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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A7 South of Ashkirk

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out resurfacing works on the A7 carriageway. The works will consist of carriageway resurfacing to various mixed depth inlays (including 45mm, 100mm, and 175mm) and reinstatement of road markings for a length of approx. 1.15km (0.86ha).

Construction activities for the resurfacing procedure are as follows:

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

The works are programmed to be completed within the 2026/2027 financial year with works expected to begin on 4th August 2026. Works will be undertaken over four nights (19:30-06:00). Traffic Management (TM) is currently programmed to be in the form of a full nighttime road closure with a signed diversion. The diversion will take drivers via off the A7 at Hawick onto the A698, A68, and A699 before rejoining the A7 in Selkirk.

Location

The scheme lies on the A7 carriageway to the east of Ashkirk within the Scottish Borders Council area and is surrounded by a small village, agricultural land, and woodland (Figure 1).

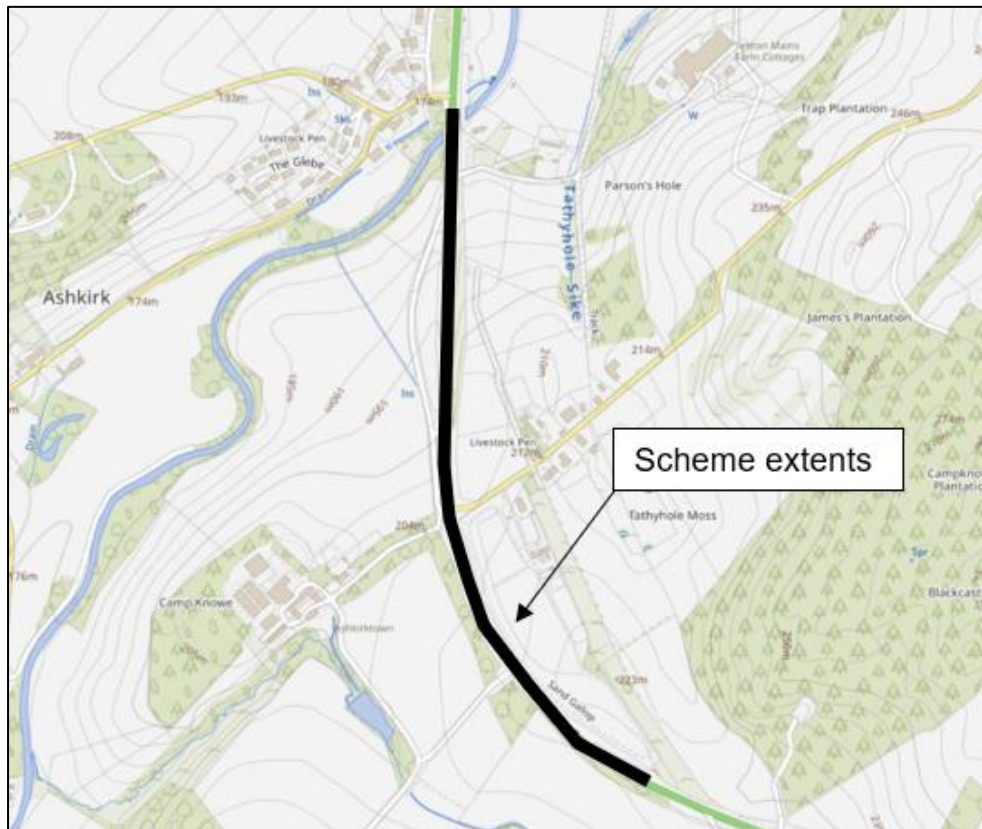


Figure 1. Extents of the Works. - Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

Description of local environment

Air quality

Properties within 300m of the scheme – refer to ‘Population and Human Health’.

A search of the [Air Quality in Scotland](#) online mapping tool records show that the air quality zones in the wider area record bandings in the ‘green zone’ (Low Index 1-3).

The scheme lies within the boundary of the Scottish Borders Council, which currently has no [Air Quality Management Areas](#) (AQMAs) within its administrative boundary. The nearest AQMA, ‘High Street, Musselburgh’, lies within the boundary of East Lothian Council approx. 51.8km northwest of the scheme extents (at its nearest point) and has been declared for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

There are no sites registered on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory ([SPRI](#)) for pollutant releases to air within 10km of the scheme, within the last 10 years.

The baseline air quality within the scheme extents is primarily influenced by motor vehicles travelling along the A7 trunk road. Secondary sources are derived from vehicles travelling along nearby local network roads and day-to-day agricultural land management activities.

Cultural heritage

According to the [PastMap](#) and [Historic Environment Scotland](#) (HES) online mapping tool, there are no designated cultural heritage assets located within 300m of the scheme extents.

There are approx. 12 undesignated cultural heritage assets located within 300m of the scheme extents. The nearest record pertains to ‘Drinkstone Hill’ National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and Historic Environment Record (HER) (ID: 341734) which lies approx. 70m east from the southern end of the scheme extents.

Construction of the A7 carriageway is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the carriageway boundary. The potential for the presence of unknown archaeological remains in the study area has therefore been assessed to be low.

Given the restriction of the works to the A7 carriageway and that no designated cultural heritage assets have been identified within 300m of the works, the potential

for impacts is considered to be negligible, therefore 'Cultural Heritage' has been scoped out of further environmental assessment.

Landscape and visual effects

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

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) within the scheme extents is 'Wooded Upland Fringe Valley' (no. 119) and 'Rolling Farmland – Borders' (no. 99) ([Scottish Landscape Character Types](#)). The key characteristics of 'Wooded Upland Fringe Valley' are:

- Small scale, intimate, enclosed character.
- Strong visual containment.
- Deeply incised river channels with frequent cliffs and steep slopes.
- Heavily wooded valley floors and lower valley sides.
- Contrasting open rolling slopes at higher levels above rivers.
- Generally tranquil, unspoilt character.

The key characteristics of 'Rolling Farmland – Borders' are:

- Undulating relief, becoming more pronounced at higher elevations.
- Distinctive areas of flat or constant gentle gradients, giving wide horizons and skylscapes.
- Large-scale strong geometric field pattern, enclosed by hedgerows, with scattered coniferous woods.
- Mix of arable, ley pasture and permanent grazing land.
- Moderately densely settled, with frequent farmsteads and small villages.
- Well kempt, prosperous appearance.

[Land use](#) within the study area is comprised of the following:

- Urban area.
- Recreation area.
- Managed woodland.
- Medieval village.
- Rectilinear fields and farms.
- Smallholdings.

The [national scale land capability for agriculture](#) classifies land surrounding the scheme as being:

- 'Class 4.1' - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops and cereal.

There are two areas of woodland registered on the [Native Woodland Survey of Scotland](#) database located within 300m of the scheme extents:

- Approx. 4ha of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, located directly alongside the northbound (NB) carriageway boundary.
- Approx. 3.3ha of wet woodland, located approx. 125m northeast of the scheme extents.

In addition to the above, the following woodlands are located within 300m of the scheme extents:

- Approx. 0.9ha of broadleaved woodland, located directly alongside the NB carriageway boundary.
- Approx. 0.7ha of mixed mainly broadleaved woodland, located directly alongside the NB carriageway boundary.
- Approx. 0.6ha of conifer woodland, located approx. 145m southwest of the scheme extents.
- Approx. 1.4ha of broadleaved woodland, located approx. 170m east of the scheme extents.

There are no areas of woodland registered on the [Ancient Woodland Inventory Scotland](#) database and no trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) located within 300m of the scheme extents.

The existing trunk road is a prominent linear landscape feature. The trunk road corridor, for example, has a distinct character shaped by fast-flowing traffic, road markings, safety barriers, signage, landscaping, etc. The scale of the trunk road detracts from the quality and character of the wider landscape.

Biodiversity

The [NatureScot Sitelink](#) online mapping tool identifies that the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation (SAC) flows directly beneath the A7 carriageway at the northern end of the scheme extents. No other European sites e.g., Special Protections Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar Sites are located within 2km of the scheme extents, or share connectivity with the works.

There are no [Local Nature Conservation Sites](#) (LNCS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) designated for biodiversity features within 300m of the scheme extents.

A search of the NBN online mapping tool records the following plant species as listed within the Network Management Contract (NMC) within 2km of the scheme extents (in the last 10-years):

One invasive non-native species (INNS):

- Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*).

The nearest record lies approx. 1.4km east of the scheme extents (recorded in 2022). No injurious weeds or invasive native perennials were recorded within 2km of the scheme extents (in the last 10-years).

A search of the Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) online mapping tool records the following plant species within the verge of the A7 carriageway boundary within the scheme extents (in the last 10-years):

One invasive native perennial:

- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*).

No INNS or injurious weeds were recorded within the verges of the scheme extents (in the last 10-years).

The habitat immediately bordering the A7 carriageway consists primarily of mature/semi-mature mixed broadleaved and conifer woodlands, pastoral land, arable land, riparian woodland lining Ale Water, mature hedgerows, natural roadside vegetation (e.g., immature trees, shrubs, scrub, etc.), and made verges which undergo cyclic maintenance (e.g., grass-cutting, weed control, etc.). While there is a high availability of roadside vegetation, the habitat immediately bordering the A7 carriageway is of reduced ecological value, due to the likelihood of disturbances from fast-flowing traffic. The presence of the A7 carriageway also limits the connectivity and continuity for species between their potential habitats on either side of the carriageway.

A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was undertaken by BEAR Scotland surveyors on the 10th of March 2026 and on the 8th of June 2026, an ecological constraints survey (ECS) was undertaken to identify any potential constraints along Ale Water (the River Tweed SAC) prior to the proposed resurfacing works. Habitats in the wider area surrounding Ale Water included mature riparian woodland with species such as beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), oak (*Quercus robur*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), hawthorn

(*Crataegus monogyna*), lime (*Tilia europaea*), willow (*Salix alba*), and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

Geology and soils

The A7 within the scheme extents is not located within a [Geological Conservation Review Site](#) (GCRS) and there are no [Local Geodiversity Sites](#) (LGS) located within 300m of the scheme extents.

The [National Soil Map of Scotland](#) online mapping tool records one generalised soil type within the scheme extents:

- Brown Soils.
- Alluvial soils.

There is one major soil group recorded within the scheme extents:

- Brown Soils.
- Alluvial soils.

The [British Geological Survey](#) online mapping tool records the superficial geology within the scheme extents as:

- Till, Devensian – Diamicton.
- Alluvium – Silt, Sand, and Gravel.

The bedrock geology within the scheme extents is recorded as:

- Hawick Group – Wacke.

There is no evidence of historical industrial processes or the storage of hazardous materials that could have given rise to significant land contamination within the scheme extents.

Given the restriction of the works to the A7 carriageway and the lack of any excavation works, local geology and soils are unlikely to be affected by the proposed resurfacing works. As such, 'Geology and Soils' has been scoped out of further environmental assessment.

Material assets and waste

The proposed works are required to resurface the worn A7 carriageway and reinstate road markings. Materials used will consist of:

- TS2010 10mm Site Class 1/2/3.
- AC20 Dense Binder 40/60 (Warm Mix).
- AC32 Dense Base Course (Warm Mix).
- Tack/Bond coat, paving grade bitumen to seal vertical faces.
- Eurolite Thermoplastic Road Markings.
- Embedded Road Studs.

The scheme has a value of less than £350,000. As a result, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required.

The scheme involves removal of the surface course, as well as areas of binder and base. The main waste produced during the works will be approx. 1010 tonnes of road planings (bituminous materials), which will be removed from site, none of which is classified as hazardous material containing coal tar.

Noise and vibration

Receptors - refer to 'Population and Human Health'.

Works are not located within a [Candidate Quiet Areas](#) (CQA).

The night-time modelled noise level ([LNGT](#)) within the scheme extents ranges between 55 and 60 decibels (dB), with levels dropping to between 45 and 50 dB at the nearest noise sensitive receptor (NSR) (residential property).

Baseline noise and vibration in the study area is mainly influenced by vehicles traveling along the A7 trunk road. Secondary sources are derived from vehicles travelling along nearby local network roads, day-to-day woodland and agricultural land management activities.

Population and human health

There are numerous residential properties and business premises located within 300m of the scheme extents. The nearest property (residential) lies approx. 25m east of the A7 carriageway boundary and has no screening from the scheme extents. The remaining residential properties have either partial to full screening from the scheme due to mature tree shelterbelts, hedgerows, intervening topography and/or other properties.

There is one pedestrian footpath located alongside the southbound (SB) carriageway boundary at the northern end of the scheme extents only.

There are no other non-motorised (NMU) or community facilities with connectivity to the scheme extents and there is no street lighting present throughout the scheme.

The A7, within the scheme extents, is a single carriageway with a speed limit of 60 mph applying throughout. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) flow is low (5,757 motor vehicles (ID: 110456, 2026 data)) ([Drakewell Traffic Data](#)).

Road drainage and the water environment

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) River Basin Management Plan online mapping tool records one classified surface waterbody within 300m of the scheme extents:

- 'Ale Water (Woll Burn confluence to Teviot Water)' (ID: 5236), which flows beneath the northern end of the scheme extents. It is a river in the River Tweed catchment of the Solway Tweed river basin district with the main stem approx. 28.5km in length and an overall ecological classification of 'Poor'. This water body has been designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed with a significant impact on water storage for public drinking.

Six unclassified waterbodies, considered to be a minor tributary or drainage channels, lie within 300m of the scheme extents:

- 'Drain one, which flows beneath the northern end of the scheme extents,
- 'Drain two', located approx. 50m west of the scheme extents,
- 'Pond one', located approx. 100m west of the scheme extents,
- 'Drain three', located approx. 135m southwest of the scheme extents,
- 'Tathyhole Sike', located approx. 170m east of the scheme extents,
- 'Drain four', located approx. 180m west of the scheme extents, and
- 'Pond two', located approx. 200m southwest of the scheme extents.

These waterbodies are considered to be too small (in terms of catchment area) to be classified as a main stem waterbody by SEPA under the water framework directive (WFD).

A search of the [SEPA's Flood Map](#) online mapping tool records that the A7 carriageway has between a low (0.1% chance) and high (10% chance) of surface water flooding each year.

A search of the [Scotland's Environment](#) (SE) online mapping tool determined that the trunk road, within the scheme extents, lies on the 'Peebles, Galashiels, and Hawick' groundwaters, which has been classified as 'Good'.

The scheme extents do not lie within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone ([NVZ](#)).

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](#)).

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

During the construction phase, activities undertaken on site could potentially have some minor localised and short-term air quality impacts in proximity to the works. The construction phase will, for example, require a range of ancillary plant and vehicles which will contribute to local dust and air pollutants. The main sources are likely to be dust generated by cold milling in preparation of carriageway resurfacing, as well as exhaust emissions from ancillary plant and vehicles. As a result, there is potential for impacts to local air quality.

However, considering the nature and duration of the scheme, along with implementation of mitigation detailed below, the proposed works' impacts on local air quality levels during the construction period are assessed to be temporary, minor adverse in magnitude.

Upon completion of the works, no residual air quality impacts are anticipated.

Air quality mitigation measures:

- 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 cold-milled material from site will have sheeted covers.
- Wherever possible, ancillary plant and vehicles will be shut down.
- All ancillary plant and vehicles will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of exhaust systems.
- Ancillary plant and vehicles will be switched off when stationary to prevent exhaust emissions (e.g., there will be no idling vehicles).
- Where practicable, if powered generators are required, the use of mains electricity ancillary plant will be considered in place of diesel or petrol alternatives.
- 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., by engineer or Clerk of Works) will take place when activities that have the potential to impact local air quality are occurring. In the unlikely event that unacceptable dust or exhaust emissions 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) minimizing cutting and grinding on-site, (b) reducing the operating hours, (c) changing the method of working, etc.

Landscape and visual effects

During construction, 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, and materials are restricted to areas of made/engineered ground on the A7, and construction works are programmed to be undertaken at night (four nights). As such, the visual impact of the works will be somewhat reduced.

Considering the nature, duration, size, and scale of the scheme, and with implementation of mitigation detailed below, impacts on landscape and visual effects are assessed as temporary, negligible adverse in magnitude.

Upon completion of the works, no residual impacts on landscape and visual effects are anticipated e.g., when complete the visual appearance will remain largely unaffected, with a renewed road surface being the only discernible change.

Landscape and visual effects mitigation measures:

- The site will be monitored regularly for signs of litter and other potential contaminants, and litter will be removed before and after works take place.
- The site will be left clean and tidy following construction.
- Where possible, construction vehicles will not be left in places where soil or vegetation can be damaged. If damage to road verge occurs it will be lightly cultivated or graded (upon completion of the works) to allow natural recolonization by local species and promote integration with existing landscape character.

Biodiversity

The works are located directly above the River Tweed SAC at the northern end of the scheme extents and as such a HRA was undertaken which could not rule out the potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the River Tweed SACs qualifying features. An Appropriate Assessment (AA) was therefore undertaken which concluded that following the implementation of mitigation measures (all of which are

listed below, such as lighting will be screened and positioned to avoid Ale Water and its associated riparian woodlands), the works would not result in an adverse effect on site integrity (AESI) to any of the qualifying features of the River Tweed SAC.

The works will result in a temporary short-term increase in noise levels which may cause disturbance to local wildlife, if present in the vicinity of the works. The works will, for example, require a range of ancillary plant and vehicles which will emit noise and create potential disturbance. The works will also require delivery of materials and the presence of personnel to facilitate the improvements to the road surface. However, the number of construction vehicles and construction operatives required on site 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 A7, and the scheme is of limited duration (four nights). The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is therefore somewhat diminished.

Rosebay willowherb, an invasive native perennial, is recorded within the verges surrounding the scheme. However, all works will be restricted to resurfacing of the existing A7 carriageway, and as such, providing the mitigation detailed below is adhered to there is limited potential to spread or introduce INNS, invasive native perennials, or injurious flowering plant species.

Considering the nature, duration, size, and scale of the scheme, and with implementation of mitigation detailed above, the proposed works' impacts on biodiversity throughout the construction period are therefore assessed to be temporary, minor adverse in magnitude.

Upon completion of the works, no residual impacts are anticipated in relation to biodiversity.

Biodiversity mitigation measures:

- All site personnel will be made aware of the location and sensitivity/protected status of the River Tweed SAC.
- Where possible, artificial lighting used during night works will be sufficiently screened and aligned so as to ensure that there is no direct illumination of neighbouring habitat (e.g., Ale Water, riparian woodland etc.) to ensure minimal impact on nocturnal species.
- Given the records of a protected species within the scheme extents, Toolbox Talk TTN-139 'Protected Species' will be briefed to all staff prior to the commencement of works.
- Given the presence of rosebay willowherb (an invasive native perennial), within the verge of the scheme extents, Toolbox Talk TTN-009 'Working with Injurious Weeds & Invasive Plants', will be briefed prior to works commencing.

- The works are not permitted to disturb or destroy any active birds' nests. If an active bird's nest is identified onsite that will be impacted by works, BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted.
- All site workers will have received adequate training relevant to their role prior to working on the site, including specific environmental inductions and 'toolbox talks' as required.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for protected species and will not approach or touch any animals seen on site. Any sightings of protected species will be reported to BEAR's Environmental Team. Should a protected species be encountered or move within 50m of the active works, works will be temporarily halted until the animal(s) move at least 50m away from the construction site, or until BEAR's Environmental Team can provide advice.
- The Contractor will employ 'soft start' techniques for all noisy activity to avoid sudden and unexpected disturbance during works. Each time the activity is started up after a period of inactivity, the noise levels will be gradually increased over a period of 30 minutes to permit animals (including birds) to move away from the disturbance.
- All equipment stored onsite, if necessary, will be checked at the start of each workday to ensure mammal species are not present. Any storage containers/plant within the compound will also be secured overnight to prevent exploration by mammal species. Any areas where an animal could become trapped (e.g., storage containers) will also be covered at the end of each working day.
- People, ancillary plant, vehicles, NRMM and materials will be restricted to areas of made/engineered ground (as much as is reasonably practicable). If during works unforeseen access to the surrounding environment is required, works will cease in this area and BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted to allow consideration of potential environmental effects.
- BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted to allow consideration of potential environmental effects if:
 - unforeseen site clearance is required,
 - unplanned works are undertaken out with the carriageway boundary,
 - there is any deviation from the agreed plan, programme and/or method of working,
 - nesting birds are found onsite.
- BEAR Scotland's Control Room will be contacted if there is a pollution incident.

Material assets and waste

Minimising impacts arising from construction materials are focussed upon making the most efficient use of materials onsite to reduce the need for imported primary materials and minimise the creation and disposal of waste through (i) reduction, (ii)

re-use, and (iii) recycling. Potential impacts have been assessed for both the construction and operational phases of this scheme. It is anticipated that most material impacts are likely to arise during construction, though long-term residual impacts could occur post construction during the operational phase e.g., during the disposal of materials arising from routine maintenance operations.

However, the detailed design will reduce the requirements for primary materials e.g., the carriageway surfacing, and subbase will be carefully considered to minimise the requirements for importing primary material. Materials will also be derived from recycled, secondary, or re-used origin as far as practicable within the design specifications to reduce natural resource depletion. Specifying TS2010 surface course also allows a wider array of aggregate sources to be considered when compared to typical stone mastic asphalt (SMA). As a result, the use of TS2010 should reduce the usage of imported aggregates and increase the use of a wider range of sustainable aggregate sources. The design life for the TS2010 surfacing is also estimated to be 20 years. The enhanced durability of TS2010 therefore reduces reoccurring routine maintenance and associated levels of traffic disruption to this section of road over the period.

Considering the nature, duration, size, and scale of the scheme, and with implementation of the mitigation detailed below, the proposed works' impacts on material assets and waste throughout the construction period are therefore assessed to be temporary, negligible adverse in magnitude. Upon completion of the works, no residual impacts are anticipated on materials or waste.

Material assets and waste mitigation measures:

- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- Good materials management methods (e.g., 'just-in-time' delivery) will be implemented wherever possible.
- The Contractor will comply with all 'Duty of Care' requirements, ensuring that any surplus materials or waste are stored, transported, treated, used, and disposed of safely without endangering human health or harming the environment. Waste transfer notes and/or waste exemption certificates (if required) will also be completed and retained.
- All road planings will be managed in accordance with SEPA Position Statement WAS-PS-07 (Low Risk Waste Activities 3) and recycled in line with SEPA Guidance WAS-G-DEF-05 on End-of-Waste for Recycled Aggregates. The Contractor will be responsible for ensuring full compliance with these requirements.
- Designated areas will be identified within which all materials and personnel, including construction compounds, where necessary, will be contained to limit

environmental disturbance during construction works. This will include a designated area (if required) for segregation and reuse of waste materials.

- The selection of areas for materials stockpiling will avoid sensitive locations such as road drainage. Stockpiled materials with leachate potential, for example, will be stored away from road drainage to prevent cross-contamination with other materials, wastes, or groundwater.
- Materials will be stored with the appropriate security to prevent loss, theft, or vandalism.
- All temporary road signs and traffic cones will be removed from site on completion of works.
- Wastewater from welfare facilities (if required) will be subject to effluent treatment followed by tanker removal.
- If hazardous substances are used onsite, each substance will be subject to assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002. Hazardous substances will also be clearly labelled, and disposed of, in line with relevant waste regulations. Special waste will also not be mixed with general waste and/or other recyclables.

Noise and vibration

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have some localised and short-term noise impacts in proximity to the works. The road works will, for example, require a range of ancillary plant and vehicles for cold milling in preparation for carriageway resurfacing. Noise will also be generated by using breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, and rollers, etc. As a result, there is potential for noise and vibration effects to residential properties within the local area, the closest of which is located approx. 25m east of the scheme extents.

However, the works are not located within a CQA, and while works will be undertaken over four nights, the aim will be to complete the noisiest works by 23:00. In addition, the proximity of road space suggests that local residents have a degree of tolerance to noise and disturbance.

The road surface is in a poor condition, with a series of defects. Replacing the life-expired surface course with TS2010 road surfacing affords the benefits of a reduction in mid-to-high frequency traffic noise and a reduction in the ground vibrations. As a result, upon completion of the work, noise associated with the movement of vehicles on the trunk road should decrease post-construction.

Considering the likely sources of noise and vibration, with the nature, duration, size, and scale of the scheme, and with implementation of the mitigation detailed below, it is unlikely that noise and vibration associated with the works will lead to significant

impacts, disruption and/or complaints. The proposed scheme is therefore anticipated to result in temporary, minor adverse noise impacts.

Noise and vibration mitigation measures:

- The local authority environmental health department will be notified of nighttime working by BEAR Scotland's design engineer.
- Where possible, the noisiest work operations (e.g., cold milling, using breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, use of rollers, etc.) will be completed before 23:00.
- In proximity to Ale Water 'soft start' techniques will be employed for all noisy activity to avoid sudden and unexpected disturbance during works. Each time the activity is started up after a period of inactivity, the noise levels will be gradually increased over a period of 30 minutes to permit animals to move away from disturbance.
- If unacceptable noise is emanating from the site the operation will, where possible, be modified and re-checked to verify that the corrective action has been effective. Actions to be considered include (a) minimizing cutting and grinding on-site, (b) reducing the operating hours, (c) repositioning equipment, (d) changing the method of working etc. Corrective actions will be actioned through the non-conformance reporting procedure, which ensures a root-cause analysis is carried out on each incident. The non-conformance procedure also ensures that appropriate corrective and preventative action measures are agreed and implemented in a timely fashion with all parties, and are recorded and actioned through to closeout, and fully auditable and traceable.
- Ancillary plant and vehicles with directional noise characteristics will (where practical) be shut down in intervening periods between site operations.
- The use of paving breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, etc. will be avoided (except where there is an overriding justification), and if used will be fitted with mufflers or silencers of the type recommended by the manufacturer.
- Drop heights from vehicles will be kept to a minimum to minimise noise when unloading.
- All ancillary plant and vehicles used onsite will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of silencers and acoustic enclosures.
- All compressors will be 'sound-reduced' models fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers which will be kept closed when in use.
- HGV and site vehicles will be switched to the minimum setting required by HSE and, where possible, will utilise 'broadband non-tonal' or 'directional sound reversing' alarms. Speed limits will also be reduced through the works.

Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on local residents and road users. A number of residential properties lie within 300m of the scheme and as such, there is potential for impacts to local residents in the form of noise/vibration impacts, visual disturbance and delays due to traffic management. However, TM will only be in place for four nights (when traffic flows will be at a minimum), as such no congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours. Providing mitigation measures detailed below and those listed within the noise and vibration section are adhered to, the impacts are assessed to be somewhat reduced.

There is one pedestrian footpath bordering the A7 southbound carriageway at the northern end of the scheme extents. However, all works will be confined to the A7 carriageway and therefore will be separated from the footpath.

Considering the nature, duration, size, and scale of the scheme, and with implementation of the mitigation described above, impacts on population and human health are assessed as temporary, minor adverse in magnitude.

Upon completion of the works, there will be a beneficial impact in relation to population and human health due to the improvement of usability and safety provided by the new carriageway surface and reconstructed carriageway.

Population and human health mitigation measures:

- Construction lighting will take into account the need to avoid illuminating surrounding properties to avoid a nuisance at night, and non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.
- Advanced signage will be strategically placed on the trunk road to notify stakeholders of the road closure and diversion at least seven days in advance.
- Where appropriate, a communication strategy (e.g., social media, consultation with local authority and other stakeholders, letter drop (for night-time works), etc.) will be initiated to keep local residents and businesses informed of the proposed working schedule, particularly the times and durations of noisy construction activities. The communication strategy will also provide a 24-hour contact number for the BEAR Scotland Control Room.
- 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.

Road drainage and the water environment

During resurfacing works, there is potential for temporary adverse impacts on the water environment. Potential changes in water quality e.g., from pollution events (either by accidental spillage of sediments, particulate matter, chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain) during works have the potential to have a direct or indirect effect on surrounding waterbodies, such as 'Ale Water' (ID: 5236), which flows beneath the northern end of the A7 carriageway boundary.

However, given the restriction of the works to the A7 carriageway, the potential for a direct/ indirect pollution incident to a waterbody is considered to be unlikely e.g., experience gained from BEAR maintenance schemes elsewhere on the network has shown that where standard best working practice is adopted (e.g., adherence to SEPA GPPs, utilisation of drain covers or similar, etc.), water quality is protected.

Considering the nature, duration, size, and scale of the scheme, and with implementation of the mitigation detailed below, the proposed works' impacts on the road drainage and water environment are assessed as temporary, negligible adverse in magnitude.

Upon completion of the resurfacing and reconstruction works, no residual impacts are anticipated in relation to the road drainage and water environment.

Road drainage and the water environment mitigation measures:

- All site operatives will be made aware of the proximity and sensitivity of Ale Water.
- No work has been identified that would require entering a waterbody. If such a need were identified onsite, BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted (before works commence) to allow consideration of potential environmental effects.
- The abstraction or transfers of water from, discharges to, or the washing of tools in surface waterbodies will not be permitted.
- The Contractor will implement measures to minimise the risk of sediment or accidental spillages entering the road drainage system e.g., prior to works commencing any roadside gullies within 10m of work activities will be protected (e.g., utilisation of drain covers or similar) to ensure full segregation of the works from the road drainage system. The Contractor will inspect these periodically to ensure that they have not been removed, damaged, or interfered with and they will be cleaned of silt and debris as necessary.
- All site personnel will be made aware of site spillage response procedures and in the event of a spill, all works associated with the spill will stop, and the incident

reported to the Site Supervisor. Small spills that did not leave the site boundary and are cleaned up without material environmental harm or residual environmental impact would most likely not be required to be notified to SEPA or other authorities. However, all such incidents will be recorded and reported to BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team. In the event of a 'serious incident', SEPA will be notified without delay. Such notification will include: (i) the time and duration of the incident, (ii) a description of the cause of the incident, (iii) any effect on the environment as a result of the incident, and (iv) any measures taken to minimise or mitigate the effect and prevent a recurrence.

- All waste, vehicles, ancillary plant, NRMM and fuels will be stored in the compound(s) or laydown area and will be secured and located, if space is available, at least 10m from drainage entry points and Ale Water, in order to comply with GPP 5 'works and maintenance in or near water'. Refuelling will only be undertaken at designated refuelling areas (e.g., on hardstanding, with spill kits available, and >10m from drainage entry points and Ale Water, where practicable). Spill kits will also be available within all site vehicles and spill kits will be replenished onsite when required. Only designated trained and competent operatives will be authorised to refuel plant. Generators, and other ancillary plant, where there is a risk of leakage of oil or fuel, will have internal bunding or will have a secondary containment system placed beneath them that meets 110% capacity requirements. Containment systems will also be emptied regularly. All waste, vehicles, ancillary plant, and fuels will also be stored in a manner that ensures they are protected from damage by collision or extremes of weather.
- Appropriate measures will be implemented during resurfacing operations to limit the potential for wastes (i.e. road planings) and materials (i.e. new asphalt) to enter any gullies present on site. On completion of resurfacing and reconstruction operations, any gullies present on site will be visually checked to ensure they have not become blocked as a result of the scheme.
- Regular visual pollution inspections of the designated laydown area and work site (particularly near road drainage entry points) will be conducted (e.g., site walkover by engineer or Site Supervisor), especially during periods of heavy rain.
- All vehicles onsite will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of oil tanks, coolant systems, gaskets etc. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.

Climate

BEAR Scotland, working on behalf of Transport Scotland, undertake carbon monitoring of major projects and operational activities. Emissions from activities are recorded using Transport Scotland's Carbon Management System. BEAR Scotland also undertakes resource efficiency activities to manage and reduce emissions contributing to climate change. The works will also extend the maintenance intervals required for future works. In doing so, the service life of the trunk road is also extended.

During 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 material/waste. However, considering the nature, duration, size and scale of the scheme, and the mitigation detailed below, the risk of significant impacts to climate are considered to be negligible and adverse in magnitude.

Upon completion of the proposed scheme no residual impacts are anticipated on the climate.

Climate mitigation measures:

- Use of warm mix asphalt as standard.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gases emitted as part of the works.
- BEAR Scotland will adhere to its Carbon Management Policy.
- Where possible, waste will be removed to local waste management facilities.

Vulnerability of the project to risks

There will be no change to the likelihood of flooding on the A7 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works.

Works are restricted to areas of made ground on the A7 carriageway, with access to the scheme gained via the A7 mainline. As such, the proposed works' impacts on road traffic accidents are assessed to be of negligible magnitude.

A Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) will be produced by BEAR Scotland which sets out a framework to reduce the risk of adverse impacts from construction activities on sensitive environmental receptors. The Contractor will comply with all conditions of the SEMP during works and may be subject to audit throughout the contract.

Considering the above, the vulnerability of the project to of major accidents and disasters is considered to be low.

Assessment of 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. Any future BEAR Scotland schemes will be

programmed to take into account already-programmed works and as such, any cumulative effect will be limited.

In addition, a search using [Scottish Borders Council 'Simple Search'](#) identified that there is one planning application within 300m of the scheme extents in the last two-years:

- 26/00602/HON - Demolition of dwellinghouse, which has been registered and is located approx. 135m west of the scheme extents.

While it is not possible to gain an understanding on the timing or duration of the above planning application, it is considered that even in the event that the above planning application was being progressed at the same time as the planned BEAR Scotland resurfacing works, given the small-scale nature of the planning application, no in-combination effects are anticipated.

A search of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner's website ([map search](#)) has identified that no other road works are currently ongoing, or noted as being planned, on the A7 trunk road or surrounding roads in proximity to the scheme, which will be undertaken at the same time.

Assessments of the environmental effects

The A7 South of Ashkirk scheme lies directly above the River Tweed SAC and as such, a HRA has been undertaken. The HRA has assessed that there is sufficient information and assessment evidence to conclude that the proposed scheme, with the implementation of mitigation and control measures, will not result in any AESI to the River Tweed SAC. Consultation has been undertaken NatureScot who have agreed with the outcome of the AA.

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

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

This is a relevant project in terms of section 55A(16) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as it is a project for the 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) are situated in whole or in part in the River Tweed SAC which is a sensitive area within the meaning of regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

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

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

Characteristics of the scheme:

- Works are restricted to like-for-like replacement of worn/damaged road surface, with all works restricted to made ground on the A7 carriageway surface.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- By removing the carriageway defects, this will provide this section of the A7 carriageway with another life cycle, and significantly improve the ride quality, which will result in safer conditions for road users.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, not significant, and limited to the construction phase.

Location of the scheme:

- The works are located above the River Tweed SAC at the northern end of the scheme extents. However, a HRA has been undertaken which has confirmed that the works will not result in AESI on the qualifying features of the SAC.
- The scheme does not lie within any sites of historical, cultural, or archaeological interest.
- The scheme is not located within any areas designated for landscape interests.

- Land use will not change as a result of the works.
- The works do not require any private land acquisition.
- The scheme does not lie within any sites designated for geology or soils.
- The scheme is not located within a densely populated area.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- The waste hierarchy will be followed to reduce waste to landfill.
- Works are programmed to take four nights to complete on a rolling programme, with the aim being to complete the noisiest works by 23:00.
- With good practice pollution prevention measures implemented onsite, there is a negligible risk of a pollution event e.g., compliance with the SEMP.

References of supporting documentation

A7 South of Ashkirk Habitat Regulations Appraisal (Produced by BEAR Scotland)

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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