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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A835 Tarvie-Garve

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out tree felling along the A835, located south of Garve (Figure 1). The works will involve removal of unstable, diseased, self-sown or otherwise defective trees within falling distance of the A835. A total of 40 trees within falling distance of the road are located on land owned by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) and were identified through a hazardous tree survey carried out by FLS. These trees will be removed by BEAR Scotland on behalf of FLS. The Garve railway station hedge will be reduced to 5m in height, and around 90m of hedge at the railway crossing will be removed as it is conflicting with Network Rail infrastructure. Network Rail and Transport Scotland support reduction and partial removal of the hedge on safety grounds. Transport Scotland trees have also been highlighted for removal after a road traffic accident involving a fallen tree on the A835. Approximately 500 to 600 trees will be felled in total. The scheme extends for approximately 2.5km, covering a total area of 1.6ha.

The works are currently programmed to be completed in winter 2025/2026 over two to three weeks by utilising a mix of daytime and night-time working hours. The construction start date is currently programmed for 01/12/2025 however this is still to be confirmed and changes in the programme may result in a change to the proposed working hours/ planned delivery of the works.

Traffic management (TM) will consist of a mixture of overnight road closures and daytime working. The exact method of TM is still to be confirmed.

Location

The scheme is located on the A835 trunk road, starting in Garve and ending approximately 1.8km northwest of Tarvie, within the Highland Council local authority area (Grid references: NH 40659 59411 to NH 39478 61400) (Figure 1).

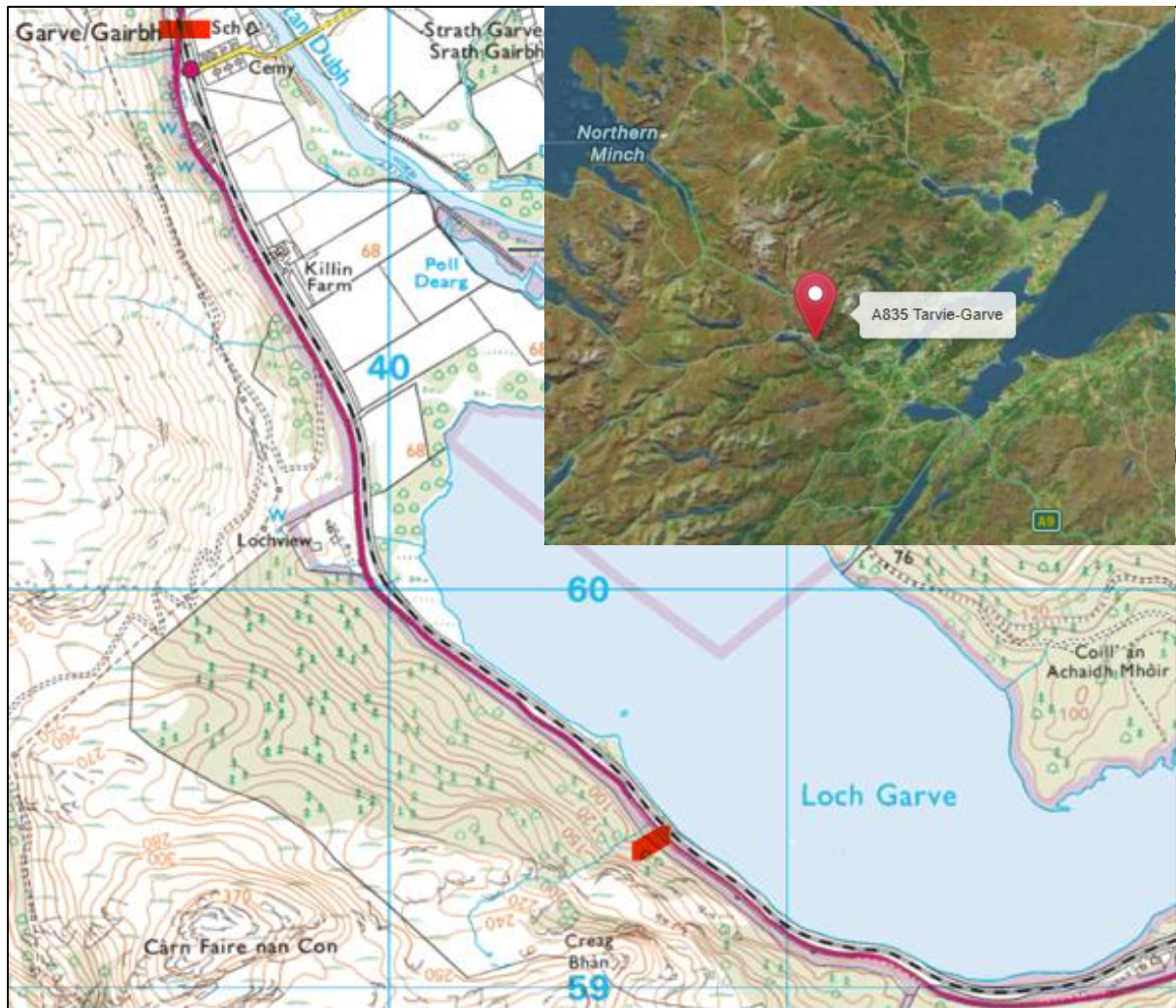


Figure 1. Scheme location. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

Description of local environment

Air quality

No Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) ([Scottish Air Quality](#)) are located within 10km of the scheme.

There are no air quality monitoring sites located within 10km of the scheme ([Scottish Air Quality](#)).

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

Due to the rural location of the works, baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A835. Secondary releases are likely delivered by land management within the wider area.

Cultural heritage

According to [PastMap](#), the following minor cultural heritage features are recorded within 300m of the scheme extents:

- 18 Historic Environment Records (HERs), the closest of which is 'Garve General' (Reference MHG22082) located at the north of the scheme extent.
- 15 National Records of Historic Environment (NRHE), the closest of which is 'Garve, Station Road, Bridge' (Reference 12269) located at the north of the scheme extent.

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

Furthermore, construction of the A835 is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the area and as such 'cultural heritage' is scoped out and not discussed further within this RoD.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme is not situated within a [National Park](#) (NP) or [National Scenic Area](#) (NSA).

The scheme is located on a semi-rural stretch of the A835, starting in the settlement of Garve. The surrounding land is dominated by residential buildings, scattered farming settlements, rough grazing, broadleaved woodland, and freshwater habitat at Loch Garve. The A835 trunk road and Loch Garve are the dominant landscape features and a railway line runs adjacent to the trunk road. Landscape Character Type for the scheme is listed as 'Strath – Ross & Cromarty' ([LCT 340](#)) and 'Wooded Glens and Rocky Moorland' ([LCT 335](#)).

'Strath – Ross & Cromarty' has the following key characteristics:

- Sinuous or curved channels with steep sides channelling through upland and mountainous landscapes.
- Wide flat strath floor at the coast or terminating water body, where the presence of water dominates.
- Narrowing channel inland, with a rising strath floor, terminating at a narrow glen or mountain pass.
- Meandering central river, becoming broad and braided at the lower end, terminating in wetlands and pebbly beaches.
- Abrupt change in topography from strath to slope emphasised by change from regular field patterns to forest, woodland and moorland.
- Riparian woodland and patches of native woodlands on the strath floor and lower slopes.
- Limited settlement, usually located at inland bridging points at the entrance to straths.
- Rural estate landscapes including broad, green, regular fields of pasture, large estate houses and associated features such as farm buildings, stone walls and policy woodlands.
- Occasional small linear crofting townships and small holdings on slopes adjoining the road access.
- Through-road along the strath length located on the edge of the strath floor.
- Historic land use evidence in abandoned 19th and early 20th Century settlements.
- Restricted views in upper reaches, channelled along the strath, contrasting with openness of the wide strath at the lower end, the latter enhanced by reflection of light on the sea or terminal loch.
- Intriguing views along curved straths which are enhanced on un-improved roads which closely follow the curving landform of the strath sides.

'Wooded Glens and Rocky Moorland' has the following key characteristics:

- Low lying, mainly rocky moorlands, with sinuous glens and narrow gorges.
- Mainly complex, deeply undulating landform with rocky knolls, lochans and small sinuous burns.

- Glens and occasional gorges with steep rocky sides, uneven, descending central floor and central burn or river with waterfalls.
- A high proportion of native tree cover consisting of relatively large patches of broadleaf trees, Caledonian pine woods, regenerating trees and new planting, interspersed with moorland and grassland.
- Small conifer forests in the west relate to the scale of native woodlands.
- Large conifer forests in the east mask the underlying landforms in the east.
- Low levels of settlement consisting of occasional estate buildings and cottages fitted into the landscape.
- Sinuous roads avoid high ground and follow natural features such as rivers, loch shores, and curving glens.
- Infrequent and low-key roadside facilities absorbed by landform and tree cover.
- Historic relics of former periods of settlement, including numerous indications of prehistoric settlement.
- Enclosed views focussing attention on foreground detail, occasionally opening to views of glens, lochs and mountains.
- A backdrop of mountains and lochs often glimpsed through tree cover.
- Extensive stands of native pines in the west add to the sense of grandeur.

Land use within 300m of the scheme extent is classified as managed woodland, rough grazing, smallholdings, rectilinear fields and farms, urban area and freshwater area ([HLAMap](#)).

The land surrounding the trunk road is classified as 6.2 ('Land capable of use as rough grazing with moderate quality plants') ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

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.

Biodiversity

The scheme lies approximately 1.7km east of the Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site ID: [10233](#)). Due to the proximity of the proposed works to the SPA, a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma was completed.

No other European designated biodiversity sites have been recorded within 2km of the scheme, and no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), national Nature Reserves (NNR) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR) have been recorded within 300m ([SiteLink](#)).

Numerous bird species were recorded on the [National Biodiversity Network](#) (NBN) Atlas within 2km of the scheme during the last ten-year period. Only records with attributions CC-BY, OGL and CC0 (open use) were included in the search criteria. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds and their active nests are protected.

NBN Atlas holds records of the following invasive non-native species (INNS), as listed on the NMC Contract:

- Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)

The Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) does not hold any records of INNS or injurious weeds (as listed on the Network Management Contract (NMC)) within 300m of the scheme.

The surrounding land is dominated by grazing pastures; broadleaved woodland; scattered residential and farming settlements; and freshwater in the form of Loch Garve.

Part of the scheme passes through four areas of woodland listed on the [Ancient Woodland Inventory](#) (AWI):

- ID 26639, ancient (of semi-natural origin), 1.33ha
- ID 26622, ancient (of semi-natural origin), 4.26ha
- ID 26640, ancient (of semi-natural origin), 1.33ha
- ID 1260, other (on Roy map), 10.29ha

Several other AWI woodlands are also located within 300m of the scheme.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) present within 300m of the scheme ([Highland Tree Preservation Orders](#)).

A site visit was undertaken in September 2025 by the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team to assess ecological constraints.

Geology and soils

Bedrock geology ([BGS Geology Viewer](#)) within the scheme consists of:

- Crom psammite formation - psammite
- Glenfinnan group – pelite and semipelite
- Reidh psammite formation – psammite, micaceous
- Vaich pelite formation – semipelite, garnet

Superficial deposits ([BGS Geology Viewer](#)) within the scheme consist of:

- Alluvium – clay, silt, sand and gravel
- Glacial deposits – diamicton, gravel, sand and silt
- Hummocky (moundy) glacial deposits – diamicton, sand and gravel

Soils in the scheme extent comprise humus-iron podzols with peaty gleyed podzols, and mineral alluvial soils with peaty alluvial soils ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

Soils within the scheme extent are recorded as being of Carbon and Peatland 'Class 0', class is associated with mineral soil where peatland habitats are not typically found ([Carbon and Peatland Map](#)).

There are no Geological Conservation Review Sites (GCRSs) or geological SSSIs within 300m of the scheme ([SiteLink](#)).

Material assets and waste

The proposed works will include the removal of trees along the verges of the A835 and no materials are required. Felled tree material will either be chipped or cut into removal pieces to be reused as firewood. Woodchip and firewood will be removed from site and reused. Habitat piles may be left on site if safe to do so, and out of sight of the A835. No waste exemption is required.

As the value of the scheme does not exceed £350,000, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required for this scheme.

Noise and vibration

A search of [Scotland's Noise Map](#) returned modelled noise records for noise levels in the day-evening-night (LDEN) within the A835 and its verges ranging between 61 and 67dB within the scheme extents.

The scheme does not fall within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan (TNAP) ([Transportation Noise Action Plan 2019-2023](#)).

Given the rural nature found within the scheme, it is considered likely that the baseline noise levels will be low, with noise mainly influenced by vehicles travelling along the A835 and the nearby railway line.

Population and human health

There are several residential properties and farming settlements within 300m of the scheme. The closest property lies 3m east from the A835 carriageway with little to no roadside verge screening provided. Access to this property is located on the southbound carriageway within the scheme extent and also leads to other properties in the vicinity. There is a paved footpath adjacent to the southbound carriageway in the north of the scheme, within Garve. The Garve railway station is located 31m east of the northern extent of the scheme, and a railway level crossing is present at the northern extent of the scheme. There are three laybys located within the scheme extents.

According to Scottish Road Works there are no other works currently programmed within 300m of the scheme ([Scottish Road Works](#)).

There are no National Cycle Network (NCN) routes ([OS Maps](#)) located within 300m of the scheme.

There are no walking paths within 300m of the scheme listed on [WalkHighlands](#), however there is one Core Path located 220m northeast (Village river path, ID RC20.04) ([Highland Council](#)).

Transport Scotland's manual data counter (site number ATC01100) located 1.2km northwest from the scheme, recorded an annual daily total (ADT) of 4,066 motor vehicles in 2024, of which 17.6% were heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

Traffic management will consist of a mixture of overnight road closures and daytime working. The exact method of TM is still to be confirmed.

Road drainage and the water environment

'Strathconon and Muir of Ord Sand and Gravel' (ID 170790) and 'Northern Highlands' (ID 150701) are groundwater bodies which underlie the scheme and are Drinking Water Protected Areas (Ground). They were both awarded an overall status of 'good' in 2023 by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

Loch Garve (ID 100134) is located adjacent to the east of the scheme, at a distance of 25m at its closest point. It was awarded an overall status of 'good' in 2023 by SEPA under the WFD ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

Within the scheme extents there is a range of low (0.1% chance each year) to high (10% chance each year) likelihood of the area flooding due to surface and river waters ([SEPA Flood Maps](#)).

Small unclassified surface waterbodies and/or culverted drainage channels that flow below and within proximity of the A835 may be present within 300m of the scheme.

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

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.

- Ancillary plant, vehicles, and non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) will be 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- Drop heights to haulage vehicles and onto conveyors will be minimised.
- Surfaces will be swept where loose material remains.

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 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, permanent visual impact upon completion of works due to the removal of trees and vegetation from the vicinity of the A835. However, these trees are being removed due to the high risk of falling during periods

of high winds (which would also cause uplift of root plates, a greater visual impact) and to ensure better visibility to drivers travelling along the A835. Works also do not lie within any visually sensitive areas (such as National Parks or National Scenic Areas).

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

- Tree felling and vegetation clearance will be kept to the minimum amount necessary to ensure the safety of the relevant infrastructure (i.e. A835 trunk road and railway).
- 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 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

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. 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.

As the scheme lies within 2km of the Glen Affric and Strathconon SPA, a HRA Proforma was completed and concluded that there would be no Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the qualifying feature of the SPA as a result of the works due to the following considerations:

- No works will take place within the SPA.
- There is a lack of suitable breeding habitat in proximity to the scheme, and there is a large amount of intervening topography, providing acoustic and visual screening between the works and the SPA.
- No in-water works will take place and potential for a pollution incident is limited.

Rhododendron, an INNS, was recorded on site and as such, site operatives will also be advised to avoid any instances of INNS or injurious weeds found within the verges. Relevant biosecurity measures and a Toolbox Talk on INNS will be included within the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP). As the works will not require any excavation of soil, there is limited potential to spread or introduce INNS, invasive native perennials, or injurious flowering plant species.

The scheme lies partially within areas of ancient woodland. However, tree felling in these areas will be limited to the trunk road boundary, which is at the edge of the ancient woodland. Furthermore, trees growing in the trunk road boundary are likely subject to sub-optimal habitat conditions due to the proximity of the trunk road and exposure to salt and other runoff from the road. Therefore, felling of trees along the edge of ancient woodland areas is unlikely to significantly affect the overall woodland.

Tree felling outside of the trunk road boundary (i.e., on FLS or Network Rail land) which will result in 5m³ or more of timber being removed from third-party land, is expected to be subject to a felling licence from Scottish Forestry and compensatory planting will likely be required as a condition of the licence. Consultation with Scottish Forestry regarding licensing was undertaken and FLS will apply for the felling licence. Felling on third-party land will not commence until any required licensing is in place.

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. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low:

- Any requirement for licences and/or consents from NatureScot will be sought prior to works commencing and any additional mitigation measures advised by NatureScot will be adhered to on site.
- Works will avoid the nesting bird season as far as is reasonably practicable. If works are delayed into nesting bird season (i.e. March to August inclusive), pre-construction nesting bird checks will be undertaken prior to felling.
- Any habitat piles left on site will be situated over 10m from any watercourses and will not block any potential mammal or reptile holes or shelters found on site.
- 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.
- Trees to be removed will be recorded so that compensatory planting can be carried out in an appropriate area in future.

- 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 and INNS.
- 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 shall 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. Works and access routes will avoid INNS growth where reasonably practicable and biosecurity measures will be detailed in the SEMP.
- 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 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.

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 works do not require any excavation within the roadside verges and tree stumps will be left in place. Therefore, the works are not anticipated to have an adverse impact on geology and soils. With the following mitigation measures in place, the likelihood of significant impacts on geology and soils is low.

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and vegetation management works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.

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

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

Material assets and waste

The proposed works will include the removal of trees along the verges of the A835 and no materials will be introduced as a result of the works. Felled trees will be chipped or cut into removal logs to be reused as firewood. Habitat piles may be left on site if safe to do so, and out of sight of the A835. 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:

- Felled vegetation material will be disposed of appropriately in line with the NW NMC (Schedule 5, Appendix 0/1, 3010SR Maintenance of Established Trees and Shrubs).
- Any felled material left on site as habitat piles will be left out of site of the A835 and over 10m from any watercourses.
- Felled material not left as habitat piles will be removed from site and disposed of appropriately via chipping and taken for reuse as firewood.
- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- Site staff will adhere to waste management legislation and comply with 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 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 contractor 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 scheme have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. However, the works are not located within a CNMA or CQA, and the proximity of road space suggests that residents within the local area will have a degree of tolerance to noise and disturbance. Works will also be completed on a rolling programme, with the majority of works taking place on the scheme where no properties are present within 300m. The noisiest works and any works within 300m of residential properties will be completed by 23:00. Works with the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will also be intermittent, temporary, transient and short-lived.

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.
- Where possible, the noisiest works and works within 300m of residential properties will be completed before 23:00.
- The Environmental Health Officer from Highland Council will be notified of night-time working.
- Operatives will be briefed using the 'Being a Good Neighbour' toolbox talk prior to the commencement of works.
- All site personnel will be fully briefed in advance of works regarding the need to minimise noise during works and of the site-specific sensitivities.

- Local residents will be notified of the impending works. Information will provide contact details (office phone number and e-mail address) for the Project Engineer as well as a 24-hour contact number for the BEAR Scotland Control Room.
- 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 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 vehicle travellers and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of vehicle noise and delays due to traffic management measures. Road users will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times. The duration of works is still to be confirmed however it is anticipated that works will take 2-3 weeks and be conducted on a rolling programme, moving progressively along the full scheme extent. Some works will be completed at night to reduce impacts on road users.

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

- Local residents will be notified of the impending works. Information will provide contact details (office phone number and e-mail address) for the Project Engineer as well as a 24-hour contact number for the BEAR Scotland Control Room.
- Any changes of schedule will be communicated to local residents throughout the programme.
- Local access will be retained within the scheme extent. Pedestrian footways and NMU routes will remain open and users of these will be facilitated throughout the scheme.

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

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 proximity to watercourses and/or drainage systems, 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 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 Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to on site.
- No discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems are permitted. Appropriate containment measures must be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- Chipping will be conducted at least 10m away from watercourses, drains and waterbodies. If left on site they will remain 10m away from any watercourse, drain or waterbody. Trees must be felled directionally away from any watercourses and habitat piles will be placed at least 10m away from any watercourse, drain or waterbody.
- 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 shall be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses.
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This shall 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 shall 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 shall 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

During the works there is potential for impacts such as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of equipment, vehicles, material use, and production and transportation of materials and wastes. Although works involve removal of a large number of trees, the majority are of a small size; therefore, the impact on climate and local carbon storage is considered to be low. 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. Considering the nature, short-term duration, size and scale of the scheme, and the mitigation detailed below, the risk of significant impacts to climate are considered to be low.

Proposed climate mitigation measures:

- 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.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with materials movement, and waste will be disposed at local landfill.
- Trees removed from the trunk road boundary will be recorded to inform future compensatory planting.

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

Vulnerability of the project to risks

There will be no change to the likelihood of flooding on the A835 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works. Although the trees along the verges participate in flooding reduction by slowing down the flow of rainwater, absorbing rainwater and reducing erosion, it is not expected that removal of the trees will significantly impact local flooding due to the presence of drainage and additional vegetation. Additionally, tree stumps will be left in place to reduce erosion. Works will also be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall.

Works are restricted to the embankment along the A835 carriageway and small sections of hedge near the Garve railway station/railway crossing. Traffic management will consist of a mixture of overnight closures and daytime working with the exact method still to be confirmed. 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.

Removal of unsafe trees in the woodland belt will improve road safety standards at this section of the A835 and to local properties. As such, the proposed works will result in beneficial impact for road users of the A835 and local residents.

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 one planning application within 300m of the scheme, however this has not yet been approved and is unlikely to be carried out concurrently with the proposed works.

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, on the trunk road at the same time as this scheme. Due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

The following vegetation clearance/tree felling schemes are currently programmed by BEAR Scotland on the A835:

- A835 Brahan Wood Maryburgh
- A835 Garve-Silverbridge
- A835 Tore-Ullapool Storm Clear Up

Trees to be removed are located along the A835 road corridor and within falling distance of the A835. The majority are of a small size, unstable, diseased, or otherwise defective. Trees to be removed across the various schemes conflict with the trunk road infrastructure and/or have a likelihood to fall due to high wind events. A number of self-sown trees within the trunk road corridor will also be removed from areas that are not suited for tree growth, such as where they block visibility splays, encroach on signage, overhand the carriageway, etc. Furthermore, they will be removed from areas where it has been assessed that their growth will be detrimental to existing woodland assets. Tree removal will be limited to the minimum number required to ensure the safety of road users and will be focused on the trunk road corridor, which is likely to provide sub-optimal habitat for adjacent trees due to the proximity of the trunk road and exposure to salt and other runoff from the road. The total quantity of trees to be removed from the A835 trunk road has been assessed as negligible in the context of both the local and wider landscape, with woodland remaining a dominant feature along the trunk road corridor for much of the extent between Tore and Ullapool. In addition, the cumulative number of trees/vegetation to be removed will be considered and recorded for future compensatory planting in appropriate locations. Suitable locations for replanting are highly limited within the trunk road boundary in proximity to these schemes; therefore, BEAR Scotland will seek to identify alternative suitable locations for compensatory planting, in discussion and consultation with Transport Scotland.

The above schemes are due to start between December 2025 and February 2026, with durations between 10 days and 5 weeks. 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 traffic management. 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 traffic management to complete multiple schemes at once. This approach allows BEAR Scotland to effectively manage the potential cumulative effects as a result of traffic management, 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

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

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

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

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

Characteristics of the scheme:

- Construction activities are restricted to the verges within the 2.5km stretch of the A835.
- No significant 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 due to improved road safety and visibility.
- As the works will be limited to removal of trees and shrubs/vegetation which are hazardous and within falling distance of the A835, there is no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term and non-significant. There will be permanent visual impacts (e.g. removal of trees) however these trees are being removed due to risk of falling (causing greater visual impact) and overall the impact is considered low in comparison. Loss of suitable habitat for biodiversity is not considered significant due to the habitats at the road verges being sub-optimal for protected species.
- The works will be temporary, localised and completed mainly using verge TM.

- Three vegetation clearance/tree felling schemes are currently programmed by BEAR Scotland on the A835 however these will be programmed to avoid/limit any cumulative effects relating to traffic management. No cumulative or in-combination effects have been identified.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- The felling of hazardous trees will remove the potential hazard of falling trees during high wind events.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme is not located within any designated protected sites and while one SPA is located within 2km of the scheme, the HRA Proforma concluded that the works would not result in any LSE on the qualifying feature of this site.
- The scheme is not located within any Conservation Areas and does not require felling of trees protected by a TPO.
- Part of the scheme passes through four areas of woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. 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.
- The works are limited to removal of unstable and defective trees in falling distance of the A835 and will not require any land take. Tree felling outside of the trunk road boundary (i.e., on FLS or Network Rail land) which will result in 5m³ or more of timber being removed from third-party land, is expected to be subject to a felling licence from Scottish Forestry and compensatory planting will likely be required as a condition of the licence. Consultation with Scottish Forestry regarding licensing was undertaken and FLS will apply for the felling licence.
- The north end of the scheme is located within the settlement of Garve. There are several residential properties and farming settlements, access roads, paved footpaths, laybys and railway crossings within close proximity of the scheme. Any impacts to the local population and public amenities as a result of works will be minor, temporary and not considered significant.
- 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:

- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.

- Pre-works surveys were conducted to ensure any impacts on protected species which may reside within the trees are appropriately assessed and managed.
- Rhododendron is present on site. Measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be detailed in the SEMP and implemented on site.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste
- Works will reduce vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment due to the proactive removal of potentially dangerous trees.
- 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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