



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A68 Oxtou to Start of Climbing Lane

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out resurfacing works on the A68 carriageway. The works will consist of carriageway resurfacing and reinstatement of road markings for a length of 1.13km (approximately 0.89ha).

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,
- Remove TM and open road.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within the 2024/2025 financial year with works expected to begin on 9th September 2024. Works are programmed to be completed over five nights (19:30 – 06:00). Traffic management (TM) is currently anticipated to comprise of a full closure of the A68 with signed diversion. Traffic will be diverted off the A68 south of Fala Village onto the B6458, then onto the A7 continuing along before connecting with the A6091 in Melrose, then rejoining the A68 at Ravenswood Roundabout. The diversion adds an additional six miles and 15 minutes to affected journeys.

Location

The scheme lies on the A68 carriageway north of Oxton, within the Scottish Borders, and is surrounded by areas of agricultural land (Figure 1).

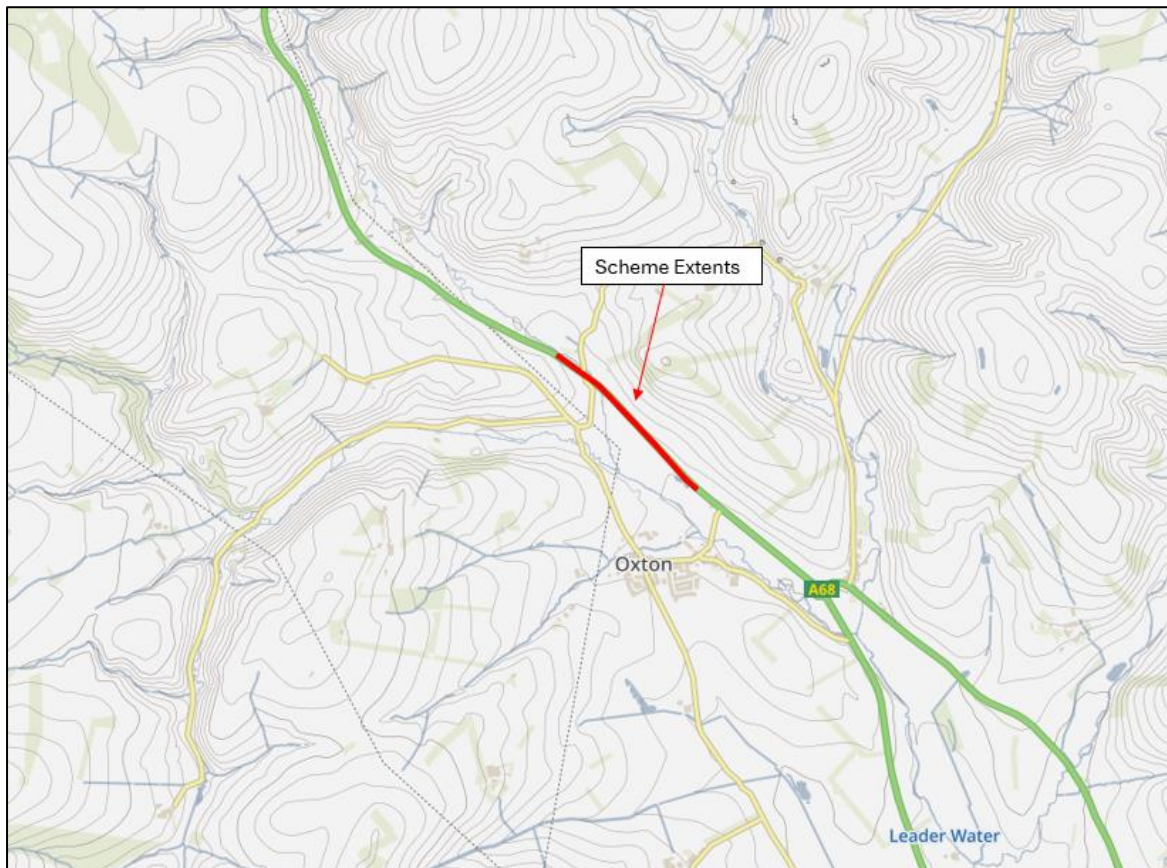


Figure 1: Extent of the works - Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

Description of local environment

Air quality

A search of the [Air Quality in Scotland](#) online mapping tool records air quality bandings within the area of the scheme to be within the 'green zone' (Low Index 1-3).

The scheme is located within the Scottish Borders, which currently has no [Air Quality Management Areas \(AQMAs\)](#) within its administrative boundary. The closest AQMA, 'Musselburgh High Street,' is located approx. 23.1km northeast of the scheme extents and is declared for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

There is one site registered on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory ([SPRI](#)) for pollutant releases to air within 10km of the scheme extents:

- Station Buildings Poultry Farm, Lauder is located 3.1km southeast of the scheme extents and has been declared for ammonia (t) and particulate matter PM₁₀ and smaller.

The baseline air quality within the scheme extents is primarily influenced by motor vehicles travelling along the A68 trunk road. Secondary sources are most commonly derived from motor vehicles travelling along local network roads and day-to-day agricultural land management activities.

Cultural heritage

The [PastMap](#) and [Historic Environment Scotland](#) (HES) online mapping tools record one scheduled monument within 300m of the scheme extents. This record pertains to 'Oxton, Roman fortlet and annexes 230m north north east (NNE) of Braefoot Cottage' ID:SM2837, which lies approx. 25m south west of the scheme extents.

There are no other designated cultural heritage assets within 300m of the scheme extents.

There are approx. nine undesignated cultural heritage assets (UCHAs) located within 300m of the scheme extents. The closest recorded is 'Oxton' Historic Environment Record (HER) (ID: 54576), which is relates to annexes (Roman) and a fortlet (Roman) located approx. 40m southeast.

Construction of the A68 carriageway is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the trunk road boundary. The potential for the presence of unknown archaeological remains in the study area has therefore been assessed to be low.

Factor has no constraints that are likely to be impacted by the proposed works, given that the works will be restricted to the existing A68 carriageway. As such 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 study area is 'Upland Valley with Mixed Farmland' (no. 115) ([Scottish Landscape Character Types](#)), the key characteristics of which are:

- Broad flat valley floor with distinct floodplain and meandering river channel.
- Evenly sloping valley sides.
- Rich red soils derived from Old Red Sandstone parent materials.
- Land cover dominated by arable and improved pasture land, with medium to large sized fields.
- Valley bottom and lower valley sides well-treed, with hedgerows, hedgerow trees, small woodlands and coniferous plantations all locally prominent.
- Significant designed landscapes in each valley.
- Unity of vernacular architecture utilising local red sandstone and whinstone.

[Land use](#) located within 300m of the scheme extents can be categorised as the following:

- Rectilinear fields and farms.
- Urban area.
- Plantation.

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.
- 'Class 4.2' - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily on grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops.

There is one area registered on the [Native Woodland Survey of Scotland](#) within 300m of the scheme extents. A small 0.69ha area of native lowland mixed deciduous woodland is located approx. 130m north of the scheme extents.

There are no areas registered on the [Ancient Woodland Inventory Scotland](#) database within 300m of the scheme extents.

In addition, approx. 1.7ha of conifer plantation woodland is located within 300m of the scheme extents, found approx. 180m north.

There are no trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) with connectivity to 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 low volume, fast-flowing traffic, road markings, signage, landscaping, etc. The scale of the trunk road detracts from the quality and character of the wider landscape.

Biodiversity

According to the online mapping tool [NatureScot SiteLink](#) there is one European Site located within 2km of the scheme. Headshaw Burn, which is spanned by the A68 within the scheme extents, forms part of the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

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

An ecological survey was undertaken on 6 August 2024 to identify any potential ecological constraints associated with the works. A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was also undertaken for Headshaw Burn Bridge which determined the bridge has no suitability to support roosting bats due to it being comprised of a well-sealed concrete box with no gaps or crevices present. No other signs of protected or notable species were identified during the site visit and no invasive non-native species (INNS) were recorded.

A search of the NBN online mapping tool records no INNS, injurious weeds (as listed in the Trunk Road Manual) or invasive native perennials within 2km of the scheme extents (within the last 10-years).

A search of the Asset Performance Management System (AMPS) online mapping tool records invasive native species, rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) along the northbound verge within the scheme extents. No INNS or injurious weeds (as listed in the Trunk Road Manual) are located within the scheme extents.

The habitat immediately bordering the A68 carriageway is dominated by agricultural land and made verges which undergo cyclic maintenance (e.g., grass-cutting, weed control, etc.). Headshaw Burn is channelled below the scheme extents and runs parallel to the A68, offering suitable habitats for a number of species. However, the habitat immediately bordering the trunk road is assessed to be of reduced ecological value, due to the likelihood of trunk road disturbances from traffic flow and that the A68 trunk road limits the connectivity and continuity for species between their potential habitats on either side of the road.

Geology and soils

The A68 within the scheme extents is not located within a [Geological Conservation Review Site](#) (GCRS), and there are no [Local Geodiversity Sites](#) (LGS) with connectivity to the scheme extents.

The [National Soil Map of Scotland](#) online mapping tool records the generalised soil types and major soil groups beneath the scheme extents as the following:

- Brown soils, and
- Alluvial soils.

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

- Till, Devensian (Diamicton), and
- Alluvium – silt, sand and gravel.

The bedrock geology in the scheme extents is recorded as:

- Great conglomerate formation – conglomerate and (subequal / subordinate) sandstone, interbedded.

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

Factor has no constraints that are likely to be impacted by the proposed works given that the works are restricted to like-for-like replacement of the existing road surface. Therefore, geology and soils has been scoped out of further environmental assessment.

Material assets and waste

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

- TS2010,
- AC20 dense binder,
- Bitumen emulsion,
- Hot bitumen,
- Cold bitumen sealant,
- Thermoplastic road markings, and
- Milled-in road studs.

As the value of the scheme is less than £350,000, as such a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required for these works.

The 1.13km scheme involves removal of the surface course and localised areas of base and binder course. In total, approx. 1553 tonnes of bituminous material (European Waste Catalogue Code: 17 03 02) will be removed from site, none of which is classified as hazardous material containing coal tar.

Noise and vibration

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

The Day, Evening and Night modelled noise level (Lden) ranges between 65dB and 70dB within the scheme extents ([Scotland's Noise Scotland's Environment](#)), with levels dropping to between 55dB and 60dB at the nearest noise sensitive receptor (NSR) i.e. residential property. Noise levels are mainly influenced by vehicles travelling along the trunk road. Secondary sources are likely derived from vehicles travelling along the local road network, and day-to-day agricultural land management activities.

The baseline noise and vibration in the scheme extents is primarily influenced by vehicles travelling along the A68 trunk road. Secondary sources are most commonly from day-to-day agricultural activities and from motor vehicles travelling along nearby local network roads.

Population and human health

Five properties which includes three residential properties, a stable and Bird Gardens Scotland CIC are found within 300m of the scheme extents. The nearest property (residential) borders the A68 within the scheme extents and is partially screened from the works by boundary fencing and a dense hedgerow which borders the trunk road. A second residential property is located approx. 95m north and has no screening from the A68. All other properties have some screening from the scheme from tree shelterbelts and also intervening properties and/or topography.

There are no non-motorised user (NMU) facilities within, or which share connectivity with, the scheme extents.

Street lighting is not present within the scheme extents.

The A68, within the scheme extents, is a single carriageway with a speed limit of 60mph applying throughout. The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow is low (8697 motor vehicles (ID: 50727, 2023 data)) ([Road Traffic Statistics](#)) and is comprised of:

- 39 two-wheeled motor vehicles,
- 6,048 cars and taxis,
- 36 bus and coaches,
- 1,891 Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), and

- 682 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs)

There are no congestion issues noted on the A68 within the scheme extents during the proposed working hours.

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:

- Leader Water (ID: 5406), is located approx. 130m south of the scheme extents, at its closest point. It is within the River Tweed catchment of the Solway Tweed river basin district with the main stem being approx. 7.6km in length and has an overall status of 'Good'.

The following unclassified waterbodies are found within 300m of the scheme extents:

- Headshaw Burn is channelled below the A68 within the scheme extents, this is a tributary of Leader Water.
- Three small ponds within the Bird Gardens Scotland CIC boundary, the closest of which is located approx. 15m south.

A search of the [SEPA's Flood Map](#) online mapping tool records that small sections of the A68 within the southern scheme extents are recorded as having a high likelihood (each year this area has a 10% chance) of surface water flooding.

A search of [Scotland's Environment \(SE\)](#) online mapping tool determined that the trunk road lies on the 'Lauder' groundwater, which has been classified as 'Good'.

A search of the [Scotland's Environment \(SE\)](#) determined that the trunk road, within the scheme extents is not located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) which has been designated for polluted water.

Climate

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out the target and vision set by the Scottish Government for tackling and responding to climate change ([Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)). The Act includes a target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 80% before 2050 (from the baseline year 1990). The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amended the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to bring the target of reaching net-zero emissions in Scotland forward to 2045 ([Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)).

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

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

Policies and plans

This Record of Determination 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, vehicles, and non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) 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, negligible 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.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles and 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., 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

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 A68, and construction works are programmed to be undertaken at night (five 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 this must 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 A68 within the scheme extents spans Headshaw Burn, which forms part of the River Tweed SAC with resurfacing works required on the bridge. As such a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) screening has been undertaken which could not rule out the potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the River Tweed's SAC qualifying features. An Appropriate Assessment (AA) was therefore undertaken which concluded that following the implementation of mitigation measures the works would not result in an adverse effects on site integrity (AESI) to any of the qualifying features. The HRA will be consulted on and authorised by NatureScot and the competent authority prior to the commencement of works.

A temporary short-term increase in noise levels may cause disturbance to local wildlife if present in the vicinity of the works. Disturbance to local wildlife may occur through the use of plant, vehicles and NRMM which will emit noise and create vibrations. In addition, the works will also require delivery of materials and the presence of personnel to facilitate the improvements to the road surface, which could result in disturbance. However, 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 A68, furthermore, the scheme is of short duration (five nights) and will be undertaken on a rolling programme. The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is therefore somewhat diminished.

Invasive native species rosebay willowherb has been recorded along the verge within the scheme extents, however given that the works are restricted to resurfacing there is no likelihood of impacting this 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:

- Headshaw Burn is designated under the River Tweed SAC (EU Site Code UK0012691). As such all personnel will be made aware of the sensitivity and protected status of the River Tweed SAC.
- Appropriate mitigation measures, such as an edge protection system (EPS) will be utilised to prevent debris and run-off from entering Headshaw Burn below. Sandbags will be located at the bottom of the containment systems and debris netting will cover the EPS and existing parapet where necessary. The containment systems will be periodically checked throughout the works to ensure they remain intact.
- Artificial lighting used during night works will be sufficiently screened and aligned to ensure that there is no direct illumination of neighbouring habitat (e.g., Headshaw Burn, surrounding fields, hedgerows along A68 etc.) to ensure minimal impact on nocturnal species.
- Given the presence of rosebay willowherb along the verge within the scheme extents 'Toolbox Talk TTN-009 Working with Injurious Weeds & Invasive Plants' must be briefed to all site personnel prior to the commencement of works.
- 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 Scotland's Environmental Team. Should a protected species be encountered or move within 50m of the active works (including compounds), 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 must 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 must be 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:

- 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.

- The Contractor is responsible for the reuse / disposal of non-hazardous road planings, and this has been registered in accordance with a Paragraph 13(a) waste exemption issued by SEPA as described in Schedule 3 of the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 2011 (exemption number: WML/XS/2008116), the rules of which will be complied with.
- 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 their 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, vehicles and NRMM for cold milling in preparation for carriageway resurfacing. Noise will also be generated by using breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, use of rollers, etc. As a result, there is potential for noise and vibration effects to residential properties within the local area, the closest of which borders the A68 within the scheme extents.

However, the works are not located within a CNMA or CQA, and works will also be completed over five nights, with the aim being to complete the noisiest works by 23:00. In addition, the proximity of road space suggests that 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.
- Wherever possible, careful consideration will be given to the siting and orientation of particularly noisy items of NRMM so that it is located away from surrounding properties. Activities which have the potential to produce excessive noise will be undertaken away from surrounding properties, if possible.
- 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, vehicles and NRMM 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 and NRMM will be kept to a minimum to minimise noise when unloading.
- All ancillary plant, vehicles and NRMM 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, site vehicles and NRMM 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. However, TM will only be in place for five nights (when traffic flows will be at a minimum), as such no congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours. Furthermore, there are no non-motorised user facilities with connectivity to the scheme.

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 positive impact in relation to population and human health due to the improvement of usability and safety provided by the new carriageway surface.

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.
- 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/or 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.
- Given the proximity of residential properties Toolbox Talk TTN-042 Being a Good Neighbour will be briefed to staff prior to the commencement of works.
- Advanced signage will be strategically placed on the trunk road to notify stakeholders of the road closure and diversion.
- 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.

Headshaw Burn is channelled below the A68 within the scheme extents, which is a tributary of Leader Water, as such, unmitigated, there is potential for pollution / run-off to enter these watercourses during the works. However, the potential for direct or indirect pollution incident to a waterbody is considered unlikely e.g., experience gained from BEAR Scotland 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 works, no residual impacts are anticipated in relation to the road drainage and water environment.

Road drainage and the water environment mitigation measures:

- If any works are identified that would require entering a waterbody, BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted (before works commence) to allow consideration of potential environmental effects.
- Appropriate mitigation measures, such as an EPS will be utilised to prevent debris and run-off from entering Headshaw Burn below. Sandbags will be located at the bottom of the containment systems and debris netting will cover the EPS. The containment systems will be periodically checked throughout the works to ensure they remain intact.
- The abstraction or transfers of water from, discharges to, or the washing of tools in surface waterbodies identified is not permitted.
- 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 operations, any gullies present on site will be visually checked to ensure they have not become blocked as a result of the scheme.
- 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 Headshaw Burn, 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 Headshaw Burn, and drainage entry points, 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 and NRMM, where there is a risk of leakage of oil or fuel, will have internal bunding or must 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, NRMM and fuels will also be stored in a manner that ensures they are protected from damage by collision or extremes of weather.
- 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 and NRMM 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, and NRMM, 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:

- 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 A68 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works.

Works are restricted to areas of made ground on the A68 carriageway surface, with access to the scheme gained via the A68 mainline. TM will employ a full road closure with signed diversion. Furthermore, no footpaths or other community assets are present within the scheme extents. 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 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.

In addition, a search using [Scottish Borders Council 'Simple Search'](#) identified one planning application within 300m of the scheme.

Reference	Proposal	Status	Location in proximity to the scheme
23/01451/S36	Erection of nine wind turbines.	Registered	Borders the A68 to the north of the scheme extents

While it is not possible to gain an understanding of the timing of the above planning application given that it has only been registered in October 2023, it is considered unlikely that it will occur at the same time as the proposed resurfacing works. Furthermore, the works will be undertaken on a rolling programme over five nights as such the potential for cumulative impacts is considered to be low.

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 A68 trunk road or surrounding roads in proximity to the scheme which will be undertaken at the same time.

Assessments of the environmental effects

The A68 Oxtou to Start of Climbing Lane scheme spans the River Tweed SAC and as such, a HRA has been undertaken that has shown 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. Consultation with NatureScot and Transport Scotland will be undertaken with regards to 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 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) span 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 A68 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 A68 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 scheme spans the River Tweed SAC, 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 significance.
- 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 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 five 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.

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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