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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A86 River Spey

A86 MacPherson Junction

Contents

Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out resurfacing works and structural maintenance on two sections of the A86 trunk road, with a combined length of 1070m (A86 River Spey 238m and A86 MacPherson Junction 832m), and combined area of 0.66ha (A86 River Spey 0.14ha and A86 MacPherson Junction 0.52ha). Carriageway resurfacing and structural maintenance will involve the milling out and replacement of bituminous material. Following the resurfacing works, road markings will be reinstated. In addition to renewal of the road surface, civils works consisting of resetting roadside gullies, will be undertaken within the scheme extents of A86 MacPherson Junction. Works have been identified from surface and structural deterioration and works are proposed to address these issues. The works will include:

- Set up traffic management (TM) and mark out site
- Mill out old surface course
- Lay new surface course
- Roll surface and allow it to go off
- Install road markings
- Replace bollards and complete ditching works
- Remove TM and open road

The works comprise two schemes which are located along the A86 trunk road in proximity to each other. The schemes are currently programmed for delivery within the 2026/2027 financial year, with a proposed start date in June. The resurfacing works will be undertaken over up to 10 days (combined) with civil works undertaken over up to 3 days by utilising a daytime working pattern. Changes in the programmes may result in a change to the proposed working hours/commencement dates.

Traffic Management (TM) for the A86 River Spey will consist of full A86 road closure with convoy amnesties accommodated by 2-way Temporary Traffic Lights (TTL), along with junction control where required.

TM for A86 MacPherson will consist of full A86 road closure with diversion via the A9 & A889 along with control of junctions where required.

Location

The schemes are located on the outskirts of the village of Newtonmore, in the Highland Council administrative area (see Figure 1) between the following National Grid References (NGRs): A86 River Spey - NN 70561 98630 - NN 70450 98431; A86 MacPherson Junction - NN 70571 98668 - NN 71323 98949.

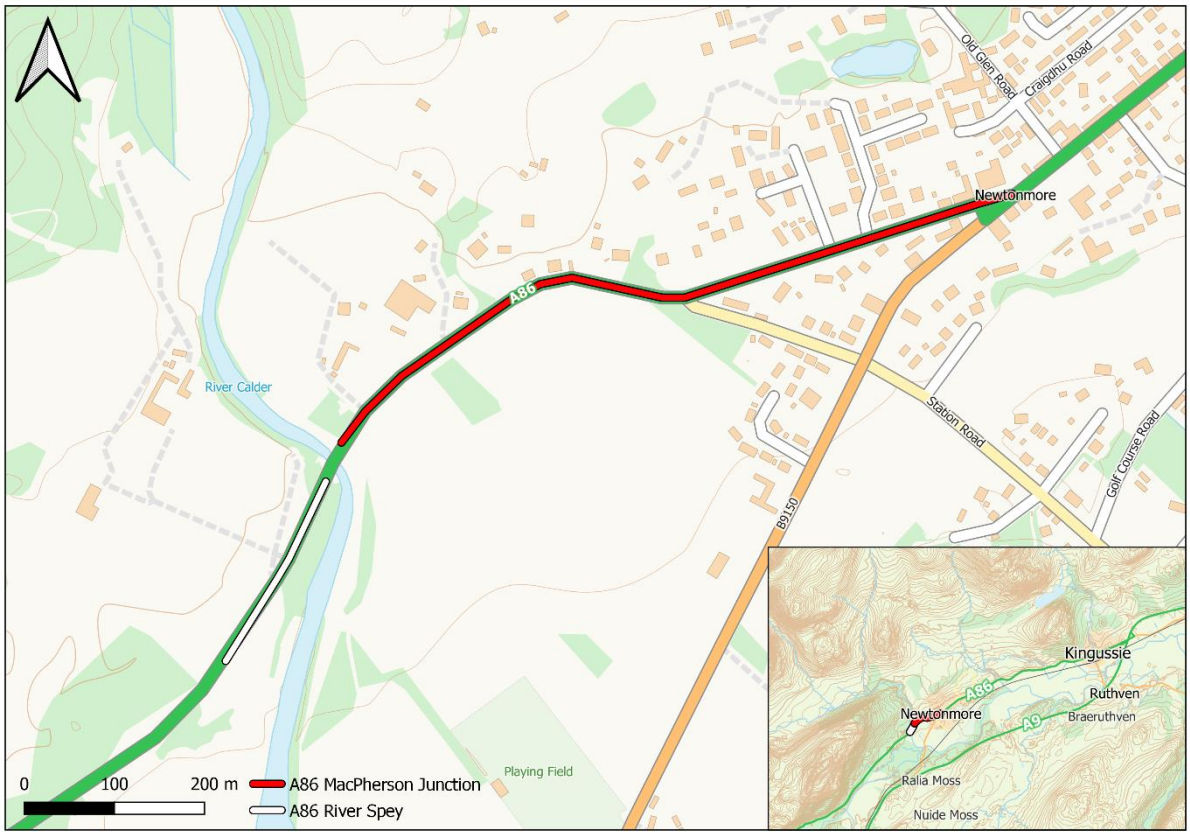

Figure 1. A86 River Spey (white) and A86 MacPherson Junction (Red) scheme extents

Description of local environment

Air quality

No Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) are located 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).

No Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) sites (which record air pollutant releases), are within 10km of the scheme (Scottish Pollution Release Inventory).

Due to the location of the works, baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A86 and local roads; with secondary sources likely shaped by land management practices.

Cultural heritage

No Scheduled Monuments, Garden and Designed Landscapes, Battlefields, Conservation Areas or World Heritage sites were identified within 300m of the scheme (PastMap).

The following cultural heritage features are recorded within 300m of the scheme (PastMap):

- Category C Listed Building 'Newtonmore, Craigmhor Hotel' (Ref: LB7672) lies approximately 60m southeast of the A86 MacPherson Junction at its closest extent.
- Several National Records of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and Historic Environment Records (HER) lie within 300m of the scheme. The closest feature is 'Newtonmore Hotel' (NRHE Ref: 25200) (HER Ref: MHG4514), located approximately 5m north of the A86 River Spey scheme.

There are no features of Cultural Heritage significance within the footprint of the scheme extents and construction of the A86 trunk road is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the area and as such 'cultural heritage' is scoped out and is not discussed further within this RoD.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme lies within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP; NatureScot Site Code: 8623), which has the following Special General Qualities:

- Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath
- Vastness of space, scale and height
- Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes
- A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland
- 'The harmony of complicated curves'
- Landscapes both cultural and natural

The scheme does not lie within a National Scenic Area (NSA), National Nature Reserve (NNR) or a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (SiteLink).

Landscape Character Type (LCT) for the scheme is listed as 'Upland Strath' (LCT 127 - Upland Strath), which has the following key characteristics:

- Large, broad, flat bottomed strath, with some narrower pinch-point sections.
- Valley floor with the meandering River Spey and frequent lochs and marshes.
- Meadows and wetlands prone to flooding on the valley floor.
- Mixed pastures and broadleaved woodland in more undulating areas.
- Wetlands flanked by mixed woodland and conifer forests.
- Main communication corridor housing A9 trunk road and railway.
- Estate houses and policy landscapes in many parts of the strath.
- A well-settled area with a series of settlements occurs along the northern side of the strath at bridging points over the River Spey. They are popular tourist destinations serving the Cairngorms National Park. Elsewhere farms and houses are frequent along main and minor roads.
- Views to the Cairngorm mountains.
- Noise and activity from busy A9.

The land use surrounding the scheme is listed as urban areas, agricultural planned village, smallholdings, rectilinear fields and farms, recreation areas, managed woodland, rough grazing and golf course (HLA Map).

The A86 trunk road connects Spean Bridge and Kingussie. It commences at the A86 / A82 junction within Spean Bridge leading generally north-eastwards for 65 kilometres to its junction with the A9. The A86 is a single carriageway along its length.

Biodiversity

The River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (NatureScot Site Code: 8365) lies within 10m of both schemes.

The River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar site (NatureScot Site Code: 8452), Insh Marshes SAC (NatureScot Site Code: 8274) and River Spey – Insh Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA) (NatureScot Site Code: 8571) all lie approximately 860m southeast of the A86 River Spey scheme and 910m south of the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme.

There are no locally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR) located within 300m of the scheme (SiteLink).

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas holds several records of bird species within 2km of the schemes. The search criteria included only records during the past ten years, and which have open-use attributions (OGL-CC0-CC-BY). Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds and their active nests are protected, with certain species receiving additional protections.

The NBN Atlas holds following injurious weeds and/or invasive plants (as listed in the Network Management Contract (NMC)) under the same search criteria for both schemes:

- Broad-leaved dock *(Rumex obtusifolius)*
- Common ragwort *(Jacobaea vulgaris)*
- Creeping thistle *(Cirsium arvense)*
- Spear thistle *(Cirsium vulgare)*
- Rosebay willowherb *(Chamaenerion angustifolium)*

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds no records of injurious weeds and/or invasive plants (as listed in the NMC) within 300m of the scheme.

Habitat in the surrounding area is dominated by pastoral agricultural land with woodland at the scheme western extents and along the banks of the River Calder. Habitat at the scheme eastern extents is somewhat limited due to the urban land associated with Newtonmore. Freshwater habitat is provided by the River Calder which is spanned by the A86 adjacent to the scheme.

One area of woodland listed as 'ancient (of seminatural origin)' on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) lies approximately 100m southwest of the scheme.

There is one Tree Preservation Order (TPO) designated by the Highland Council within 300m of the schemes (TPO). This relates to pockets of trees along Laggan Road (HRC08C), which occur intermittently adjacent to the A86 within the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme extent.

BEAR Scotland undertook an ecological constraints survey on 1st of May 2026, encompassing the River Calder (part of the River Spey SAC) and the embankments surrounding A86 Calder Bridge, which is located between the two schemes.

Geology and soils

There are no Geological Conservation Review Sites (GCRSs) or Geological SSSI located within 300m of the scheme (SiteLink).

The British Geological Survey (BGS) online mapping tool records that the bedrock geology within the schemes extents is recorded as Loch Laggan Psammite Formation-Micaceous psammite.

The BGS mapping tool records the following superficial deposits within the scheme extents:

- Alluvium-Sand, gravel and boulders
- Glaciofluvial sheet deposits-Sand, gravel and boulders

Soils within the schemes are recorded as humus-iron podzols from fluvioglacial and raised beach sands and gravels derived from acid rocks (Scotland's Soils). With alluvial soils derived from mineral alluvial soils with peaty alluvial soils also noted within the scheme extent of A86 MacPherson Junction.

Soils within the schemes extent are recorded as being ‘Class 0’ as displayed on Scotland’s Peat Map. Class 0 are mineral soils where peat is not typically found.

Material assets and waste

The proposed works will entail the resurfacing of the A86 carriageway and road markings with material used to consist of:

- Asphaltic material
- Bituminous emulsion bond coat
- Milled in road studs
- Thermoplastic road marking paint

The civils work will require the following materials:

- D400 Gully Frames
- Hazard Markers
- Concrete

It is expected that the works will produce the following waste materials:

- Planings; 100% of uncontaminated planings are to be recycled/reused off site.
    - no coal tar is present within the A86 River Spey scheme extent.
    - There is an expected total of 236.9t of Coal Bound Tar classified as hazardous material to be removed from A86 MacPherson Junction.
- Old road studs; disposed of at local waste facility where re-use is not possible

The value for each site does not exceed £350,000; therefore, Site Waste Management Plans (SWMP) are not required.

Noise and vibration

The works do not fall within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan (Road Maps) (TNAP).

Lden or 'day, evening, night average noise levels' are modelled within the scheme extent. Noise levels are recorded as being between 57 and 69dB on the road (ScotGov).

Baseline noise and vibration in the study area is mainly influenced by traffic travelling along the A86 and local roads; with secondary sources likely shaped by urban and land management practices.

Population and human health

The scheme lies within the village of Newtonmore, with several residential properties located within 300m of the scheme. The closest property to the A86 River Spey works is situated approximately 120m north of the scheme extent with visual and acoustic screening provided by tree belt. Properties further afield, have limited visual and acoustic screening but are located at greater distances from the A86, reducing the potential for direct effects from the works. In relation to the A86 MacPherson Junction, the closest property is situated within 5m of the road within the scheme extent with no visual or acoustic screening.

Access arrangements are present throughout both scheme extents, including multiple access roads, field gates, and connections to residential properties. At the A86 River Spey scheme, access is more limited, with a farmland gate and a

farm/residential access track connecting at two points. At A86 MacPherson Junction, there is a higher density of access points serving local roads, properties, and agricultural land.

Non-motorised user (NMU) facilities vary across the schemes. No formal NMU infrastructure is present within the A86 River Spey scheme; however, a layby with a bench is located approximately 75m north-east of the bridge. In contrast, the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme includes a northbound adjacent footpath along much of its extent, with street lighting provided throughout. Bus stops are not located directly within either scheme extent, although stops are present approximately 80m north of the MacPherson Junction scheme and approximately 30m south along the B9150.

In terms of wider NMU connectivity, no National Cycle Network (NCN) routes are present within 300m of the A86 River Spey scheme. However, NCN Route 7 runs adjacent to the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme, utilising the A86 and continuing along the B9150. Core Path 'UBS2' (Highland Council) runs along the east bank of the River Calder, approximately 40m from the A86 River Spey scheme, and crosses the A86 within the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme extent. This route also forms part of the WalkHighlands 'Wildcat Trail, Newtonmore'.

Baseline traffic data from a Transport Scotland counter (Site ID: 0000ATC01051), located within the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme and approximately 240m north of the A86 River Spey scheme, recorded an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) flow of 1,021 vehicles in 2025, of which 19.9% were Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

According to the Scottish Road Works Commissioner (Scottish Road Works Commissioner), no other roadworks are currently scheduled within 300m of the A86 River Spey scheme. At the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme, footway works are currently being undertaken by BEAR Scotland, with completion expected by 30/04/2026. In addition, the Highland Council has programmed works approximately 125m south of the scheme to construct a new access for the Perth Road development, with an estimated start between 22/03/2026 and 21/06/2026 for a duration of 10 working days. No other roadworks are scheduled within 300m of the schemes.

TM will involve road closure with convoy amnesties facilitated by 2-way TTL and control of junction where required for the A86 River Spey scheme and road closure with diversions, control of junctions where required a with the diversions via the A9 and A889.

Road drainage and the water environment

The scheme falls within the 'Strathnairn, Speyside and Cairngorms' (ID 150709) and 'Upper Spey Sand and Gravel' (ID 150814) groundwater bodies which were classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in 2024 as having an overall status of 'Good' and is also a Drinking Water Protected Area (Ground) (DWPA).

The River Calder is a river (ID: 23145), in the River Spey catchment of the Scotland river basin district. The main stem is approximately 30.5km in length and lies within 10m of the schemes at their closest extents. In 2024, it was assigned an overall status of 'Moderate' by SEPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (SEPA).

The schemes falls within an area that has a 0-10% chance of flooding each year from river or surface water and small watercourses (SEPA Flood Map).

Climate

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

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

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

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

Policies and plans

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

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. Activities undertaken on site may cause dust and particulate matter to be emitted to the atmosphere. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to 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.
- When not in use, plant and vehicles will be switched off; there will be no idling vehicles.
- All plant, machinery and vehicles associated with the works will be maintained in order to minimise emissions, as per manufacturing and legal requirements. No significant dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions sources will be introduced by the works.
- Green driving techniques will be adopted, and effective route preparation and planning will be undertaken prior to works.
- 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.
- Activities involving cutting/planing will be appropriately managed to reduce the potential for dust creation. This will involve use of measures such as dampening down or on tool extraction where required.
- 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.
- Drop heights to haulage vehicles and onto conveyors will be minimised.

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 scheme is located within the CNP, however, the works are like-for-like general maintenance of the trunk road surface and such the works will not result in any residual changes to the landscape character and special qualities associated with the CNP.

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 this will be restricted to the construction duration only. Following the works, renewed road surface and reset road gullies will be the only change. Land use will not change as a result of the works. No residual change is anticipated.

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 is 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 will 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 scheme is located within proximity to the River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey – Insh Marshes SPA and River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar.

It was assessed that ecological connectivity between the works area and the designated sites is present due to the mobile nature of their qualifying features, and suitable connected habitat in proximity to the scheme. The work activities have been assessed within the “Roads and Bridges Maintenance Activities within the River Spey and River Spey – Insh Marshes and Insh Marshes European Sites, Highland Region Habitats Regulation Assessment - 2023” which has been completed for the noted European Sites and covers a variety of maintenance activities, including

resurfacing and road drainage maintenance schemes and concluded no likely significant effects (LSE).

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity in the area as a result of an increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats. Works are, however, restricted to the A86 carriageway and the number of construction vehicles and construction operatives required onsite is low given the scale and scope of works. In addition, any species in the area are likely to be accustomed to noise and visual disturbance pertaining to vehicle movements on the A86. The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is therefore considered to be low.

There are no records of invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants within the footprint of the works. Furthermore, works are restricted to the A86 carriageway and will not involve in-stream works, vegetation clearance, or earthworks. As no land-take, site clearance, or material import is required, the risk of spreading invasive non-native or injurious plant species is low. However, operatives may encounter such species within adjacent verges, so relevant toolbox talks will be included in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) to raise awareness.

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low:

- No in-water works will be permitted. Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and resurfacing works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing, which will be included in the SEMP. The toolbox talks will provide information on the legislation, general ecology, and best practice measures for relevant protected species.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of potentially unrecorded instances of invasive plants or injurious weeds in road verges throughout the works period; should any be identified in working areas, no works will take place within 7m of these areas until the BEAR Scotland Environment Team can provide further advice on additional mitigation measures.
- 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 Environment Team.

- 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.
- Any artificial lighting used during periods of low light levels will be directional and will avoid spilling into sensitive areas and nearby habitat where possible.
- 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.

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.

Geology and soils

The scheme is not located within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) or a geological SSSI. The proposed works involve the resurfacing of the existing carriageway.

As such, there is minimal risk of impacts to geology or soils. Standard good practice measures outlined in the SEMP as follows:

- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- The parking of machinery/vehicles and storage of equipment on grass will be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Additional pollution prevention measures as outlined in Road drainage and the water environment will be adhered to during construction.

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

Material assets and waste

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

- Materials will be sourced from recycled origins as far as reasonably practicable within design specifications.
- Care will be taken to order the correct quantity of required materials to prevent the disposal of unused materials.
- Where possible, minimal packaging 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.
- 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 road planings will treated in line with SEPA Low Risk Waste Activities (LRWA) 3 and be recycled in line with SEPA's WAS-G-DEF-05 Guidance for End-of-Waste for Recycled Aggregates under the Environmental Authorisation (Scotland) Regulations 2018.
- 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 will 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 undertaken where possible, 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.
- Coal tar will be appropriately processed in line with Transport Scotland's Guidance Note on Dealing with Coal Tar Bound Arisings (Coal Tar Guidance). This will include:
  - Coal tar contaminated road planings will be classified as a Special Waste.
  - Special waste consignment notes (SWCN) will be obtained from SEPA to allow the movement of the contaminated planings.
  - All waste will be appropriately segregated, with coal tar contaminated planing being kept separate from uncontaminated planings.
  - Coal tar contaminated road planings will be transported by a registered waste carrier and be accompanied by a SEPA-issued consignment note or code. SEPA will be notified, at least 72 hours before and no longer than one month before, prior to Special Waste leaving site where the waste is being transported outwith Scotland. It will be sent to a facility that holds suitable EASR authorisations. Copies of consignment notes will be retained for a period of three years.
  - Waste will be transported in a safe and secure manner to prevent the release of contaminated material en-route.

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 generate noise and vibration through the use of plant, machinery, and construction vehicles. The closest residential property is located approximately 5m from the A86 with minimal existing acoustic screening. However, the works are not located within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA). The A86 River Spey Works will be completed over 3 nights on a rolling programme, with the A86 resurfacing being done over 7 nights along with civil works being conducted during 3 daytime shifts with the aim being to complete the noisiest works (e.g. planing) by 23:00. Works with the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will also be intermittent, temporary, transient and short-lived. Due to the short duration and localised nature of the works, the proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary minor noise impacts during the construction programme.

The road surface is in poor condition, with a series of defects. Replacing the life-expired surface course with new surfacing will provide two positive benefits: improved road condition and a reduction in noise generated by vehicle movements once the works are complete.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- Local residents which are affected by the works will be notified in advance of the works, likely by a letter drop, which will contain details of the proposed timings and duration of the works, in addition to contact details for the Site Supervisor.
- The 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.
- The local authority (Highland Council) Environmental Health Officer (EHO) will be notified of the works.
- On-site construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to the local area.
- All site staff will receive the 'Being a Good Neighbour' toolbox talk.
- Where possible and where works will take place within 300m of residential properties and other sensitive receptors, the noisiest work operations (e.g., cold milling, using breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, use of rollers, etc.) will be completed before 23:00.
- All site personnel will be fully briefed in advance of works regarding the need to minimise noise during works and of the site-specific sensitivities.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and will have been maintained regularly to the appropriate standards.
- Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

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

Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and NMUs. TM for

the A86 River Spey will consist of full A86 road closure with convoy amnesties accommodated by 2-way TTL, along with junction control where required. TM for A86 MacPherson will consist of full A86 road closure with diversion via the A9 & A889 along with control of junctions where required. There are NMU facilities located within the scheme extent. However, access for NMUs within the scheme extents will be maintained and majority of the works are being undertaken at night when footfall and cyclist count is likely to be at its lowest.

Several residential properties are found within 300m of the scheme. The closest of these is located approximately 5m off the A86 northbound carriageway with no visual or acoustic screening. Although part of the works is being undertaken at night, potential for disturbance from noise, vibration and the additional construction lighting is limited. Disturbance to residents will be mitigated by the following measures; with these in place the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low:

- Notification will be issued to local public transport operators prior to commencement of the works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Construction lighting will consider the need to avoid illuminating surrounding environment and properties to avoid a nuisance at night, and non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.
- Local access will be granted as required.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the TM to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site as required.
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the trafficscotland.org website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR's social media platforms.

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

Road drainage and the water environment

There is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment due to operation of plant within and within proximity to watercourses and/or drainage systems, which may lead to potential changes in water quality from pollution events (either by accidental spillage of sediments, particulate matter, chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain).

No in-water works will take place and there is no requirement for the abstraction or transfers of water from, or discharges to, a waterbody. As such, the potential for a

direct pollution incident within a waterbody is unlikely. Experience gained from BEAR maintenance schemes elsewhere on the network has shown that where standard good working practice is adopted (e.g., adherence to SEPA good practice guidance, utilisation of drain covers or similar, etc.), water quality is protected.

The works may result in potential direct or indirect effects on surrounding waterbodies. The following mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of works:

- No work has been identified that would require entering any surface waterbodies. If such a need were identified onsite, BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted (before the works commence) to allow consideration of potential environmental effects.
- Standard working practices to comply with Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations (EASR) for works in or near water will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.
- No discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems will be permitted. Appropriate containment measures will be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- 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.
- 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 will be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.

- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. Spill kits will be quickly accessible to capture any spills should they occur. The ground / stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special waste.
- Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and / or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not bunded then drip trays will also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%.

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

Climate

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.
- The works will utilise the use of Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA) for binder layer in favour of Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA).
- 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 a local waste management facility.

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

Works will be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall. There will be no increase to the likelihood of flooding on the A86 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works.

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.

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 (Map Search) identified no approved planning applications within 300m of the scheme along the River Spey within the last six months.

However, two planning applications have been approved within 300m of the proposed A86 MacPherson Junction. These comprise the erection of a replacement restaurant and reconfiguration of the parking area at Newtonmore Truckstop, Old Perth Road (Planning Ref: 26/00038/FUL), located approximately 230m south of the A86, and the installation of a digital advertising board at the Esso Service Station, Perth Road (Planning Ref: 26/00381/ADV), situated approximately 45m south of the B9250 Perth Road. Due to their nature, scale, and separation distance from the proposed works, these developments are not considered likely to give rise to any cumulative environmental effects.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner website (Map Search) has identified that at the A86 MacPherson Junction scheme, footway works are currently being undertaken by BEAR Scotland, with completion expected by 30/04/2026. No other roadworks are currently ongoing or scheduled on the trunk road concurrent with this scheme.

However, one set of works by the Highland Council is scheduled at the Station Road/B9150 junction. These works relate to the creation of a new access for the New Perth Road development and are programmed to take place between 22/03/2026 and 21/06/2026. As such, there is potential for a partial temporal overlap with the proposed A86 MacPherson Junction works. Due to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed works, no cumulative environmental effects are anticipated in combination with 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 a significant cumulative effect with any other future works in the area.

Assessments of the environmental effects

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

A HRA was undertaken due to the scheme's proximity and ecological connectivity with the River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey – Insh Marshes SPA and River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar. The HRA confirmed that the works will not result in LSE on the designated feature of the River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey – Insh Marshes SPA and River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar.

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) is situated wholly within 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:

- Works are restricted to like-for-like replacement of worn road surface and drainage maintenance, with all activities confined to the A86 trunk road boundary.
- Construction activities are restricted to an area of 0.15ha along a 238m stretch and 0.52ha along an 832m stretch of the A86
- The works will be temporary, transient, localised, and completed during night-time hours and day-time hours for civils works on a rolling programme by utilising A86 carriageway road closure with convoy amnesties and 2-way Temporary Traffic Lights for A86 River Spey and road closures and diversion via A9 & A889 for A86 MacPherson Junction.
- 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.
- Removing the carriageway defects will provide this part of the A86 carriageway with another life cycle, and significantly improve the ride quality, which will result in safer conditions for road users.
- No impacts to the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users during the operational phase.
- As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the structural components, there is no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact the environment.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme is fully located within the existing A86 road boundary (carriageway surface) with no requirement to access land adjacent to the carriageway and as such no land take is required.
- The scheme lies within 2km of four European Sites: River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey – Insh Marshes SPA and River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar. Assessment under the Habitats Regulations concluded that no LSE on these sites would occur from the work activities.

- The scheme is located within the Cairngorm National Park and was deemed due to the like-for-like nature of the works there would be no adverse impact on the qualities of the park as a result of the proposed works.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users, ecological and human receptors during the operational phase.
- As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement 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.
- Works are programmed to be of short duration and nighttime resurfacing works will be completed on a rolling programme, with the aim being to complete the noisiest works by 23:00.
- 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

References of supporting documentation

Roads and Bridges Maintenance Activities within the Drumochter Hills, River Spey and River Spey - Insh Marshes European Sites, Highland Region - Habitats Regulations Appraisal Proforma. BEAR Scotland, April 2023

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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