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# **Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination**

## **A9 Tore Roundabout to Arpafeelie Junction VRS**

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## Project Details

### Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to undertake replacement of the central reservation Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) on the A9 between Tore Roundabout and the village of Arpafeelie, north of Inverness. The works involve replacing the current VRS to a high containment VRS, including the addition of VRS where gaps are present along a 2,462m section of the A9 trunk road.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within the 2026/2027 Financial Year, scheduled to take place from 04/05/2026, utilising a night-time working pattern (19:00 to 06:00). Duration of the works is estimated between 4-6 weeks. The works are necessary to update the VRS in line with current traffic standards. Changes in the programme may result in a change to the proposed working hours/commencement dates.

Traffic Management (TM) will include single lane closure (Lane 2) on both sides of the carriageway throughout the scheme extent. The TM strategy will be in line with recommendations and guidance within the [Traffic signs manual chapter 8](#). Access to junctions and private roads will be maintained. Site access and plant storage will be located within TM. If the programme changes, this may result in amendment to the exact TM requirements.

### Location

The scheme is located on a stretch of the A9 trunk road between the rural villages of Tore and Arpafeelie, which are located within Highland Council (Figure 1). The scheme has the following National Grid References (NGR):

- Scheme start point NGR: [NH 60305 52439](#)
- Scheme end point NGR: [NH 61552 50369](#)

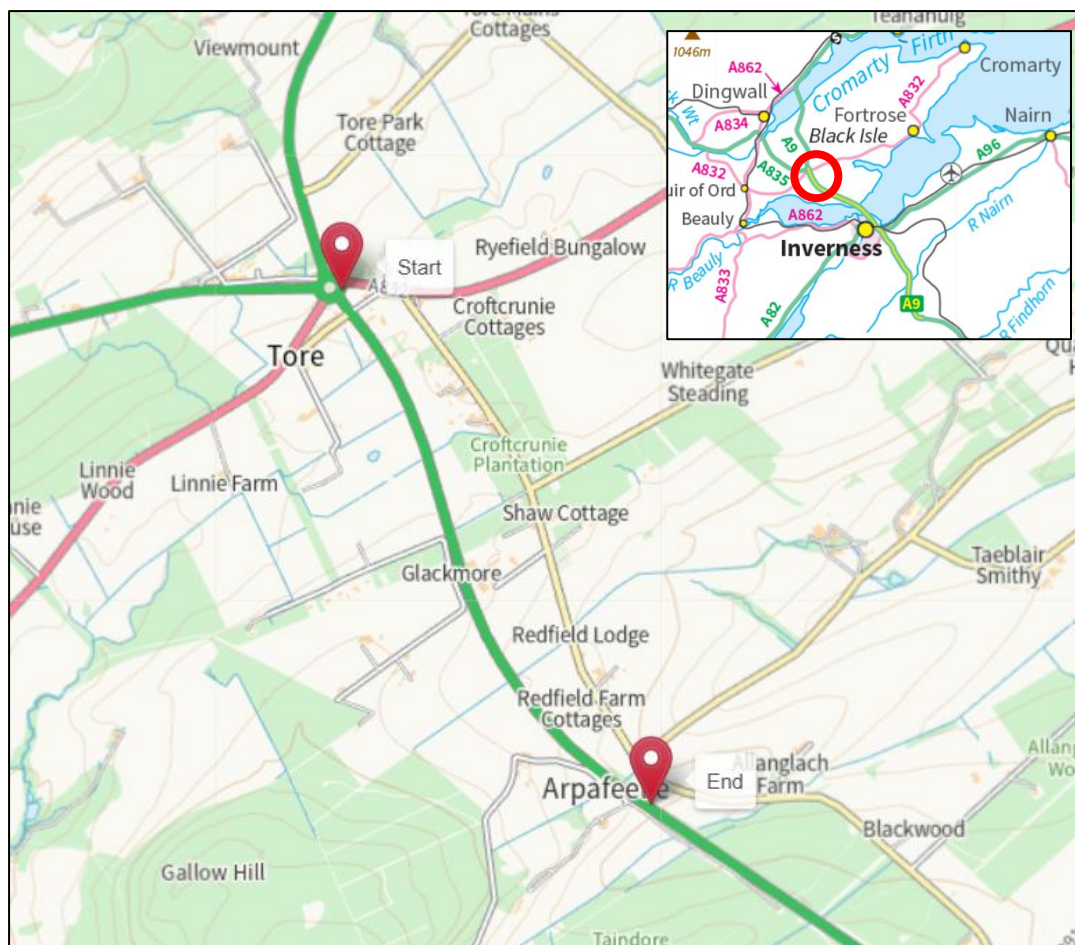


Figure 1. A9 Tore Roundabout to Arpafeelie Junction VRS scheme location and scheme extent

## Description of local environment

### Air quality

For properties within 300m of the scheme, refer to 'Population and Human Health'.

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

There are two air quality monitoring stations located within 10km of the proposed works ([Scottish Air Quality](#)). The closest lies approximately 6km southeast from the scheme. Latest readings of the daily air quality index ([DAQI](#)) at the time of the search were recorded as being within '1-3 low' band.

There is one air pollutant release site registered on the Scottish Pollution Release Inventory (SPRI) located within 10km of the scheme ([Scottish Pollution Release Inventory](#)). The site, Carbon Fibers, Muir of Ord, lies approximately 8km west from the scheme and records emissions of the pollutants ammonia (t) and hydrogen cyanide (kg).

Baseline air quality in the study area is mainly influenced by vehicles travelling along the A9 trunk road. Secondary sources are derived from rural activities associated with land management within the area.

## Cultural heritage

There are no Scheduled Monuments, Garden & Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Battlefields or World Heritage Sites found within 300m of the scheme extent ([Pastmap](#)).

Multiple other features of cultural heritage interest lie within 300m of the scheme. The following Listed Buildings are located closest to the scheme:

- Category C Listed Building 'Birchwood, Lentrán Muir of Ord Greenhouse' lies approximately 80m northeast from the A9 carriageway.
- Category C Listed Building, 'Arpafeelie Episcopal Parsonage' lies approximately 180m west from the A9 carriageway.
- Category B Listed Building, 'Arpafeelie Episcopal Church of St John' lies approximately 225m west from the A9 carriageway.

Several records of lesser cultural heritage importance noted on the National Records of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and Historic Environment Record (HER) databases lie within 300m of the scheme extent. Those closest to the scheme are listed below:

- HER/NRHE – Arpafeelie hut circles and field system at the closest point lie adjacent to the A9 carriageway.
- HER – Coille Cnoc Na H-Eireachd field system lies approximately 15m west from the A9 carriageway.
- HER/NRHE – Glackmore Farmstead lies approximately 15m west from the A9 carriageway.
- HER - Tore Farmstead lies approximately 40m east from the A9 carriageway.

Construction of the A9 is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the area. Due to the lack of cultural heritage assets within the scheme footprint, the proposed project does not carry the potential to cause direct or indirect impact to cultural or archaeological features. As such, impact has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

## Landscape and visual effects

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

The Landscape Character Type ([LCT 345](#)) within the scheme extent is recorded as Farmed and Forested Slopes – Ross & Cromarty, which has the following key characteristics:

- Complex pattern of farmland, tree cover, forests and woodland on sloped, often terraced land rising from firths or river plains to mid-elevations and often backed by large scale forest plantations where there are adjacent hills.
- Overall impression of a well-treed landscape, but within which farming is the dominant land use.
- Generally higher proportion of trees, woodland and forest plantations in upper slopes, forming a well-connected network within which fields are located.
- Terraces of open land, interspersed with forest plantations and woodlands on mid-slopes.
- Gradual change to more open landscapes at lower levels.
- Wide range and distribution of archaeological sites indicating a long history of human settlement.
- Occasional large settlements in a predominantly rural landscape.
- Views from more open, terraced areas across lowlands or firth to hills or out to sea.

Land use ([HLAmap](#)) within 300m of the scheme extent is classified as smallholdings, plantation woodlands, rectilinear fields and farms, urban area (Tore and Arpafeelie) and motorway and major roads.

The land surrounding the trunk road is classified as 3.1 'Land capable of producing consistently high yields of a narrow range of crops and / or moderate yields of a wider range. Short grass leys are common' ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

The A9 carriageway is a prominent linear landscape feature within the highland area, connecting Perth with Thurso. It commences immediately north of Inveralmond Roundabout in Perth leading generally northwards for 357 kilometres to its junction with an unclassified road leading to Holborn Head lighthouse at Scrabster. The A9 is a mixture of single carriageway, '2+1' carriageway and stretches of two-lane dual carriageway. The A9 is a two-lane dual carriageway at the scheme extent.

## Biodiversity

The Monadh Mor Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies approximately 1.25km northwest from the scheme ([SiteLink](#)) (NatureScot Site Code: 8323).

The Inner Moray Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) lies approximately 2.15km south from the scheme ([SiteLink](#)) (NatureScot Site Code: 8515).

The Inner Moray Firth Ramsar ([SiteLink](#)) (NatureScot Site Code: 8430) overlaps the Inner Moray Firth SAC.

The Moray Firth SPA lies approximately 2.5km south from the scheme ([SiteLink](#)) (NatureScot Site Code: 10490).

No ecological connectivity exists between the works and Monadh Mor SAC due to the immobile nature of the qualifying habitat features and distance from the scheme. As such, no further assessment under the Habitats Regulations has been undertaken for this site. A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma has been completed to assess the potential effects of the works on the qualifying features of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar sites and the Moray Firth SPA. Refer to the Biodiversity Impacts and Mitigation section below.

No other locally or nationally designated sites with biodiversity features (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), Local Nature Reserves or National Nature Reserves) are located within 300m of the scheme ([SiteLink](#)).

Numerous records of bird species were returned on the NBN Atlas within 2km of the works under the same search criteria. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA), all wild birds and their nests are protected.

The NBN Atlas holds records of the following invasive native perennial plant (as listed in the Network Management Contract (NMC)) using the same search criteria:

- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*).

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds records of the following invasive native perennial plants (denoted by \*) and injurious native and non-native plant species (as listed in the NMC) within 300m of the scheme:

- Three records of rosebay willowherb\* growths which have been recorded within the verges on both sides of the carriageway within the scheme extent
- One record of giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) located on the southbound side of the carriageway within the scheme extent.

Habitat surrounding the A9 carriageway is dominated by agricultural pasture used for a mixture of grazing livestock and crop production. Pockets of woodland are also within proximity to the scheme.

One area of long-established (of plantation origin) woodland flanks the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent ([Ancient Woodland Inventory](#)).

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

Due to location within the central reservation, it is considered unlikely that any terrestrial mammal species of conservation importance are associated with permanent habitat or resting places within the area of likely construction disturbance. Therefore, a field survey has been ruled out, and a desktop study has been deemed sufficient for this assessment.

## Geology and soils

The scheme does not lie within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS), or a geologically designated SSSI ([SiteLink](#)).

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

- Raddery Sandstone Formation – Sandstone, Devonian.
- Kilmuir Conglomerate Formation – Conglomerate, Devonian.

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

- Till, Devensian-Diamicton – Quaternary.
- Glaciofluvial deposits – Gravel, sand and silt – Quaternary.

The local soil type is recorded as humus-iron podzols ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

Soils within the scheme extent are recorded as being 'Class 0', as displayed on Scotland's [Carbon and Peatland map](#). Class 0 is mineral soil, and peatland habitats are not typically found on such soils.

## Material assets and waste

The proposed works are necessary to replace the central reservation VRS including the addition of VRS where there are gaps present to ensure that the A9 carriageway remains in safe condition for road users. Materials used will consist of:

- New VRS safety barriers
- P4 terminals
- Concrete

Any excavated soil material from the works will be side casted within the scheme extents. Old VRS material is anticipated to be recycled.

The value of the scheme does exceed £350,000; therefore, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is required and will be completed as part of these works.

No site compound is required for these works. Storage of plant and equipment will be within the A9 carriageway.

## Noise and vibration

For residential, community and commercial receptors refer to the 'Population and Human Health' section below.

Works are not located within a Candidate Noise Management Area ([CNMA](#)) as defined by the [Transport Noise Action Plan \(TNAP\) 2024 to 2028](#).

Scottish Noise Mapping indicates average noise level during the night ( $L_{NLT}$ ) ranges between 60 and 70dB within the A9 and its associated verges ([Scotland's Noise Map](#)).

A Transport Scotland manual data counter for the A9 (Site name ATC01010) located 275m southeast from the scheme, recorded an annual daily traffic (ADT) flow of 26,952 motor vehicles in 2025, of which 16.9% were Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

Baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A9 carriageway. Secondary sources are derived from vehicles travelling along the local road network and rural activities associated with land management within the area.

## Population and human health

There are several residential properties and farmsteads scattered throughout the landscape within 300m of the scheme extent. There is a cluster of residential properties located on the northbound and southbound side of the carriageway on the approach to Tore roundabout. The closest property lies approximately 30m west from the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent. There is roadside verge planting present, providing a level of visual and acoustic screening between the property and the A9 carriageway.

The closest farmstead and associated outbuildings lie approximately 40m east from the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent. There is a small amount of roadside verge screening provided by the way of small shrubs and trees.

Several access routes/junctions lie on both sides of the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent. There is one layby located on the northbound and southbound side of the carriageway within the scheme extent.

There are three bus stops scattered throughout the scheme extent on the northbound side of the carriageway and one bus stop located on the southbound side of the carriageway.

Pedestrian footpaths are located only at the mentioned bus stops and surrounding laybys associated within the scheme extent.

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

National Cycle Network (NCN) route 1 ([OS Maps](#)) at its closest point is located approximately 100m northeast from the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent.

There are no walking routes listed on [WalkHighlands](#) or [Core Paths in Highland Council](#) within 300m of the scheme.

TM will consist of single lane closures (Lane 2).

## Road drainage and the water environment

'Black Isle' (ID 150643) and 'Munlochy Coastal' (ID: 150749) are groundwater bodies, in the Scotland river basin district, which underlie the scheme. Both were awarded an overall status of 'good' in 2024 by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

'Allanglach Burn' is a river (ID: 20155), in the Cromarty coastal catchment of the Scotland river basin district. It lies approximately 180m southeast from the A9 carriageway at the scheme extent. The water body has been designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact on the drainage for agricultural land. It was awarded an overall status of 'good ecological potential' in 2024 by SEPA under the WFD ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

Small unclassified surface waterbodies and/or culverted drainage channels may flow below and be present within proximity to the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent.

The scheme falls within an area that has no likelihood of river or coastal water flooding each year. However, intermittent sections of the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent do fall within a medium likelihood (0.5% chance) of surface water and small watercourse flooding each year ([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

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 the air are considered to be low.

- A water-assisted dust sweeper will sweep the carriageway after dust-generating activities, and waste will be contained and removed from site as soon as is practicable.
- Materials that have a 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).

## **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. However, people, ancillary plant, vehicles, NRMM and materials are restricted to areas of made/engineered ground on the A9, and construction works are programmed to be of short duration, undertaken at night on a rolling programme. As such, the visual impact of the works will be minimal.

Upon completion of the works, no significant residual impacts are anticipated e.g., when complete the visual appearance will remain largely unaffected, with a renewed VRS system being the only discernible change. This VRS change will be in keeping with the existing/replaced street furniture, and as such any visible change is considered to be negligible.

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, minimising 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 shall 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 Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar lie approximately 2.15km south from the scheme and the Moray Firth SPA lies approximately 2.5km south from the scheme. Due to ecological connectivity between the scheme and the designated sites, a HRA Proforma was produced. The HRA concluded that there was no potential for the proposed works to result in Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the qualifying features of the Inner Moray Firth SPA / Ramsar or the Moray Firth SPA based on the following factors:

- No works will take place within the boundary of either SPA or Ramsar and no in-water works are required; as such, no direct impacts (e.g., habitat loss) will occur.
- Given the minor and localised nature of the works, the lack of requirement for in-water works, and adherence to good practice measures for pollution prevention, no risk of significant pollution impacts (to watercourses or associated feeding grounds) was identified.
- Although the works will result in a temporary (localised) increase in noise, this is unlikely to significantly affect the qualifying features of the Moray Firth SPA or Inner Moray Firth SPA due to the transient nature of the works and distance from the scheme.
- Although night works will require some artificial lighting, the works will be transient, and lighting will be directed in a way to avoid light spillage within the surrounding environment.

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity that may be present in the area as a result of an increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats. However, works are restricted to the A9 carriageway and the number of construction vehicles and construction operatives required onsite is low given the scale and scope of works. In addition, any species in the area are likely to be accustomed to noise and visual disturbance pertaining to vehicle movements on the A9 and the scheme is of short duration (4 to 6 weeks) and will be undertaken on a rolling programme. The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is therefore considered to be low.

One area of long-established (of plantation origin) woodland is located within 300m of the scheme; however, no tree felling is planned for the works.

Transport Scotland's AMPS identified rosebay willowherb and giant hogweed within the scheme extent. Rosebay willowherb an invasive native perennial plant will be managed as per NW Landscape Management plan and disposed of accordingly if required. Giant hogweed growth was identified to be present within the verge of the southbound (SB) carriageway layby located 400m north from Glackmore Farm. Works are restricted to be within the central reservation of the A9 trunk road and lie approximately 15m west from the identified giant hogweed growth. Should any INNS be identified within the works area, relevant mitigation measures to prevent spread will be followed, as will be detailed within the SEMP.

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the Site Environment Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to on site. Any protected species in the area are likely to be accustomed to road noise on the A9 and the scheme is of relatively short duration. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low:

- No in-water works will be permitted. 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 (where required) will be directed away from areas of woodland and waterbodies as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- If an active bird nest (e.g., eggs or young present, adult sitting on nest) is identified on site, all works within 30m of the nest will stop until the BEAR Scotland NW Environment Team can provide advice.
- 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.

Taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the good site practice mitigation measures which will be adopted during the works, it is anticipated that any biodiversity effects associated with the proposed works will not be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Geology and soils

The scheme is not located within a GCRS or geological SSSI. Although the works will entail minor excavation, this will be on engineered ground. In addition, any excavations will be carried out with good practice measures detailed in the SEMP as follows:

- Excavations will be restricted to the engineered ground of the A9 carriageway, and all machinery will operate from road level without entering ground outside the man-made surface of the A9.
- Excavated material will be kept to a minimum and reused and/or redistributed within the scheme extents.
- Multiple handling of excavated soil will be minimised.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- The parking of machinery/vehicles and storage of equipment on grass will be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.
- All relevant soil management toolbox talks will be included in the SEMP and sediment control measures will be in place to prevent soil erosion and loss of containment.
- Additional pollution prevention measures as outlined in the 'Road drainage and the water environment' section will be adhered to during construction.

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

## Material assets and waste

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

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

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

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

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

## Noise and vibration

Construction activities associated with the proposed 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 be completed on a rolling programme during night-time working hours, with the aim being to complete the noisiest work 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:

- Local residents that are likely to be affected by the works will be notified in advance of the works, likely by a letter drop, which will contain details of the proposed timings and duration of the works, in addition to contact details for the Site Supervisor.
- The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) from Highland Council will be notified of the works.
- 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 construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.
- Where possible and where works will take place within 300m of residential properties and other sensitive receptors, the noisiest work operations will be completed before 23:00.
- 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.
- Drop heights from vehicles and NRMM will be kept to a minimum to minimise noise when unloading.
- All plant, machinery and vehicles will be switched off when not in use.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and will have been maintained regularly to the appropriate standards.
- Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

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

## Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and NMUs. The A9 will not be fully closed during the works, the single lane closure on both sides of the carriageway will take place at night when traffic count is at its lowest and no significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours. In the event of local access restrictions to residential properties, access will be granted as requested. Access to NMU facilities which lie within 300m of the scheme, will be maintained and the works are being undertaken at night when footfall and cyclist count is at its lowest.

Several residential properties are found within 300m of the scheme. The nearest residential property lies 30m west from the scheme with minimal screening present and given that the works are being undertaken at night, there is potential for disturbance from noise, vibration and the additional construction lighting.

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

- Notification will be issued to local residents and local public transport operators prior to commencement of the works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Any changes of schedule will be communicated to local residents and public transport operators throughout the programme.
- Given the proximity of residential properties to the scheme extents, the Toolbox Talk TTN-042 'Being a Good Neighbour' will be briefed prior to the works commencing.
- Construction lighting will consider the need to avoid illuminating surrounding environment and properties to avoid a nuisance at night, and non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.
- Local access will be granted as required.
- Appropriate provisions / measures shall 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](http://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.

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

- No work has been identified that would require entering any surface waterbodies. If such a need were identified onsite, BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted (before the works commence) to allow consideration of potential environmental effects.
- Standard working practices to comply with The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR) (as amended) 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.
- Concrete batching will be carried out on an impermeable surface at least 10m away from drains, water bodies, any open drainage facilities and trees (roots absorb water) but as close to the works as possible to prevent any spills, drips, etc into open ground.
- Any concrete wash-out will be contained and removed off-site for appropriate treatment/disposal. Disposal of wash water into waterbodies or road drainage will not be permitted.
- Pollution prevention measures will be in place to manage concrete (including any wash water) and prevent escape to the watercourse.
- Cement powder, concrete retarding and concrete curing agents (if required) will be stored in areas away from roadside gullies, any open drainage

facilities, and trees, with liquids being stored in a suitable bund or storage container.

- An incident response (contingency) plan will be put in place to reduce the risk from pollution incidents or accidental spillages. All necessary containment equipment, including suitable spill kits (for oil and chemicals) will be available on site, quickly accessible if needed, and staff trained in their use.
- All spills will be logged and reported. In the event of any spills into the water environment, all works will stop, and the incident will be reported to the project manager and the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. SEPA will be informed of any such incident as soon as possible using the SEPA Pollution Hotline.
- All plant and equipment will be regularly inspected for any signs of damage and leaks. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.
- Storage of hazardous material, oil and fuel containers will be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses.
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.
- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. Spill kits will be quickly accessible to capture any spills should they occur. The ground/stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special waste.
- Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and/or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not bunded then drip trays 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

During the works there is potential for impacts 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. However, 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 its Carbon Management Policy.
- All mitigation measures detailed within 'Air Quality' and 'Material Assets and Waste' will be adhered to.
- 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 facilities, where required.

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

A section of the A9 carriageway has a medium likelihood (0.5% chance) of surface water flooding each year. Works will be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall. There will be no change to the likelihood of flooding on the A9 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works.

Works are restricted to areas of engineered ground of the A9 trunk road and traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. TM will consist of single lane closures (Lane 2) on both sides of the carriageway. Local residents will be notified of working hours and provided with appropriate contact information. Pedestrians or other NMUs will be accommodated within the traffic management setup.

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.

The works will not result in any change in vulnerability of the A9 carriageway to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment. The replacement/ installation of new VRS is designed to protect users of the A9 trunk road and will have a beneficial impact on road users.

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. Due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

A search of the Highland Council Planning Portal ([Highland Council Planning Portal](#)) identified two planning applications within 300m of the scheme. Both are currently still under review, one for the erection of a house and formation of access approximately 90m northeast from the scheme and the second for the erection of 4no. houses and garages approximately 250m northeast from the scheme. It is unlikely that either proposal will coincide with the planned works, however if overlap of construction were to occur, no significant cumulative effects are anticipated. VRS works are limited to the A9 carriageway for a limited period and will be undertaken during a night-time programme.

A search of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner website ([Scottish Road Works Online](#)) has not identified any other roadworks that 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.

BEAR Scotland programme all of its 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 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 completed to assess potential impacts of the works has concluded that there will be no LSE on the qualifying features of the Inner Moray Firth SAC or Ramsar as a result of the works.

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

This is a relevant project in terms of section 55A(16) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as it is a project for the 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 an area of 3ha along a 2.5km stretch of the A9 central reservation.
- The works will be temporary, transient, localised, and completed during night-time hours on a rolling programme.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- A site waste management plan (SWMP) is required for this scheme.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.

### Location of the scheme:

- The scheme will be located within the existing A9 road boundary (central reservation) and as such, no land take will be required.
- The scheme has ecological connectivity with Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar, and the Moray Firth SPA. The HRA concluded that the works have no potential for LSE on the qualifying features of these sites due to sufficient distancing, no in-water works, and the minor and localised nature of the scheme.
- The scheme is not located within a NP/NSA, or any other site designated for landscape character or quality.

#### **Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:**

- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be non-significant and limited to the construction phase.
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users, ecological and human receptors during the operational phase.
- 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.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

## **References of supporting documentation**

“A9 Tore Roundabout to Arpafeelie Junction Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma”. BEAR Scotland, March 2026.

## 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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