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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9/A95 VMS Rolls Royce Replacement - A3&A4

GENERAL

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GENERAL

Project Details

Description

The proposed scheme comprises the replacement and upgrade of the existing Variable Messaging Systems (VMS) – A3 and A4 infrastructure of the A9 and A95 carriageways. The current VMS assets no longer meet current standards and are reaching the end of their operational life. The upgrades will improve the reliability, safety and ease of maintenance, helping to ensure the continued effective operation of the VMS network.

Construction activities are as follows:

- Installation of Traffic Management (TM) and marking out site;
- Temporary dismantling of existing VRS adjacent to the VMS asset to facilitate access;
- Potential for minor vegetation cutbacks around the VMS asset;
- Removal of existing VMS components including dismantling the sign face, post and electrical connections (ducting and cabling). This will involve the use of mini excavators to break ground;
- Installation of new VMS infrastructure including posts, faces, cabinets, ducting, cabling, and electrical connections;
- Reinstatement of VRS where required;
- Reinstatement of working area; and
- Removal of TM.

The following plant and machinery will be required for the outlined works:

- A mini excavator will be required during breaking ground to remove the existing infrastructure.
- HIAB will be required during removal and installation of new VMS asset.
- Hand tools will be required during removal and replacement of cabinetry and cabling.
- Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and other site vehicles will be used by site staff for travelling to and from the site and during delivery of materials, plant and equipment and removal of waste.

Construction is programmed for the 2026-27 financial year for approximately ten days. The works are proposed to be undertaken during nighttime working hours.

The proposed works will be undertaken under protection of nighttime lane 1 traffic management closures.

Location

The proposed works are located at two separate locations on the A9 and A95, north and south of Aviemore, Highlands. VMS installations are positioned within the grass verge behind existing Vehicle Restraints Systems (VRSs). The National Grid References (NGRs) for the scheme extents are detailed below and illustrated in Figure 1:

- A3 Location - NH 88311 10490
- A4 Location - NH 90392 15440

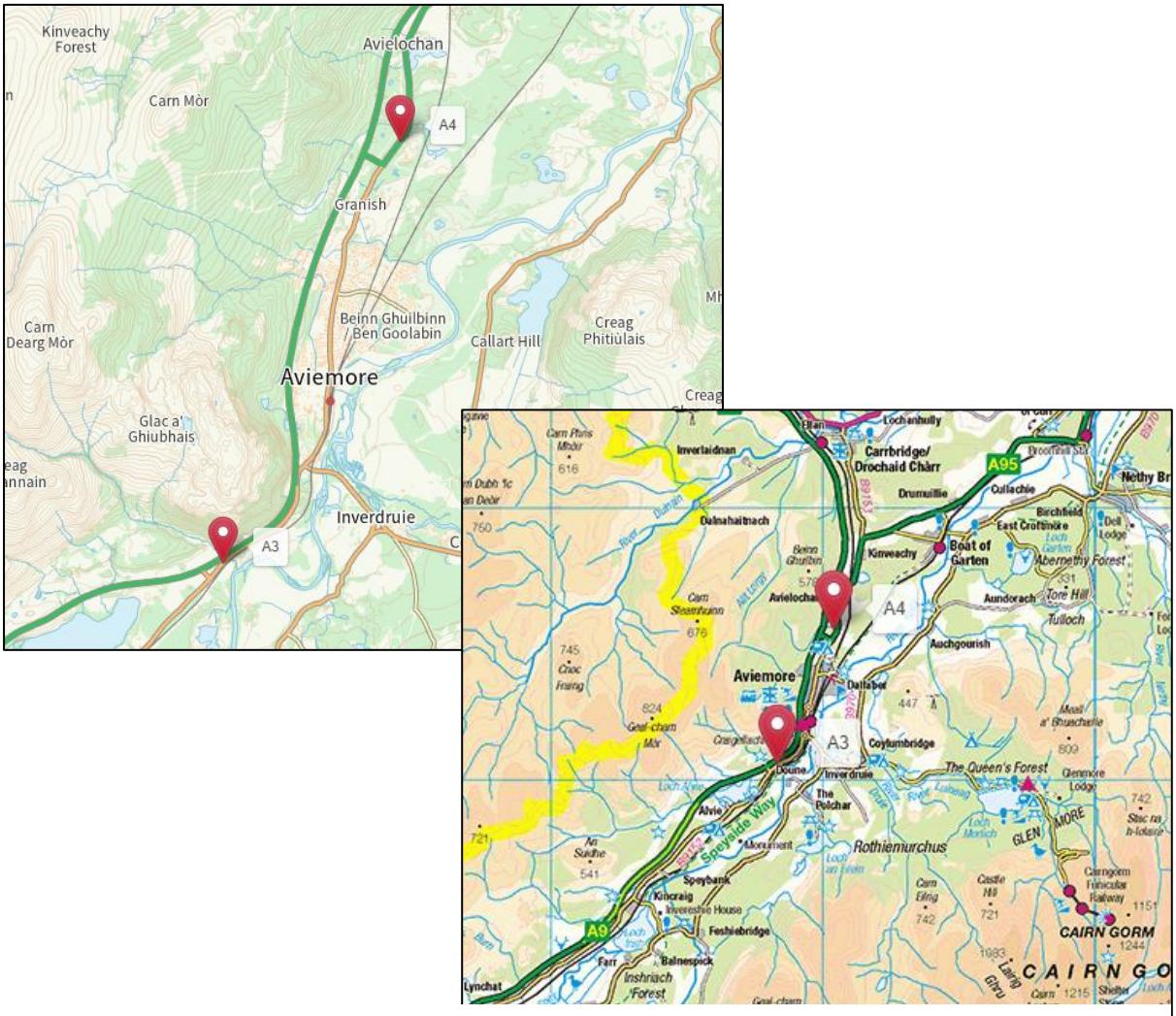


Figure 1. Scheme Location. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right [2026]. Contains Royal Mail data © Royal Mail copyright and database right [2026]. Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2026].

Description of local environment

Air quality

VMS- A3

The scheme is located within a rural area of the B9152 within the Highland Council area. Baseline air quality is expected to be primarily influenced by traffic flow along the B9152 and the nearby A9 approximately 60m northwest, with secondary sources from surrounding agricultural activities.

There is no Average Annual Daily Flow (AADF) data for the B9152 however, an automatic count point located 900m north of the scheme extents (ID: 40821) on the A9 carriageway (Grid Ref: NH 88999 11068) recorded 9,242 vehicles per day in 2025, including 1,183 of these being HGVs.

VMS- A4

The scheme is located within a rural area of the A95 within the Highland Council area. Baseline air quality is expected to be primarily influenced by traffic on the A95 and the nearby A9 trunk road, located approximately 300m west of the scheme extents, with secondary sources from surrounding residential and agricultural activities.

The AADF data for the A95, obtained from a count point located immediately south of the scheme extents (Count Point ID: 30868), recorded 4,642 vehicles per day in 2025, of which 504 of these being HGVs.

There are no permanent air quality sensitive receptors within 200m of the proposed A3 and A4 VMS.

A review of the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) identified no registered air pollutant releases sites within 1km of either VMS signs. In addition, no air quality monitoring sites are located within 200m of VMS A3 and A4.

The Highland Council currently has no declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), indicating that concentrations of key pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}), and particulate matter less 2.5 microns ($PM_{2.5}$), are generally within the limits set by the Scottish air quality objectives.

There are no permanent air quality sensitive receptors within 200m of the proposed works. Given the rural setting, the absence of nearby sensitive receptors, and the relatively low traffic flows recorded on the local road network, baseline air quality conditions are anticipated to be good.

Cultural heritage

A desk-based assessment was undertaken using Pastmap. A study area of 300m was used for designated cultural heritage assets and an area of 200m was used for non-designated cultural heritage assets.

Historic Environment Records (HERs) and National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) provide local and national level information on Scotland's historic environment.

VMS - A3

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

The following HER and NRHE are located within 200m of the scheme:

- Easter Lynwilg Bridge ID- MHG23952 an HER located approximately 120m northeast of the works.
- General Wade's Military Road, Alvie ID- MHG30057 located approximately 120m southeast of the works.

VMS- A4

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

The Field System - Loch Nan Carraigean, REF- MHG40377 HER is located approximately 60m northeast of the works.

No direct impacts are anticipated on the identified non-designated assets as no land take is required and works remain within the trunk road boundary, involving replacements to existing infrastructure for both the A3 and A4 sites. No indirect impacts, such as impacts on setting of the assets will occur as the works are located over 50m from the HERs, with complete screening from the works.

Landscape and visual effects

Landscape

The proposed A3 and A4 VMS signs are located within a rural landscape characterised by woodland, grazing land and agricultural fields.

The Scottish Landscape Character Assessment surrounding the signs identifies the area as Upland Strath, characterised by a large flat-bottomed strath with meadows and wetlands.

Five Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) sites are present within 500m of the works, with the closest being Wood ID-6843, approximately 190m south of A3 VMS and another being Granish (Ancient – of semi- natural origin (ID-7207), located 30m northwest of VMS-A4.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the scheme extents or within 500m both sign locations.

A desktop study using NatureScot Sitelink and PastMap has identified the following designated landscape areas within 500m of the works. These include:

VMS – A3

- Cairngorms National Park, within which the works are located;
- Doune of Rothiemurchus Garden and Designed landscape (ID- GDL00139) located approximately 120m southeast of the works; and
- Kinrara Garden and Designed landscape (ID- GDL00246) located approximately 360m south of the works.

VMS – A4

- Cairngorms National Park, within which the works are located.

No other landscape designated sites such as National Scenic Areas (NSAs) and Local and Regional Nature Reserves have been identified within 500m of the works.

Visual

VMS-A3 and VMS-A4

No permanent visual receptors have been identified at either location due to the presence of mature vegetation and the enclosed nature of the surrounding landscape.

Transient visual receptors are limited to road users (motorists and public transport users) travelling through the areas, who will experience brief and intermittent views of the works.

Biodiversity

VMS- A3 and VMS -A4

A desktop review has been undertaken using SiteLink which has identified that the River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 260m east of the works at its closest point from VMS-3 and VMS-4. A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been undertaken.

Scotland's Environment Map has not identified any Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) or National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within 200m of either site.

VMS-A3

There are five areas of woodland designated under the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) within 500m of the works with the closest with Wood ID-6843, located approximately 190m south of the works at its closest point.

VMS – A4

In addition to the River Spey SAC, Kinveachy Forest SAC and Special Protection Area (SPA) are located approximately 1.4 km west of the site.

Five Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) sites are located within 500 m of the works, the closest being Granish (ID 7207), an ancient semi-natural woodland located approximately 30m northwest of the site.

Ecology Field Survey

VMS- A3 & VMS- A4

An ecological field survey was undertaken by two Amey Ecologists on the 15th and 16th June 2026.

Geology and soils

VMS-A3 and VMS-A4

The National Soil Map of Scotland has identified the local soil type as humus-iron podzols.

A desktop study using NatureScot's Sitelink has not identified any geological sensitive sites within 1km of the scheme extents.

A desktop study using the British Geological Survey Map identifies the local geology types as the following:

- Bedrock geology: Pityoulish Formation-Psammite and semipelite. The origin of these rocks is uncertain and precludes a simple classification of their environmental setting or mode of formation. However, they have undergone metamorphism or crushing in a fault or shear zone.
- Superficial deposits: Alluvium-Clay, silt, sand and gravel. These sedimentary deposits are fluvial in origin. They are detrital, ranging from coarse- to fine-grained and form beds and lenses of deposits reflecting the channels, floodplains and levees of a river or estuary (if in a coastal setting).

There are no landfill sites within 2km each VMS location.

VMS 3 and VMS 4 are not located within a Coal Mining Reporting Area as defined by the Coal Authority and Mining Remediation Authority.

Material assets and waste

Materials

VMS A3 & A4

Materials required are as follows:

- VMS sign face and post;
- Paving and hardstand;
- Ducting and cabling; and
- VRS barrier.

New metal components will include a proportion of recycled content, subject to supplier specifications, and a concrete mix incorporating cement replacement products is also proposed.

Wastes

VMS A3 & A4

The waste produced by the scheme will consist of:

- Excavated material;
- Existing VMS sign face and post; and
- Existing VRS.

The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the investigation and construction works.

All waste will be managed in accordance with the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018, under the relevant SEPA waste authorisation for recovery, reuse or disposal.

A Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) will not be prepared prior to the works due to the scheme value being less than £350,000.

Noise and vibration

For baseline information on the wider setting, refer to the Air Quality section.

Both VMS locations are not located within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan Road Maps.

VMS-A3

One residential property, Lynwilg House, is located approximately 250m northwest of the works and is the only Noise Sensitive Receptor (NSR) within 300m of the site.

According to the Scotland Noise Map, modelled day-evening-night noise levels (Lden) along the scheme extents range from >60 dB to 65 dB, while night-time noise levels (Lnight; 23:00-07:00) range from >55 dB to 60 dB. Similar Lnight levels (>55 dB to 60 dB) are predicted at Lynwilg House.

VMS-A4

There are no residential properties or other NSRs within 300m of the works.

According to the Scotland Noise Map, modelled day-evening-night noise levels (Lden) along the scheme extents range from >60 dB to 65 dB, while night-time noise levels (Lnight; 23:00-07:00) range from >55 dB to 60 dB.

Population and human health

A reduced 300m buffer has been applied to reflect the localised nature of the works, which comprise the replacement of existing VMS infrastructure within the existing road corridor.

Private Property and Housing

Proposed works at each location will be contained within the existing carriageway boundary, requiring no land take from private or residential land.

VMS-A3

One residential property, Lynwilg House, is located approximately 250m northwest of the works.

VMS-A4

There are no residential properties within 300m of the works.

Development Land and Businesses

VMS- A3

The following businesses are located within 300m of VMS-A3.

- Kinara distillery, approximately 250m northwest of the site; and
- Aviemore Dog Park, approximately 20m northwest of the site.

VMS-A4

The following businesses are located within 300m of VMS-A4.

- Granish Quarry, approximately 100m east of the site.

Agricultural Land Holdings

VMS-A3 and VMS-A4

Both sites are located within a semi-rural area, with grazing agricultural land situated south of the scheme extents. No agricultural access points are located within the works areas. All works will be undertaken within the existing carriageway boundary, and no land take from agricultural land will be required.

Community Land and Assets

VMS-A3 and VMS-A4

No community assets, including educational, medical, religious or recreational facilities, are located within 300m of either site.

Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding (WCH) Routes

VMS-A3 and VM-A4

There is no WCH provision adjacent to the scheme extents on the A9 and the A95, including National Cycle Network routes or core paths. The route is not street lit, and there are no bus stops or lay-bys within the works area.

Road drainage and the water environment

Surface water

VMS- A3

A desktop review of Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)'s Water Classification Hub has identified the River Spey (ID: 23097), approximately 40m southeast of the location. SEPA has classified this watercourse as having an overall status of 'Poor Ecological Potential'.

The Allt-na-Criche River is located approximately 70m northeast of the scheme and passes beneath the carriageway before discharging to the River Spey.

The site lies within the River Spey (ID: 23097) Surface Water Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA).

VMS -A4

A desktop review of Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)'s Water Classification Hub has identified the River Spey (ID: 23097), approximately 260m southeast of the location. SEPA has classified this watercourse as having an overall status of 'Poor Ecological Potential'.

The Allt-na-Criche River is located, 200m northeast of the scheme and passes beneath the carriageway before discharging to the River Spey.

The scheme is located within the River Spey (ID: 23097 Surface Water Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA).

Groundwater

VMS-A3 and VMS- A4

The SEPA Water Classification Map identifies the underlying groundwater body as Spey Sand and Gravel (ID: 150814,) which is classified as being in 'good' condition.

Neither site is located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). Both sites are located within Upper Spey Sand and Gravel Groundwater Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) (ID: 150814).

Flood risk

SEPA's Flood Map has not identified any areas of flooding on the B9152 or A95 carriageway within the scheme extents.

Climate

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, as amended by the Scottish Carbon Budgets Amendment Regulations 2025 sets out the statutory framework for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Scotland. The prior annual and interim targets have been replaced by five-year carbon budgets, which sets limits on the amount of GHGs that can be emitted in Scotland.

The proposed carbon budgets are aligned with advice from the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) and calculated in accordance with the 2009 Act. The 2025 Regulations define the baseline years for emissions reductions as 1990 for greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, and 1995 for others such as hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulphur hexafluoride (as set out in Section 11 of the Act). The budgets are as follows:

- 2026 - 2030: Average emissions to be 50% lower than baseline.
- 2031 - 2035: Average emissions to be 60% lower than baseline.
- 2036 - 2040: Average emissions to be 80% lower than baseline
- 2041 - 2045: Average emissions to be 94% lower than baseline.

These budgets are legally binding and will be supported by a new Climate Change Plan, which will outline the specific policies and actions required to meet the targets.

Transport Scotland remains committed to reducing carbon across Scotland's transport network, this commitment is being enacted through the Mission Zero for Transport. Transport is the largest contributor to harmful climate emissions in Scotland, representing for 37% nationwide, and Transport Scotland are committed to reducing their emissions by 50% by 2030. To support this, Transport Scotland's Fourth Carbon Management Plan is committed to reaching Net Zero emissions across corporate activities by 2027. This will contribute to achieving a legally binding target of net-zero by 2045.

Amey's Company Wide Carbon Goal is to achieve Scope 1 and 2 net-zero carbon emissions, with a minimum of 80% absolute reduction on our emissions by 2035. Amey is aiming to be fully net-zero, including Scope 3 emissions, by 2040.

Policies and plans

This Record of Determination (RoD) has been undertaken in accordance with Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (RSA EIA Regulations) along with Transport Scotland's Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance (Guidance – Environmental Impact Assessments for road projects (transport.gov.scot)). Relevant guidance, policies and plans accompanied with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)) LA 101 and LA 104 were used to form this assessment.

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

The Below Impacts and mitigation cover both the A3 and A4 sites as they are the same at each location.

Air quality

Impacts

The following activities associated with the proposed works may temporarily impact local air quality:

- The works (including breaking ground and excavating) may emit dust and particulate matter into the atmosphere.
- Increased HGV and construction plant presence may also contribute to short-term emissions. TM will likely cause congestion and elevated traffic-related emissions during the works.

The completed scheme will not result in any changes to traffic flow characteristics post-construction (composition, speed or flows), with any quality impacts expected to be localised, and short-term and limited to the construction period.

Mitigation

- The following best practice as outlined in the Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (2024) published by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), which includes the following mitigation relevant to this scheme will be followed:
    - The site layout will be planned (including plant, vehicles and Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM)) so that machinery and dust causing activities are located away from receptors, as far as reasonably practicable;
    - Materials that have a potential to produce dust will be removed from site as soon as possible, unless being re-used on site (stockpiles will be covered or fenced to prevent wind whipping);
    - Cutting, grinding or sawing equipment will be fitted or used in conjunction with suitable dust suppression techniques such as water sprays or local extraction, e.g. suitable local exhaust ventilation systems;
    - Drop heights from conveyors and other loading or handling equipment will be minimised;

  - Vehicles carrying wastes and materials will be covered when entering and leaving the work area to prevent escape of materials during transport;
  - Equipment will be readily available on site to clean any dry spillages and spillages will be cleaned up as soon as reasonably practicable after the event using wet cleaning methods; and
  - When not in use, plant, vehicles and NRMMs will be switched off and there will be no idling vehicles.
- Plant, vehicles and NRMM will be regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of exhaust systems to ensure such fuel operated equipment is not generating excessive fumes.
- Green driving techniques will be adopted, and effective route preparation and planning will be undertaken prior to works.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally.
- Surfaces will be swept where loose material remains following planing.

The residual significance of effects is not considered significant and does not warrant any further assessment in accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 105: Air Quality.

Landscape and visual effects

Impacts

No constant visual receptors of the scheme have been identified, due to mature vegetation providing natural screening and the general landscape arrangement also providing natural screening.

Transient visual receptors include road users (motorists and public transport users) travelling along the scheme extents who will experience brief and intermittent views of the scheme.

No residual landscape or visual impacts are anticipated post-construction, including the National Park as the replacement of VMS and associated infrastructure will not introduce any new landscape changes, or alter the distinctiveness, quality or character of the surrounding landscape.

Mitigation

- All areas impacted by the works will be fully reinstated to their original condition, ensuring no long-term visual effects on the surrounding landscape and National Park.

- Plant/machinery/materials will be stored in unobtrusive areas when not in use and will not be stored on grass verges.
- The site will be left clean and tidy throughout, and following the works, with appropriate storage and stockpiling of materials and waste to minimise the potential visual impact.

In accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 107: Landscape and Visual Effects, no further assessment is required.

Biodiversity

Impacts

An HRA has been undertaken and concluded that there will be no Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the River Spey SAC, and the Kinveachy Forest SAC and SPA. There are no direct impacts or significant effect pathways anticipated for the qualifying interest of the European Sites. The qualifying interest is confined to the extents of the European sites, and there is a physical separation where the works are to be confined within the extents of the existing carriageway boundary. Air pollution risks will be appropriately minimised by standard pollution and noise and vibration controls. As well as no long-term disturbance to key habitats, no habitat or species fragmentation will occur and no reduction in species density as a result of the scheme.

The proposed works have the potential to disturb foraging and/or commuting mammals within the area. Works will not impact nesting birds within the area as works are taking place out with bird nesting season. If for any reason works are delayed then there is potential for nesting birds to be impacted.

Increase in nighttime noise could potentially result in temporary disturbance for nocturnal species if active in proximity of the works. Temporary lighting for the works may affect the foraging or commuting routes of nocturnal protected species which may be active in the surrounding area.

Mitigation

- If a protected species is seen in or near the scheme, all works will be stopped until the animal passes by. The Environment team will be contacted for any guidance if required, and the control room will be contacted for environmental record.
- If works are required within nesting bird season and are expected to damage any tree or scrub species, then nesting bird checks are required. Nesting bird checks will be undertaken within 48 hours prior to any vegetation clearance works taking

place. If works are delayed such that more than 48 hours has passed since the nesting bird check took place, then an update nesting bird check will be required. If any active nests are identified, then a 5m buffer (or as defined by the site ecologist, depending on the species present and site conditions) will be set around the nest and vegetation clearance works stopped within this buffer until an ecologist has determined that the nest has become inactive (which may take up to six weeks depending on the bird species present).

- When in use, any artificial light will be directional and directed at the area of works as far as reasonably practicable, reducing any light spill into the wider surroundings, and potentially sensitive habitat (e.g. woodland/structures).
- No vehicles, machinery or materials will be parked/stored on any soft verges.
- Effects from noise will be kept to a minimum through the use of appropriate mufflers and silencers fitted to machinery. All exhaust silencers will be checked at regular intervals to ensure efficiency.
- The noisiest works will be scheduled for before 11:00pm if feasible.
- Operatives will avoid extraneous noise whilst on site and will be briefed using Noise and Vibration briefing.
- General mammal protection measures will be implemented throughout the scheme extents to safeguard mammals that may be using the proposed works sites:
  - Equipment will be started up gradually to slow increase levels of noise and vibrations onsite, as sudden noises can be more disturbing.
  - Where equipment can be used with hoods, doors or sleeves to reduce noise levels, these will be used wherever possible.
  - Consideration will be given to where spoil is stored, mammal proof fencing will be considered if spoil is to be stored on site for long periods of time.
  - No equipment will be stored in suitable mammal habitat.

On the condition that the above mitigation measures and best practice are adhered to, the residual effect on local biodiversity is considered not significant.

Therefore, in accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 108: Biodiversity, no further assessment is required.

Geology and soils

Impacts

Excavation works have the potential to result in minor, localised soil disturbance. Exposed soils may be vulnerable to accidental pollution incidents through spillage of fuels or oils. The use of plant and machinery within the verge such as excavators

may result in limited soil compaction, affecting soil structure and permeability within the immediate working area.

No deep excavations are proposed; however, shallow ground disturbance associated with foundation reuse, minor excavation, and installation of cabinets, ducting or posts may interact with previously disturbed ground.

No operational impacts on geology and soils are anticipated as the scheme will not have any ongoing effects or disturbance to geology or soils.

Mitigation

- Vehicles and materials will not be stored or parked on grass verges where possible. Where damage occurs, the reinstatement of the grass verge will be carried out.
- Excavation of soils will be kept to a minimum and only where necessary, with any excavated soils being re-used on site as far as reasonably practicable.
- Excavated soils if stored on site will be appropriately contained/covered and protected from the elements.
- Spill kits will be present on site, and all operatives will be fully trained in their use.
- Any fuel, oil and other chemicals required for use will be stored securely with drip trays used appropriately and stored under any chemical or fuel containers.
- If any unusual odours or soil colourations are identified during the works, the works will cease, and the environmental team will be notified.

On the condition that the above mitigation measures and best practice are adhered to, the residual effect on geology and soils is considered not significant.

Therefore, in accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 109: Geology and Soils, no further assessment is required.

Material assets and waste

Impacts

The scheme will require relatively small quantities of materials, which is not anticipated to put pressure on regional material supply chains or resource availability.

Excavation works will generate small volumes of soil, and where this is not possible to be used as backfill, it will require appropriate off-site disposal.

The improper handling of waste may result in localised impacts such as contamination of verges and soil.

Mitigation

- The Contractor will comply with all 'Duty of Care' requirements, ensuring that any surplus materials or wastes are stored, transported, treated, used, and disposed of safely without endangering human health or harming the environment. All waste transfer notes and/or waste exemption certificates will also be completed and retained.
- Materials will be derived from recycled, secondary or re-used origin as far as practicable within the design specifications to reduce natural resource depletion and associated emissions.
- All waste will be managed in accordance with the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018, under the relevant SEPA waste authorisation for recovery, reuse or disposal.
- Waste will be transferred to SEPA-authorised facilities by carriers with valid waste carrier registration. A waste transfer note (WTN) will be completed for removal of waste from site and retained for two years, in line with statutory Duty of Care requirements.

With best practice mitigation measures in place, the residual significance of effect on material assets and waste is considered to be not significant. Therefore, in accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 110: Material Assets and Waste, no further assessment is required.

Noise and vibration

Impacts

Construction activities, including excavation, breaking ground and the use of excavators and other plant and vehicles may generate temporary increases in noise and vibration, affecting surrounding NSRs. TM may also contribute to short-term increases in noise associated with congestion, however, such effects will be brief and limited to the construction period.

Post-construction, no adverse noise or vibration impacts are anticipated. The works will not change traffic speed or flows, and ambient noise levels are expected to return to pre-construction conditions.

Mitigation

- Impacts from noise will be kept to a minimum through the use of appropriate mufflers and silencers fitted to machinery. All exhaust silencers will be checked at regular intervals to ensure efficiency.
- Plant and machinery will be switched off when not in use to reduce noise disruptions to the surrounding environment.
- Engine exhaust and vent silencers will be used where possible.
- The noisiest works will be scheduled for before 11:00pm where feasible.
- 'Soft start' techniques will be utilised with noise heavy equipment/plant/machinery in order to avoid disturbance.
- The delivery of materials to the scheme extents will be made during daytime and early evening hours were reasonably practicable, to reduce noise associated by traffic.
- Operatives will avoid extraneous noise whilst onsite and will be briefed using the Amey Noise and Vibration environmental briefing.
- Pre-notification of the works through appropriate signage, and/or social media to inform local residents and road users of the upcoming works.

With best practice mitigation measures in place, and due to the works being of a minor, temporary, transient nature, no significant effects are predicted for noise and vibration. Therefore, in accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 111: Noise and Vibration and no further assessment is required.

Population and human health

Impacts

Construction activities may cause short-term disruption to road users through temporary TM, noise, and delays. Impacts are not anticipated to be significant, and furthermore, no full road closures or diversion routes will be required to facilitate the works.

Human health determinants such as noise, and air quality will likely experience temporary increases, however, due to the nature and scale of the works no discernible health impact is expected.

Mitigation

- Local residents and road users will be informed of the proposed working schedule, in particular the times and durations of the works through a pre-

construction notice of the works and journey planning via social media and/or on approach to scheme extents.

- Artificial site lighting will be directional and pointed away from residential properties.

With best practice mitigation measures in place, no significant effects associated with Population and Human Health are predicted.

Road drainage and the water environment

Impacts

Potential impacts on the water environment are anticipated to be limited, temporary and managed through best practice measures as all works are to occur within the carriageway boundary and involve replacements to existing VMS and associated infrastructure to kerbing and a footway.

There is potential for short-term risk of accidental pollution from fuels, oils and other contaminants associated with plant, machinery and materials entering surface runoff, drainage systems and eventually surface watercourses. However, as there are no in-water works, no abstraction or transfers of water from, or discharges to a waterbody. The scheme lies within a groundwater DWPA, however, as the works are limited to existing engineered layers, involving and shallow excavations within the grass verge, the potential for impacts on groundwater quality or mobilisation of contaminants is limited.

In the event of a flooding incident, debris may be mobilised and could enter the road drainage having a detrimental effect on the surrounding local water environment.

Mitigation

- Best practice, as detailed by SEPA's Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP5 and PPG6), will always be followed onsite. This will ensure that any potential debris/spills are not allowed to enter road drainage unchecked.
- Appropriate measures will be implemented onsite to prevent any potential pollution to the natural water environment (e.g. debris, dust and hazardous substances). This will include, but will not be limited to, spill kits being present onsite at all times, and the use of funnels and drip trays when transferring fuel, and utilisation of drain covers/shielding boards.
- Any pollution incidences will be reported to the Amey control room.
- Operatives will conduct regular checks of the work site, especially in periods of heavy wind and rainfall.

- All debris which has the potential to be suspended in surface water and wash into the local water environment will be cleaned from the site following the works.
- Bunds will be provided around drums up to 205 litres with a buffer of 25% of their capacity, and around bulk storage to a capacity of 110% of the stored fuel/oil.
- All plant and fuel storage at the site compound will be located on hardstanding and sited more than 10m from any watercourse.
- All oils and fuels will be returned to storage area after use.
- Weather reports will be monitored prior to and during all construction activities. In the event of adverse weather/flooding events, all activities will temporarily stop, and only reconvene when deemed safe to do so, and when run-off/drainage can be adequately controlled to prevent pollution.
- Concrete curing for foundations will be protected/covered from precipitation to prevent runoff contamination.
- Mixing of concrete on site will be undertaken >10m from watercourses and surface water drainage systems.
- No washout from concrete mixing will enter the water environment and will be taken off site for appropriate treatment.
- Site staff will be briefed using the Water Pollution Prevention Toolbox Talk.

Providing all works operate in accordance with current best practice, as demonstrated by SEPA's Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs), no significant effects are predicted on the water environment. Therefore, in accordance with DMRB Guidance document LA 113: Road drainage and the water environment no further assessment is required.

Climate

Impacts

- GHG emissions will be generated through the use of machinery, vehicles, and materials (both recycled and virgin) required for the scheme, as well as through transportation to and from the site.

Mitigation

- Local suppliers will be used as far as reasonably practicable to reduce travel time and GHG emitted as part of the works.
- Waste disposal will be directed to local licensed facilities.
- Vehicles/plant will not be left on when not in use to minimise and prevent unnecessary emissions.

- Further actions and considerations for this scheme are detailed in the above Material Assets and Waste section.

With best practice mitigation measures in place, no significant effects are anticipated on Climate. Therefore, in line with DMRB Guidance document LA 114: Climate, no further assessment is required.

Vulnerability of the project to risks

As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of existing VMS, there will be no change in vulnerability of the road to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.

It has been determined that the project is not expected to alter the vulnerability of the existing trunk road infrastructure to risk of major accidents or disasters.

Assessment of cumulative effects

A review of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner's Interactive Map and Amey's current programme of works confirms that no other roadworks are scheduled to take place at the proposed location or during the planned timeframe for the construction activities.

Highland Councils planning portal has not highlighted any further works located within proximity of the scheme extents that are going to affect further TM or have an impact on the wider community.

The scheme is not anticipated to have significant environmental effects having regard to its nature, scale and location. The residual impacts arising from the works can be appropriately mitigated and thus no cumulative or in-combination effects are anticipated.

Assessments of the environmental effects

Following assessment as detailed within this Record of Determination, and provided that mitigation measures are in place and best practice is followed, the residual impact is deemed not significant and there will be no significant effects on the environment.

The following environmental surveys/reviews/consultations have been undertaken:

- Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) undertaken by Amey's Environmental Team in September 2026.
- A Preliminary Ecological Walkover (PEW) undertaken by Amey's Ecology Team in June 2026.
- Habitat Regulations Appraisal was undertaken by Amey's Ecology Team at Amey in September 2026.

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 improvement of a road and the completed works (together with any area occupied by apparatus, equipment, machinery, materials, plant, spoil heaps, or other such facilities or stores required during the period of construction) are situated in whole or in part in the Cairngorms National Park 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:

- As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the roadside components, there is no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.
- Construction activities are restricted to the existing carriageway boundary within made ground and as such there will be no residual change to the local landscape as a result of the works.

- No significant effects on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works.
- No disturbance is anticipated to protected species within the wider area.
- At end of life, components can be recycled, reducing waste to landfill.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme will be confined within the existing carriageway boundaries and as a result will not require any land take and will not alter any local land uses.
- The River Tay SAC is located approximately 260m east of the scheme extents and Kinveachy Forest SAC/SPA is located approximately 1.4km west of the scheme extents. The works are confined to the existing carriageway and will not result in land take, habitat loss, or changes to the SAC/SPA.
- It is not anticipated that there will be any significant or direct impacts on the designated sites due to the physical separation between the designated site and work area being more than 200m, in addition to the works being localised to the existing carriageways. There is no connectivity between the sites via hydrology.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Containment measures of the working area will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding water environment.
- Materials will be derived from recycled, secondary or re-used origin as far as practicable within the design specifications.

References of supporting documentation

- Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) undertaken by Amey's Environmental Team in September 2026.
- A Preliminary Ecological Walkover (PEW) undertaken by Amey's Ecology Team in June 2026.
- Habitat Regulations Appraisal was undertaken by Amey's Ecology Team at Amey in September 2026.

Annex A

"sensitive area" means any of the following:

- land notified under sections 3(1) or 5(1) (sites of special scientific interest) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- land in respect of which an order has been made under section 23 (nature conservation orders) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- a European site within the meaning of regulation 10 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994
- a property appearing in the World Heritage List kept under article 11(2) of the 1972 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- a scheduled monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- a National Scenic Area as designated by a direction made by the Scottish Ministers under section 263A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
- an area designated as a National Park by a designation order made by the Scottish Ministers under section 6(1) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

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