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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 1360 Cromarty Bridge - Expansion Joint Replacement

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to conduct expansion joint replacement works on the A9 Cromarty Bridge. The proposed works will initially involve an interim repair of the expansion joint at Pier 7 of the structure which will include the removal of the rail joint and the installation of a temporary asphaltic plug joint. Following this, full expansion joint replacement at three locations on the southern end of the bridge will be undertaken. This will involve the following:

- Pier 4: removal of the rail joint and replacement with a mat joint. A mat joint is a prefabricated, reinforced elastomeric mat (or rubber mat).
- Pier 7: removal of the interim repair and installation of a mat joint.
- South abutment: replacement of the plug joint with a new plug joint.

No in-water works are required as part of the proposed works.

Interim repair works at Pier 7 are currently programmed to commence in May 2026 following completion of the current Phase 3 works on the A9 Cromarty Bridge. Interim repair works will be conducted over two nights, utilising a night-time working pattern. Full replacement works are currently planned for July 2026 for a duration of one week utilising a night-time working pattern.

Traffic management (TM) for both the interim and full replacement works will involve single lane closures with temporary traffic lights. There is no requirement for a site compound.

Location

The scheme is located on the southern end of the A9 Cromarty Bridge between the southern abutment and Pier 7 (Figure 1). The A9 Cromarty Bridge spans the Moray Firth approximately 4.8km north-east of Dingwall, in the Highland Council administrative area (Figure 2). The National Grid Reference (NGR) for the centre point of the works is NH 59137 60769.

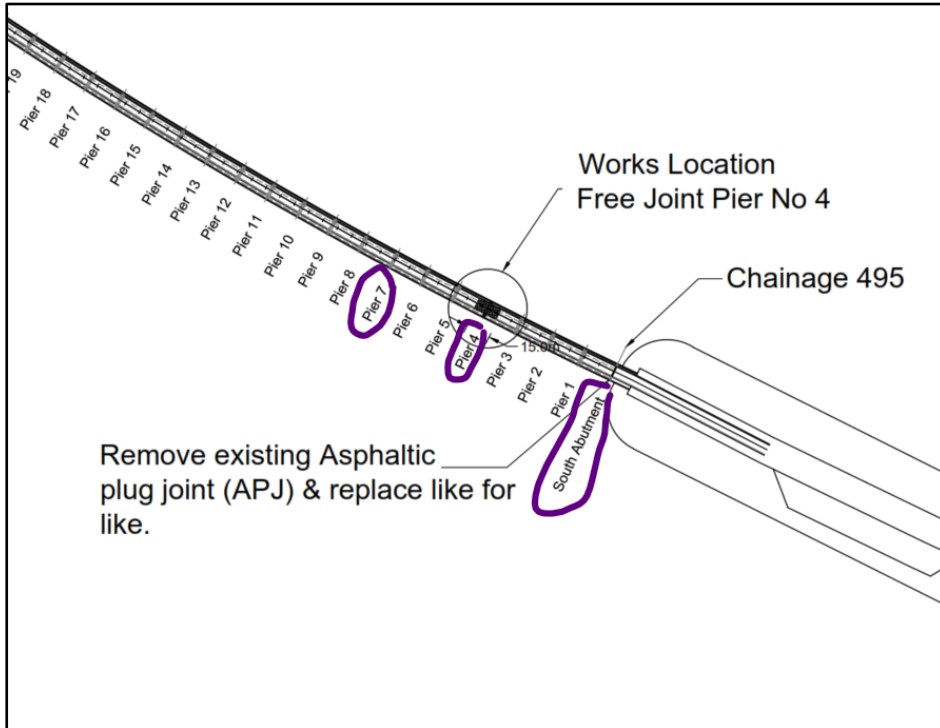


Figure 1: Location of the works on A9 Cromarty Bridge between the southern abutment and Pier 7.



Figure 2: Location of the A9 Cromarty Bridge which spans the Moray Firth north-east of Dingwall.

Description of local environment

Air quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) which have been declared by Highland Council within 10km of the scheme ([Air Quality Management Areas](#)).

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

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

Baseline air quality is likely primarily influenced by vehicular traffic on the A9 trunk road and the surrounding road network. Secondary sources are likely derived from activities associated with nearby urban settlements; marine traffic; and land management activities.

Cultural heritage

According to [PastMap](#) there are no significant cultural heritage features (i.e. Conservation Areas, Battlefields, World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or Gardens and Designed Landscapes) located within 300m of the proposed scheme.

Of lesser cultural heritage value, there are five National Records of the Historic Environment and five Historic Environment Records, the closest of which relate to Cromarty Bridge ([PastMap](#)).

As the works are restricted to the engineered ground of the A9 Cromarty Bridge and there are no significant cultural heritage features within proximity to the proposed works, there is negligible potential for cultural heritage impacts as a result of the proposed works and this receptor is not considered further in this Record of Determination (RoD).

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme does not lie within a National Park, National Scenic Area, or any other site designated for its landscape character and/or quality ([SiteLink](#)).

The scheme is located on the A9 Cromarty Bridge which spans the Moray Firth. Land use at the southern end of the bridge nearest the proposed works is described as the following ([HLA Map](#)):

- Rough grazing
- Seashore
- Managed woodland
- Rectilinear fields and farms

The Landscape Character Type ([LCT](#)) of the surrounding area to the south of the Cromarty Bridge is LCT 346- Open Farmed Slopes which is characterised by the following:

- Open, convex, generally north-east facing farmed slopes.
- Smooth slopes of arable and pasture fields forming a regular pattern, lined with occasional small trees, fences or gorse hedges.
- Mix of crofting, small holdings and large farms giving rise to a patchwork of rectangular fields of different sizes.
- Areas of distinctive crofting patterns with generally smaller fields and regularly scattered croft buildings.
- Areas of distinctive, large, regular fields of large farms, with occasional small patches of birch woodland and conifer plantations and lines of trees descending the slopes.
- Scattered settlement patterns and network of minor roads running along contour lines, with few groupings in villages or towns.
- Ever present views which are open, expansive and outward looking.

The A9 trunk road, within the north-west Network Management Contract (NMC), connects Perth with Thurso. It commences immediately north of Inveralmond roundabout in Perth, leading generally northwards for a distance of 357 kilometres to its junction with an unclassified road leading to Holborn Head lighthouse at Scrabster. The A9 is a mixture of single carriageway, '2+1' carriageway and stretches of two-lane dual carriageway. The A9 is a single carriageway at the scheme extent.

Biodiversity

The A9 Cromarty Bridge spans the Cromarty Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site ID: [8488](#)) and Cromarty Firth Ramsar (Site ID: [8418](#)) at the scheme extent.

The Cromarty Firth Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Site ID: [467](#)) overlaps with the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar at the scheme extent.

There are no other sites designated for biodiversity features (such as Local or National Nature Reserves) within 300m of the scheme ([SiteLink](#)).

Numerous bird species were recorded on the NBN Atlas under the same search criteria, including those listed as qualifying features of the designated sites. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds, particularly those listed under Schedule 1 of the Act, and their active nests are protected.

The NBN Atlas holds the following records of invasive native perennials and injurious weeds (as listed on the North West Network Management Contract (NMC)). No invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants were recorded:

- Broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
- Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Curled dock (*Rumex crispus*)
- Oil seed rape (*Brassica napus*)
- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)
- Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

The Transport Scotland Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds one record of rosebay willowherb on the verges of the A9 approximately 230m south of the A9 Cromarty Bridge.

The A9 at the scheme extents spans the Moray Firth, which provides marine and coastal habitat for a variety of protected mammal species. The land surrounding the Cromarty Bridge is largely comprised of agricultural and arable land, with pockets of mixed woodland and urban settlements.

There are no areas of trees listed on the [Ancient Woodland Inventory](#) that lie within 300m of the scheme.

There are no areas of woodland or individual trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within 300m of the scheme extents ([Highland Council](#)).

BEAR Scotland and associated sub-contractors have conducted multiple ecological surveys on the A9 Cromarty Bridge:

- Highland Ecology and Development Limited ('HED') conducted a survey in December 2021.
- HED conducted a protected species survey in June 2025.
- A survey was conducted in June 2025 by BEAR Scotland.

Geology and soils

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

Bedrock geology within the scheme extent is comprised of Raddery Sandstone Formation- sandstone ([Scottish Geosites](#)).

Superficial geology within the scheme is extent is comprised of beach deposits - gravel, sand and silt; and intertidal deposits (undifferentiated) - gravel, sand and mud ([Scottish Geosites](#)).

Component soils on the land surrounding the south of the bridge are comprised of humus-iron podzols. The parent materials are Morainic drifts derived from sandstones and Middle Old Red Sandstone age ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

Soils on land surrounding the south of the bridge are recorded as being 'Class 0', which are mineral soils with no peatland vegetation, and peatland habitats are not typically found on such soils ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

The proposed works are restricted to the A9 Cromarty Bridge deck and A9 trunk road and there is no requirement for excavation or earthworks. Therefore, there is no potential for geology and soils to be impacted by the proposed works and this receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

Material assets and waste

The A9 Cromarty Bridge expansion joint replacement works are required to allow the bridge to fully articulate. Materials required for the works include:

- Plug expansion joint for the interim repair on Pier 7
- Two mat joints (Pier 4 and 7).
- Plug joint for south abutment

Removed, life-expired timber expansion joints to be removed from site and disposed of by the sub-contractor.

The scheme value does not exceed £350,000, therefore a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required.

Noise and vibration

Noise modelled data from Environmental Noise Directive (END) Round 4 Noise Mapping indicates 24 hour annual average noise level (L_{DEN}) of approximately 73dB at the scheme location ([SpatialData](#)).

The scheme does not fall within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transport Noise Action Plan (TNAP) ([Transport Noise Action Plan \(TNAP\) 2024 to 2028](#))).

The nearest manual traffic count point for the A9 (Site ID: 0000ATCNW012) lies approximately 200m south of the Cromarty Bridge. Manual traffic data recorded at this site in 2025 accounted for an average daily traffic (ADT) flow of 13,507 motor vehicles, of which 16.4% were Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) (Transport Scotland).

Baseline noise levels are likely primarily influenced by vehicular travellers along the A9 trunk road and surrounding local road network, with secondary sources from nearby land management, marine traffic and coastal activities.

Population and human health

The scheme is on the southern end of the A9 Cromarty Bridge. There are no residential or commercial properties within 300m of the proposed works. The nearest property is a farm located 700m east of the bridge.

There are two junctions leading onto the local road network approximately 200m south of the bridge. There is one layby adjacent to the northbound (NB) carriageway within the scheme extent.

There is a pedestrian footway adjacent to the NB carriageway for the entirety of the scheme extent, with no street lighting present.

There are no National Cycle Routes ([OS Maps](#)) or Core Paths ([Highland Council Core Paths](#)) located within 300m of the scheme extent.

The John O'Groats Trail: Culbokie to Alness utilises the A9 Cromarty Bridge at the scheme extent ([WalkHighlands](#)).

TM will involve single lane closures with temporary traffic lights.

Road drainage and the water environment

The Inner Cromarty Firth is a transitional water body (ID: 200443) in the Scotland river basin district. It is 39.5 square kilometres in area and is spanned by the A9 Cromarty Bridge at the scheme extent. The proposed works will be seaward of the Mean High Water Spring (MHWS). In 2024, the Inner Cromarty Firth was classified as having 'good ecological potential' by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

The Strathconon and Muir of Ord Sand and Gravel groundwater body (ID: 150790) underlies the land at the southern end of the scheme extent. In 2024, it was classified as having 'good ecological potential' by SEPA under the WFD ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

There are several other unclassified water bodies, drains, springs and culverts within 300m of the scheme and culverted under the A9 on the land to the south of the scheme extent ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

A search of SEPA Flood Map identified a low to high likelihood of coastal flooding (i.e. a 0.1-10% chance of flooding each year) around the coastline south of the A9 Cromarty Bridge. There is also a low to high likelihood of surface water and small watercourses flooding around the land south of the A9 Cromarty Bridge ([SEPA Flood Maps](#)).

Climate

The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) ('The Act'), and its subsequent amendment under the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), sets the framework for the Scottish Government to address climate change. The Act has an ambitious target to reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with any residual emissions balanced by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This is five years earlier than the rest of the UK due to the greater potential for carbon sequestration in Scotland.

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

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

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

Policies and plans

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

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. The main sources are likely to be dust generated by the removal of existing expansion joints, as well as exhaust emissions from ancillary plant and vehicles. As a result, there is potential for dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions to be emitted to the atmosphere. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to air are considered to be low.

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

- Good housekeeping will be employed throughout the work.

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

Landscape and visual effects

The works are not located in a National Park, National Scenic Area or any other site designated for landscape character and visual effects features.

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 will be restricted to areas of made/engineered ground on the A9, and construction works are programmed to be of a short duration. As such, the visual impact of the works will be minimal and, on completion of the works, no residual impacts are anticipated as the visual appearance of the bridge will remain largely unchanged.

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

- Throughout all stages of the works, the site will be kept clean and tidy, with materials, equipment, plant and wastes appropriately stored, reducing the landscape and visual effects as much as possible.
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or not permitted. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape should be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- The site will be left clean and tidy following construction.

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

Biodiversity

The proposed works on the A9 Cromarty Bridge are seaward of the MHWS line and, as such, a Marine Licence is required. A 10-year Marine Licence (Licence number: MS-00011106) was issued to BEAR Scotland in June 2025 to permit a range of works on the bridge (including joint replacement) and is valid until June 2035. All conditions of the Marine Licence will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site;

however, of note, the Marine Directorate is required to be notified within one week of completion of the proposed works and materials utilised during works should be like-for-like and/or in adherence with those detailed in the Marine Licence.

As the A9 Cromarty Bridge spans the Moray Firth, including the Cromarty Firth SPA and Ramsar sites, a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma was produced as part of the A9 Cromarty Bridge 10-year Marine Licence application. The HRA assessed various maintenance works on the bridge, including expansion joint replacement works and was approved by both NatureScot and Transport Scotland. Relevant mitigation measures to ensure no adverse effects on site integrity (AESI) are included below. Therefore, no further assessment is required unless the scope of works changes.

The Cromarty Firth SSSI also overlaps with the SPA/Ramsar at the scheme location. However, the proposed works are not listed as an 'Operation Requiring Consent'; therefore, no specific consent for works within the SSSI is required.

Ecological surveys conducted in 2025 on and around the A9 Cromarty Bridge did not identify any signs of protected species use within, or in proximity to the bridge. A pre-construction survey will be carried out by the BEAR Scotland environment team prior to works commencing, as suitable habitat is present in proximity to the southern abutment. If resting places are identified, further mitigation measures may be required and works will not commence until appropriate measures are in place.

As works are restricted to the A9 trunk road and bridge deck, no verge works are required and there is no potential for the spread or introduction of INNS, invasive native perennials or injurious weeds.

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity in the area as a result of increased vehicle presence and the increase in noise and artificial lighting. However, works are restricted to the A9 trunk road boundary and the number of construction vehicles and operatives required on site is low. In addition, any species in the area are likely to be accustomed to noise and visual disturbance pertaining to vehicle movements on the A9 and ongoing construction works on the A9 Cromarty Bridge. Therefore, the potential for significant species disturbance within the area is considered low.

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to on site. The following mitigation measures will be in place to minimise impacts on biodiversity features in the area:

- A pre-construction mammal check and two pre-construction nesting bird checks will be conducted in advance of the works.

- No in-water works will be permitted and no discharges into the water environment will be permitted.
- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and to carry out the works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing, which will be included in the SEMP. The toolbox talks will provide information on the legislation, general ecology, and best practice measures for relevant protected species.
- Artificial lighting used during night works will be used for as short a duration as possible and directed on the immediate area of works. Artificial lighting will avoid being directed onto nearby watercourses or habitats as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of any protected species throughout the works period. Should a protected species be noted during construction, works will temporarily halt until the species has sufficiently moved on. Any sightings of protected species will be reported to the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. If required, NatureScot will be contacted for advice.
- A 'soft start' will be implemented on site each day. This will involve switching on vehicles and checking under/around vehicles and the immediate work area for mammals prior to works commencing to ensure none are present and that there is a gradual increase in noise.
- Any excavations, exposed pipes/drains, or areas where an animal could become trapped (e.g. storage containers) will be covered over when not in use, at the end of each shift, and following completion of the works to avoid animals falling in and becoming trapped.
- If fencing is utilised at any point during the works, a gap of 200mm from ground level will be provided, allowing free passage for mammals and preventing entrapment.
- If an active bird nest is found in vicinity of the works, all works within 30m of the nest will stop until the BEAR Scotland Environment Team can provide advice.
- If nesting birds and/or protected mammals are found during the pre-works check or during works, consultation with NatureScot will be carried out and a licence will be sought if advised by NatureScot. If required, all conditions of any licences will be adhered to.

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

Material assets and waste

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

- Any additional materials required, out with those detailed above, should be in compliance with the materials listed in the Marine Licence.
- Materials will be sourced from recycled origins as far as reasonably practicable within design specifications.
- Care will be taken to order the correct quantity of required materials to prevent disposal of unused materials.
- Where possible, minimal packaging will be requested on required deliveries to reduce unnecessary waste and production of packaging materials.

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

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

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

Noise and vibration

Construction activities associated with the proposed scheme have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. However, the works are not located within a CNMA or CQA, there are no residential or commercial properties within 300m of the scheme and works will be of short duration (i.e. two nights for interim works and one week for replacement works). Therefore, works with the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will be intermittent, temporary, transient and short-lived.

Upon completion of the works, noise associated with the movement of vehicles on the trunk road should decrease.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The Highland Council Environmental Health Officer will be informed of night-works.
- The Best Practicable Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum. On-site construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.
- Where possible, inherently quiet plant will be selected for construction works.
- All site personnel will be fully briefed in advance of works regarding the need to minimise noise during works and of the site-specific sensitivities.
- Drop heights from vehicles and NRMM will be kept to a minimum to minimise noise when unloading.
- All plant, machinery and vehicles will be switched off when not in use.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and will have been maintained regularly to the appropriate standards.
- Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

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

Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, pedestrians and NMUs as a result of construction presence and associated noise and delays due to TM measures.

There are no commercial or residential properties within 300m of the scheme; however, there are two junctions leading onto the local road network 200m south of the bridge. Additionally, there is a pedestrian footway adjacent to the NB carriageway for the entirety of the scheme extent; and a layby adjacent to the NB carriageway within the scheme extent.

Road users will be informed of the works through media release which will provide details of construction dates and times. A pedestrian management plan will be in place if required and works will be of limited duration and conducted during night-time hours only.

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

- Notification will be issued to local residents and local public transport operators prior to the commencement of works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Local access will be granted where required.
- The works are currently programmed as night-works. The works schedule and any changes to this will be communicated to local residents and the Local Authority prior to and throughout the programme.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the works area to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site (if required).
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the [trafficscotland.org](https://www.trafficscotland.org) website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR's social media platforms.

Taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the good site practice measures to be adopted during the works (outlined in the SEMP), it is anticipated that any population and human health effects associated with the works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

Road drainage and the water environment

During the works, there is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment. Potential changes in water quality from pollution events (either by accidental sediments, particulate matter, chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain/flooding) during works have the potential to have a direct or indirect effect on the surrounding water bodies.

As works on the A9 Cromarty Bridge are over areas seaward of the MHWS line, a 10-year Marine Licence (Licence number: MS-00011106) was issued to BEAR Scotland in June 2025 to permit a range of works on the bridge (including joint replacement) and is valid until June 2035. All conditions of the Marine Licence will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to onsite.

No in-water works are required and there is no abstraction or transfers of water from, or discharges to, a water body. As such, the potential for a direct pollution incident within a water body is unlikely. Experience gained from BEAR maintenance schemes elsewhere on the network has shown that, where good working practice is adopted (e.g. adherence to SEPA good practice guidance, appropriate containment measures, etc.), water quality is protected.

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

- All conditions of the Marine Licence (MS-00011106) will be complied with. A copy of the licence will be present and kept on site for inspection.
- Standard working practices to comply with the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations (EASR) 2018 for works in or near water will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.
- No in-water works or discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems are permitted.
- Appropriate containment measures will be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- An incident response (contingency) plan will be put in place to reduce the risk from pollution incidents or accidental spillages. All necessary containment equipment, including suitable spill kits (for oil and chemicals) will be available on site, quickly accessible if needed, and staff trained in their use.
- All spills will be logged and reported. In the event of any spills into the water environment, all works will stop and the incident will be reported to the project manager and the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. SEPA will be informed of any such incident as soon as possible using the SEPA Pollution Hotline.

- All plant and equipment will be regularly inspected for any signs of damage and leaks. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.
- Storage of hazardous material, oil and fuel containers will be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses.
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.
- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. Spill kits will be quickly accessible to capture any spills should they occur. The ground / stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special waste.
- Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and / or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not bunded then drip trays will also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%.
- All storage of hazardous materials utilised on site is required to undergo assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002. These assessment(s) will contain a section on environment which highlights any precautions and mitigation requirements.

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

Climate

Construction activities associated with the proposed scheme works have the potential to cause local air quality impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of vehicles and machinery, material use and production, and transportation of materials to and from site. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to their Carbon Management Policy.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emitted as part of the works.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with materials movement, and waste will be removed to local waste management facilities.

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

Vulnerability of the project to risks

There will be no change to the likelihood of flooding on the A9 within the scheme extent upon completion of the works and works are programmed, as far as is reasonably practicable, to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall.

Works are restricted to areas of made ground on the A9 trunk road and A9 Cromarty Bridge structure, with access to the scheme gained via the A9. TM will involve single lane closures with temporary traffic lights and NMUs and pedestrians will be accommodated within the TM setup. Any restrictions to the pedestrian footpaths will be fully signposted where required and a pedestrian management plan will be in place.

The works will not result in any change in the vulnerability of the A9 carriageway to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.

Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety measures will be in place for works near water.

A SEMP will be put in place which will set out a framework to reduce adverse impacts from construction activities on sensitive environmental receptors. The SEMP will set out the commitments and constraints and will identify the procedures and measures that will be used to manage and control these aspects. The contractors will be required to comply with all conditions of the SEMP, as well as the conditions of all licences/consents.

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

Assessment of cumulative effects

The proposed works are not anticipated to result in significant environmental effects. Due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

A search of the [Highland Council Planning Portal](#) identified no approved planning applications within 300m of the scheme within the last six months.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner website ([Map Search](#)) has identified that there are no roadworks planned for the same period as the proposed works. Phase 3 works on A9 Cromarty Bridge are currently ongoing, however, these are expected to be completed prior to the commencement of expansion joint works. Additionally, the expansion joint works are of short duration (i.e. one week) and no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

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

Overall, it is unlikely that the proposed works will have significant cumulative effects with any other future works in the area.

Assessments of the environmental effects

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

An HRA Proforma was conducted as part of the 10-year Marine Licence, which covers a range of maintenance activities including expansion joint replacement works. The HRA was approved by NatureScot and Transport Scotland and concluded that with appropriate mitigation measures in place, works will not result in AESI on the nearby designated sites. Relevant mitigation measures will be included in the SEMP. Therefore, no further assessment was required and all conditions of the Marine Licence will be adhered to on site.

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 within the Cromarty Firth SPA, Cromarty Firth SSSI and Cromarty Firth Ramsar, which are sensitive areas within the meaning of regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

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

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

Characteristics of the scheme:

- Works are localised to the A9 Cromarty Bridge structure only.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to nearby receptors or protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- A pre-construction survey and nesting bird checks will be conducted prior to works commencing.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- Residual impacts are considered to be beneficial to the environment by maintaining the function of the A9 Cromarty Bridge and reducing traffic noise.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme fully lies within the A9 trunk road boundary. The A9 Cromarty Bridge spans the Cromarty Firth SPA and Cromarty Firth Ramsar within the scheme extent. Expansion joint replacement works were assessed by the existing HRA Proforma as part of the 10-year Marine Licence.
- The location of works on the bridge spans the marine area seaward of MHWS level. A 10-year Marine Licence (MS-00011106) has been issued to permit maintenance works, including expansion joint replacement, and all conditions of the licence will be adhered to.
- The proposed works do not require consent from NatureScot for works within the Cromarty Firth SSSI.
- There are no other sites designated for biodiversity or geology features within 300m of the scheme.
- There are no features of cultural heritage importance within 300m of the scheme.
- There is no requirement for a site compound, with materials and plant stored within TM.
- The works will not restrict access to nearby residential properties.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- All relevant licences and consents required will be in place prior to works and all conditions of these licences/consents will be adhered to during works.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- It is not anticipated that there will be any residual visual impacts as a result of the works.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- Mitigation measures detailed above and in the SEMP will be put in place with the objective to prevent and, if required, subsequently control any potential impacts on sensitive receptors.
- In the event that INNS are found on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.
- Updated ecological surveys, including pre-construction checks, will be undertaken prior to the commencement of works and additional mitigation measures will be included in the SEMP if required.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

References of supporting documentation

BEAR Scotland (2025) A9 Cromarty Bridge 10-year Marine Licence Programme of Works, Habitats Regulations Appraisal Proforma, May 2025

Marine Directorate (2025) Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, Part 4 Marine Licensing: Licence to Construct, Alter or Improve Works in the Scottish Marine Area. Licence Number: MS-00011106 (Valid from 19 June 2026 until 18 June 2035)

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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