



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 Ralia Junction – VRS works

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out vehicle restraint system (VRS) works on a stretch of the A9 carriageway by Ralia junction near Newtonmore within the Highlands Council. The VRS will protect errant vehicles from entering either of the two ditches to the north or south of the junction.

The works package includes installation of VRS and the repositioning of some existing signs to facilitate this. The works cover a total area of 0.17 hectares (ha).

Excavation for signposts and VRS posts will be undertaken with an excavator, with soil redistributed within the scheme extents. Any existing VRS requiring removal will be recycled.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within the 2025/2026 financial year, commencing in June 2025. The exact programme is to be confirmed but will utilise a night-time working pattern (19:00 – 05:00).

Traffic management (TM) will consist of verge working where possible; where TM is required such as on the narrower minor road, it is anticipated to consist of lane closures facilitated by two-way temporary traffic lights where required.

Location

The scheme lies on the A9 by Ralia junction within the Highlands Council area (Figure 1, National Grid Reference: NN 70380 97010 to NN 70686 97189).



Figure 1. Scheme extent.

Description of local environment

Air quality

No Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) declared by the Highland Council are located within 300m of the scheme ([Scottish Air Quality](#)).

There are no registered air emission sites on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) located within 10km of the scheme ([Scotland's Environment](#)).

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 carriageway, with secondary sources likely to arise from nearby land management.

Cultural heritage

There are no Scheduled Monuments, Garden & Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Battlefields, Listed Buildings or World Heritage Sites within 300m of the scheme ([PastMap](#)). There are also no features recording on the Canmore or Historic Environment Record databases within 300m of the scheme.

Construction of the A9 carriageway is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the carriageway boundary. The potential for the presence of unknown archaeological remains in the study area has therefore been assessed to be low.

No features are recorded within the works' footprint, and potential for presence of undiscovered features is low. Therefore, this receptor has no constraints that are likely to be impacted by the proposed works and as such, 'cultural heritage' is scoped out and is not discussed further within this RoD

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme extent lies within [Cairngorms National Park](#) (CNP). The Special General Qualities of CNP are the following:

- 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 is not situated within a [National Scenic Area](#) (NSA).

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) ([NatureScot](#)) within the scheme extent is recorded as Upland Strath (LCT No. 127) which is characterised by:

- 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 A9 Trunk Road connects Perth with Thurso. It commences immediately north of Inveralmond Roundabout in Perth leading generally northwards for a distance of 357 kilometres to its junction with an unclassified road leading to Holborn Head lighthouse at Scrabster. The A9 is a mixture of single carriageway, '2+1' carriageway and stretches of two-lane dual carriageway. Within the scheme extent, the A9 is a single carriageway with a junction/off-slip at the southern extent.

Biodiversity

The River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ([SiteLink](#); NatureScot Site Code: 8365) lies 350m north of the scheme extents at the nearest point.

The Insh Marshes SAC ([SiteLink](#); NatureScot Site Code: 8274) lies 750m northeast of the scheme extents at the nearest point.

The River Spey - Insh Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA) ([SiteLink](#); NatureScot Site Code: 8571) lies 750m northeast of the scheme extents at the nearest point.

The River Spey - Insh Marshes Ramsar ([SiteLink](#); NatureScot Site Code 8452) lies 750m northeast of the scheme extents at the nearest point.

The following locally and/or nationally designated sites with biodiversity features are located within 300m of the scheme ([SiteLink](#)):

- River Spey - Insh Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ([SiteLink](#)).
- River Spey SSSI ([SiteLink](#)).

Both SSSIs overlap with the above-mentioned European sites and lie 50m from the scheme extents at the nearest point.

No other locally or nationally designated sites with biodiversity features such as Local Nature Reserves or National Nature Reserves are located within 300m of the scheme ([SiteLink](#)).

The NBN atlas does not hold any record of invasive and injurious plants (as listed in the Network Management Contract (NMC)) within 300m of the scheme.

The Transport Scotland Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds no record of invasive and injurious plants (as listed in the NMC) within 300m of the scheme.

No Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are located within 300m of the scheme ([Highland Council](#)).

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

Geology and soils

The scheme does not lie within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS), or within a geologically designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ([NatureScot](#)).

The local soil type is recorded as humus-iron podzols ([Scotland's Environment](#)).

Superficial deposits are recorded as 'Glaciofluvial Sheet Deposits - Sand, gravel and boulders' and 'Ardverikie Till Formation – Diamicton'. Bedrock type is recorded as 'Loch Laggan Psammite Formation' which is a metamorphic bedrock ([British Geological Survey](#)).

The scheme is located within a 'Class 0' category of carbon and peatland importance. Peatland habitats are not typically found on such soils ([Scotland's Environment](#)).

Material assets and waste

The proposed works involve installation of new VRS and repositioning of existing signs to facilitate this. Materials used will consist of Portland cement, VRS beam and posts, and traffic sign faces & posts (re-used).

Wastes are anticipated to be earth excavated for the installation of posts, and possibly small sections of existing VRS that will be removed. Excavated material will be redistributed on site, and any removed VRS will be recycled.

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

Noise and vibration

For sensitive receptors, refer to the 'Population and Human Health' section below.

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

Baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A9 carriageway, in addition to minor roads and nearby land use. Round 4 Noise Mapping shows the average day, evening and night-time noise levels (LDEN) at the scheme to be between 70 and 80dB ([SEPA](#)).

Population and human health

Approximately eight residential properties are located within 300m of the scheme, the closest of which is located 20m from the A9 carriageway. Some screening is present between these properties and the scheme, in the form of roadside shelter belts.

There is a junction at the western extent of the scheme leading to Newtonmore via the B9150. There is also a layby on the southbound side of the A9 opposite the scheme extents.

There are no non-motorised road user (NMU) provisions within the scheme.

No routes on the National Cycle Network ([Sustrans](#)), Core Paths ([Highland Council](#)), or routes listed on [Walkhighlands](#) are located within the scheme extent. However, the No.7 cycle route and Core Path (UBS9) passes 25m northwest of the scheme.

The nearest traffic counter on the A9 (ID: [30824](#)) is located 150m west of the scheme, and estimated an average annual daily flow (AADF) in 2023 of 9039 vehicles, of which 1580 (17.6%) heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

Traffic management will consist of temporary traffic lights and lane closure on the B9150 where needed, with the majority of the works expected to be carried out as verge works.

Road drainage and the water environment

River Spey – ‘Spey Dam to Loch Insh’ (ID: 23142) lies 380m north of the scheme. This waterbody has been classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) and was given an overall status of ‘moderate’ by SEPA in 2023 ([SEPA](#)).

Several minor watercourses (not shown on an Ordnance Survey 1:50k scale map) including drainage channels are located within 300m of the scheme, however none are located directly within the footprint of the works.

The scheme is located within the Upper Spey Sand and Gravel groundwater body (ID: 150814) and Drinking Protected Area (Ground). This water body was classified by SEPA as having an overall good status in 2023.

Climate

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

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

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

Policies and plans

This Record of Determination (RoD) 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.

- 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 to 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 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.
- Surfaces will be swept where loose material remains.

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.

There is potential for minor temporary visual impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase as a result of obstructed views due to vehicles and machinery. Works, however, will be localised and will be undertaken for a short duration.

Installation of new VRS and repositioned signs will result in a permanent change to the landscape. Works will be restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary and will entail installation of new VRS and possible repositioning of existing signs, which will not significantly alter the visual character of the trunk road. The new VRS will connect to existing VRS in this area and will be in keeping with existing road safety systems along the A9. The works are essential road safety upgrades and will be undertaken over a nighttime working pattern, when traffic is lowest. They are programmed to take place during the summer, but are largely expected to be carried out as verge works so temporary negative impacts on the local landscape or CNP are expected to be minimal and short-term. CNP will be notified of the proposed works in advance.

Land use will not change as a result of the works, and the works will not result in any significant residual change to the visual amenity of the local landscape. 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.

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 in proximity to various areas designated for biodiversity features, including River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, and River Spey – Insh Marshes SPA and Ramsar. BEAR Scotland produced a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma in 2023 to assess potential impacts of a range of maintenance activities within the River Spey and River Spey – Insh Marshes

European Sites. Activities in this HRA did not specifically mention VRS works, however construction activities will be the same as those mentioned for signage works and parapet works, which are both included specifically in the HRA. As such, this HRA has been deemed relevant for these VRS and signage works. The HRA Proforma outlines standard good practice measures to reduce the risk of pollution or disturbance to qualifying features of these designated sites and concluded that none of the proposed maintenance works would result in Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the qualifying features of these sites. The HRA Proforma was approved by NatureScot and Transport Scotland as the Competent Authority. All relevant good practice measures will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to during works. As such, no significant impacts on the River Spey and River Spey – Insh Marshes European Sites are anticipated by virtue of the following factors:

- All works are minor, highly localised, and restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary with only VRS installation and sign replacement being undertaken. There will be no in-stream works; therefore, no direct impacts to any of the above European sites are anticipated.
- There is no requirement for land take (or resources) or site clearance from within the sites and no works are required within any part of the site boundaries.
- The works will not involve any in-stream works or any discharges to the natural water environment, and therefore there will be no change to water quality or impact on qualifying features.
- Standard good practice measures to prevent pollution and reduce noise and lighting associated with works will be in place.
- The works will not result in significantly higher levels of noise or lighting than existing levels of traffic on the A9.
- Works will not promote the known negative pressure on the various designated species.
- No significant dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions sources will be introduced by the works, and standard pollution prevention measures will be in place during works.

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. However, works are restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary, and the number of construction vehicles and construction operatives required onsite is low given the scale and scope of works. The standard good practice measures to prevent pollution and reduce noise and lighting (as noted above) will be in place across the full scheme extent. In addition, any species in the area are likely to be accustomed to noise and visual disturbance pertaining to vehicle movements on the A9. The potential for significant

species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is therefore considered to be low.

The works will be restricted to the A9 carriageway soft verge. However, no INNS species have been noted within the scheme extents. There is no requirement to import topsoil and the small amounts of excavated soil required for new signposts will be spread within the road verge at the scheme extents. As such, there is limited potential to spread or introduce INNS, invasive native perennials, or injurious flowering plant species.

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:

- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of potentially unrecorded instances of INNS or injurious weeds in road verges throughout the works period. Should any INNS 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.
- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and resurfacing works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- 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.
- Relevant toolbox talks for working with protected species will be included in the SEMP.
- 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 night works or periods of low light levels will be directional and will avoid spilling into sensitive areas 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

All works are confined to the A9 carriageway boundary and are restricted to localised excavation for installation of posts. The scheme is not located within a site of geological significance and no significant earthworks are expected as part of these works and excavated soil material will be side casted within the site. The following measures will be applied to on site:

- The parking of machinery/personnel and storage of equipment on road verges will not be permitted.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- Standard good practice measures, like containment measures for working near water, to prevent water and soil pollution will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

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 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 must 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.

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 works have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. The works will employ a night-time working pattern, and several properties fall within 300m of the schemes. Due to the short duration and localised nature of the works, the proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary minor adverse noise impacts during the construction programme. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The Best Practicable Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum. On-site construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.

- Residents within 300m of the scheme will be notified in advance of the works, likely by a letter drop. This notification will include details of proposed nature, timings and duration of the works, and a 24-hour contact number for the BEAR Scotland Control Room.
- The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) for the Highland Council will be notified of works.
- The noisiest works will be programmed to be completed as early in the nightly schedule as possible, where reasonably practicable.
- 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 may have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of construction presence, and associated noise and delays due to traffic management measures. Road users and local residents will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times. The works will be of limited duration and will be undertaken predominantly off-line.

No significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours; any disruption is considered insignificant considering the relatively low traffic counts, largely verge-restricted works and works being undertaken out of the traffic peak hours. Numerous NMUs lie in proximity to the scheme, however the access to NMU facilities will be maintained and the works are being undertaken at night when footfall and cyclist count is at its lowest.

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

- Notification will be issued to local residents and local public transport operators prior to commencement of the works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Any changes of schedule (e.g. change from night-time works to daytime works) will be communicated to local residents throughout the programme.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the traffic management to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site.
- Construction lighting will consider the need to avoid illuminating surrounding environment to avoid a nuisance at night, and non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.
- 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

During the works, there is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment. 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/flooding) during works have the potential to have a direct or indirect effect on the surrounding waterbodies. The following mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of works:

- The scheme will not entail any in-stream works.
- Standard working practices to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works in or near water are detailed in the SEMP and will be adhered to on site.
- No discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems are permitted. Appropriate containment measures will be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- An incident response (contingency) plan will be put in place to reduce the risk from pollution incidents or accidental spillages. All necessary containment equipment, including suitable spill kits (for oil and chemicals) will be available on site, quickly accessible if needed, and staff trained in their use.

- All spills will be logged and reported. In the event of any spills into the water environment, all works will stop, and the incident will be reported to the project manager and the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. SEPA will be informed of any such incident as soon as possible using the SEPA Pollution Hotline.
- All plant and equipment will be regularly inspected for any signs of damage and leaks. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.
- Storage of hazardous material, oil and fuel containers will be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses.
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and 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 contaminated 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 must 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.
- 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 disposed at local landfill.

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

Numerous areas of the A9 carriageway within the works location are recorded as being between low risk (0.1% chance each year) and high risk of (10% chance each year) of flooding. Works will be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall.

Works are restricted to the boundary of the A9 carriageway and traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. Verge TM will be prioritised however if TM on live carriageway lines is required, it will consist of lane closures facilitated by two-way temporary traffic lights. Where required, alternative NMU provisions/routes will be included in the traffic management setup, to minimise impact of the works on NMUs.

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

During construction, activities associated with the works may create several types of minor temporary disturbances such as changes to noise and vibration and air quality. However, these impacts will be temporary in nature and are not anticipated to result in a significant cumulative effect.

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

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner website ([Map Search](#)) has identified that no other roadworks are currently ongoing, or noted as being planned, on the trunk road at the same time as this scheme. However, there are planned works by BT along the B9150 within 300m of Ralia junction, these are programmed to be finished by the 23rd of May but if delayed may overlap.

BEAR Scotland programme all of the 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.

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 in whole within the CNP 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 (EIA) 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 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:

- The total working area is restricted to <1ha of existing carriageway boundary.
- The works include VRS works across a 550m stretch of A9 with all works restricted to the carriageway verges.
- The works will be temporary, highly localised, and completed during night-time hours.
- 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.
- No INNS have been recorded within the scheme extents.
- 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 during the operational phase.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.

Location of the works:

- The River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey - Insh Marshes SPA and River Spey - Insh Marshes Ramsar lie within 2km of the scheme. An HRA Proforma was produced in 2023 which concluded that the proposed works will not result in LSE on the qualifying features of these European sites (or the associated SSSIs).
- The scheme extent is located within CNP, which will be notified of the proposed works.
- The scheme will be confined within the existing carriageway boundary and as a result will not require any land take or alter any local land uses or habitats.
- Any impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase will be minor and will not result in significant visual changes to the A9 road corridor or the CNP. In addition, no operational impacts are anticipated.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the works:

- 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.
- Residual impacts are considered to be beneficial for road users which may use this stretch of carriageway.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- Mitigation measures detailed above and in the SEMP are 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.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

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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