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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A86 Moy to Laggan (A889 Junction – Kinloch Laggan)

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned on behalf of Transport Scotland to carry out vegetation, tree and branch clearance works along a section of the A86. The works are split into 21 individual sections on both the westbound (WB) and eastbound (EB) carriageways.

The proposed works will clear vegetation within the trunk road boundary. Quantities for clearance are 41,000m² vegetation clearance, entailing the removal of 3,250 trees of varying sizes. The works are required to clear encroachment onto road signs, laybys, safety barriers, and the A86 carriageway, and to improve forward visibility.

Key plant and equipment to be used on site include a tractor with mulching head, Hiab lorry, chainsaws, pole saws and woodchipper.

The works are scheduled to commence within the 26/27 Financial Year (FY) with a start date of 02/11/2026. Works will be carried out over approximately 10 weeks during daylight hours. Traffic management (TM) will consist of temporary traffic light for lane closures and verge works where possible. The scheme is located on a trunk road stretch with no pedestrian facilities present, however, non-motorised users (NMUs) will still be accommodated within TM, if applicable.

Location

The scheme is located on a 7.1km stretch of the A86 located 0.5km south of the settlement of Laggan, within the Highland Council Administrative Area (Figures 1 & 2). See Figures 3-6 for the locations of each individual section.

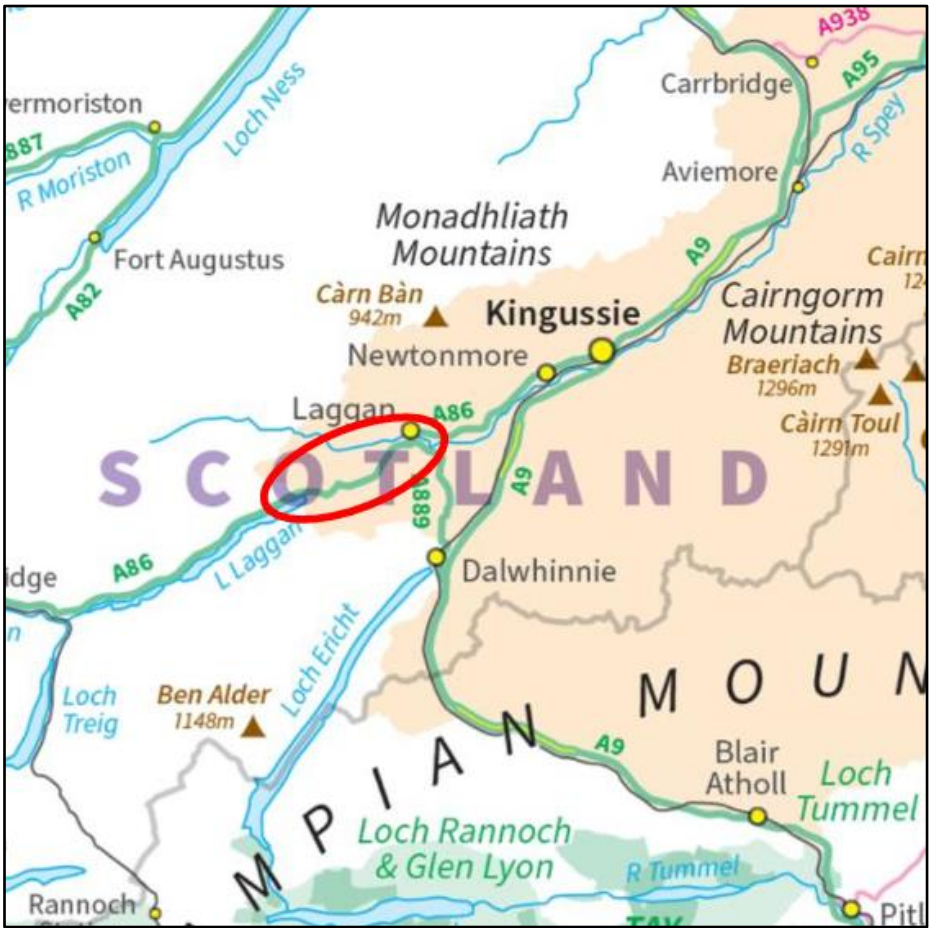


Figure 1: Scheme location. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

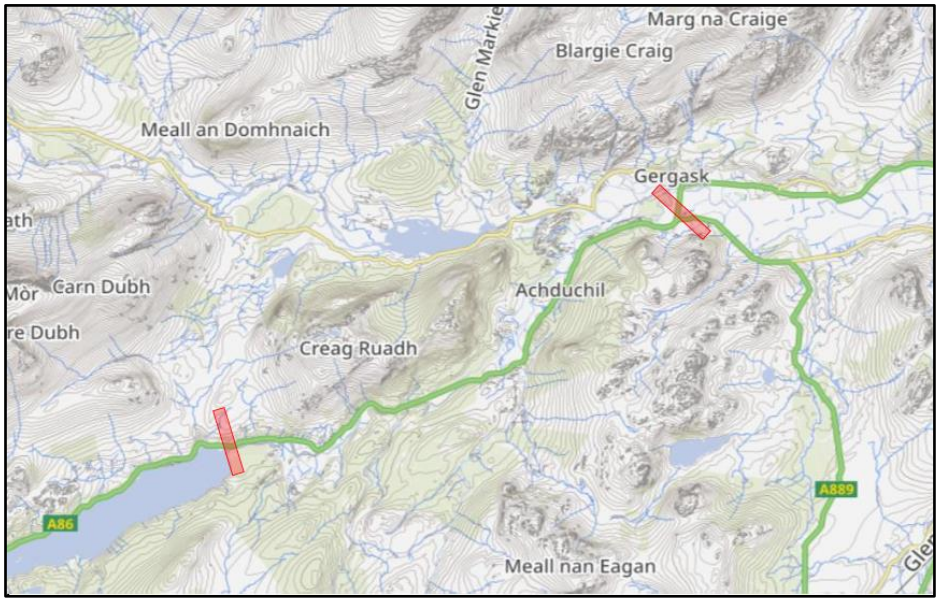


Figure 2: Scheme extent. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

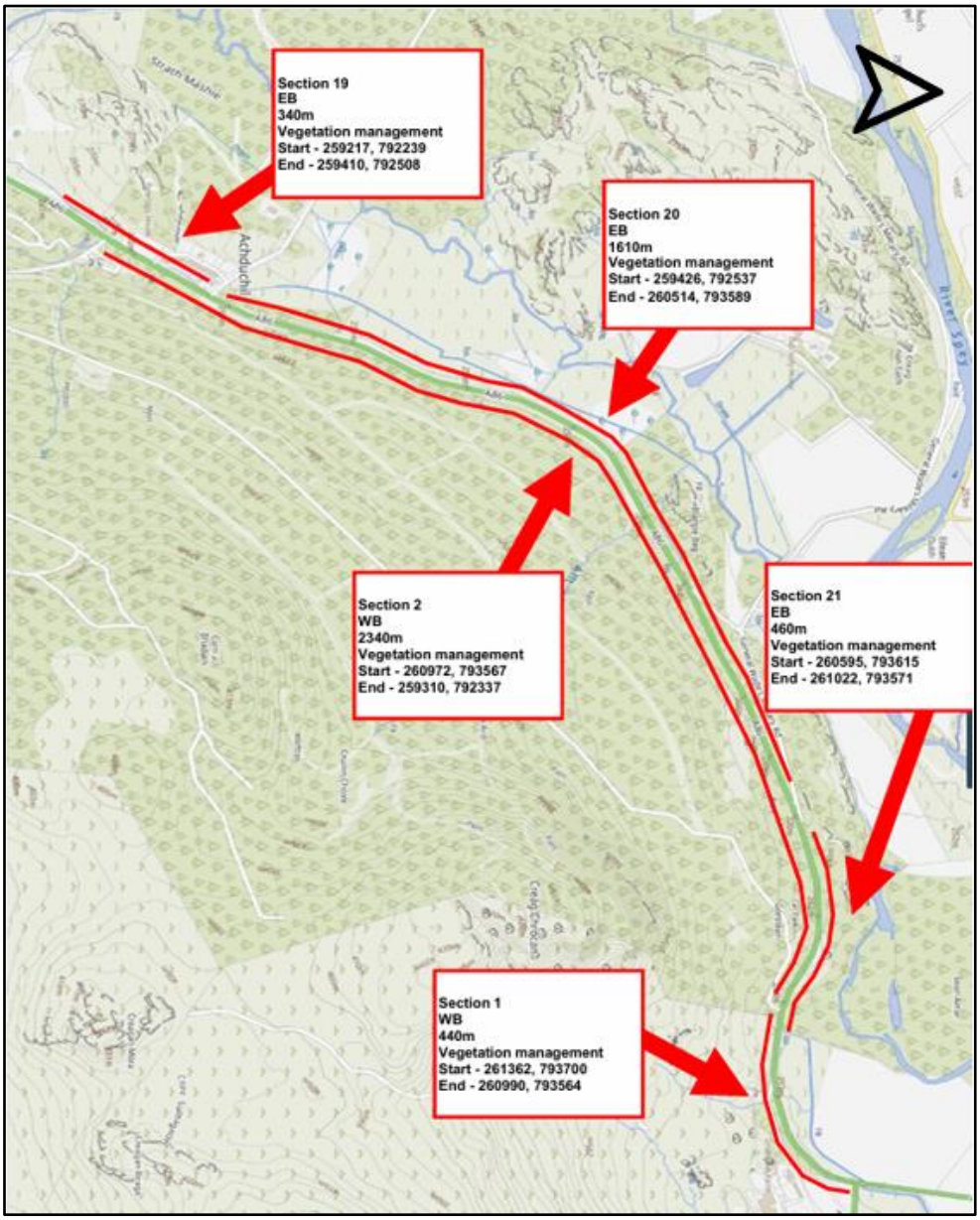


Figure 3: Sections 1, 2, 19, 20 & 21. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

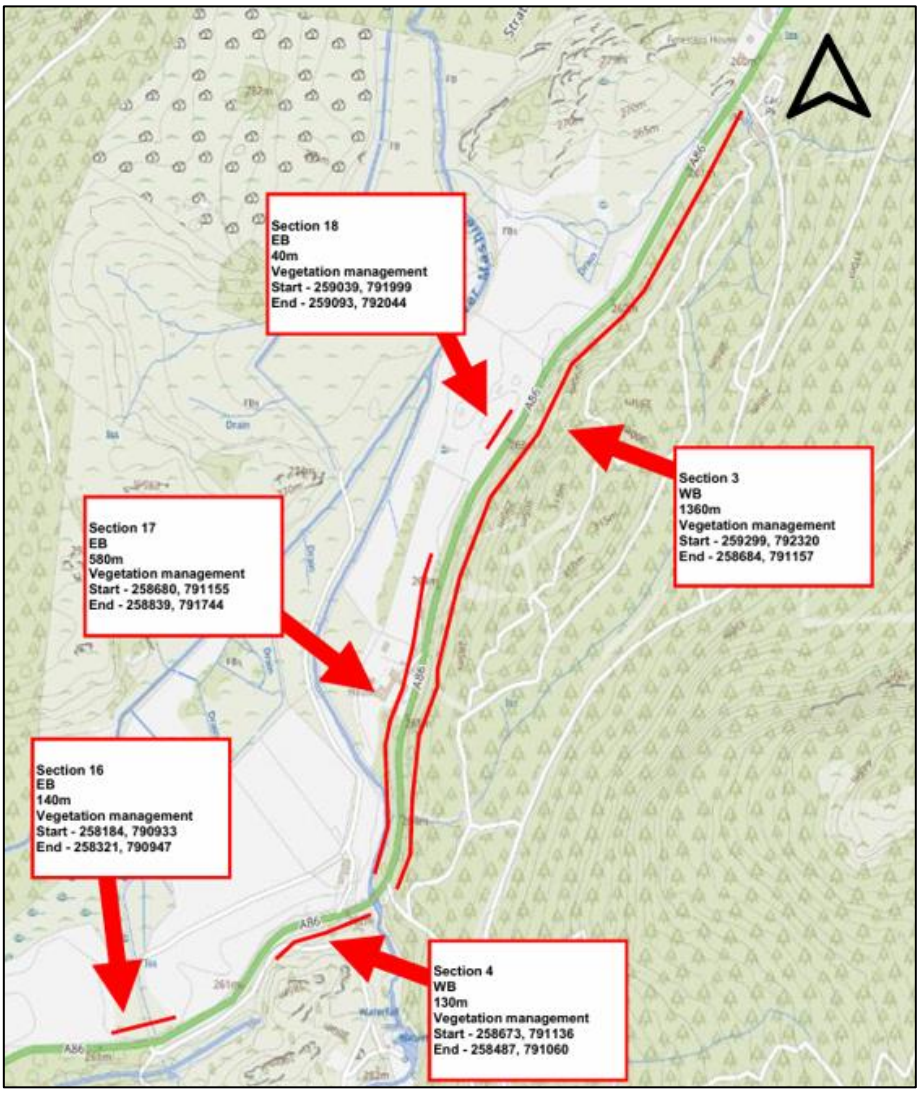


Figure 4: Sections 3, 4, 16, 17, & 18. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

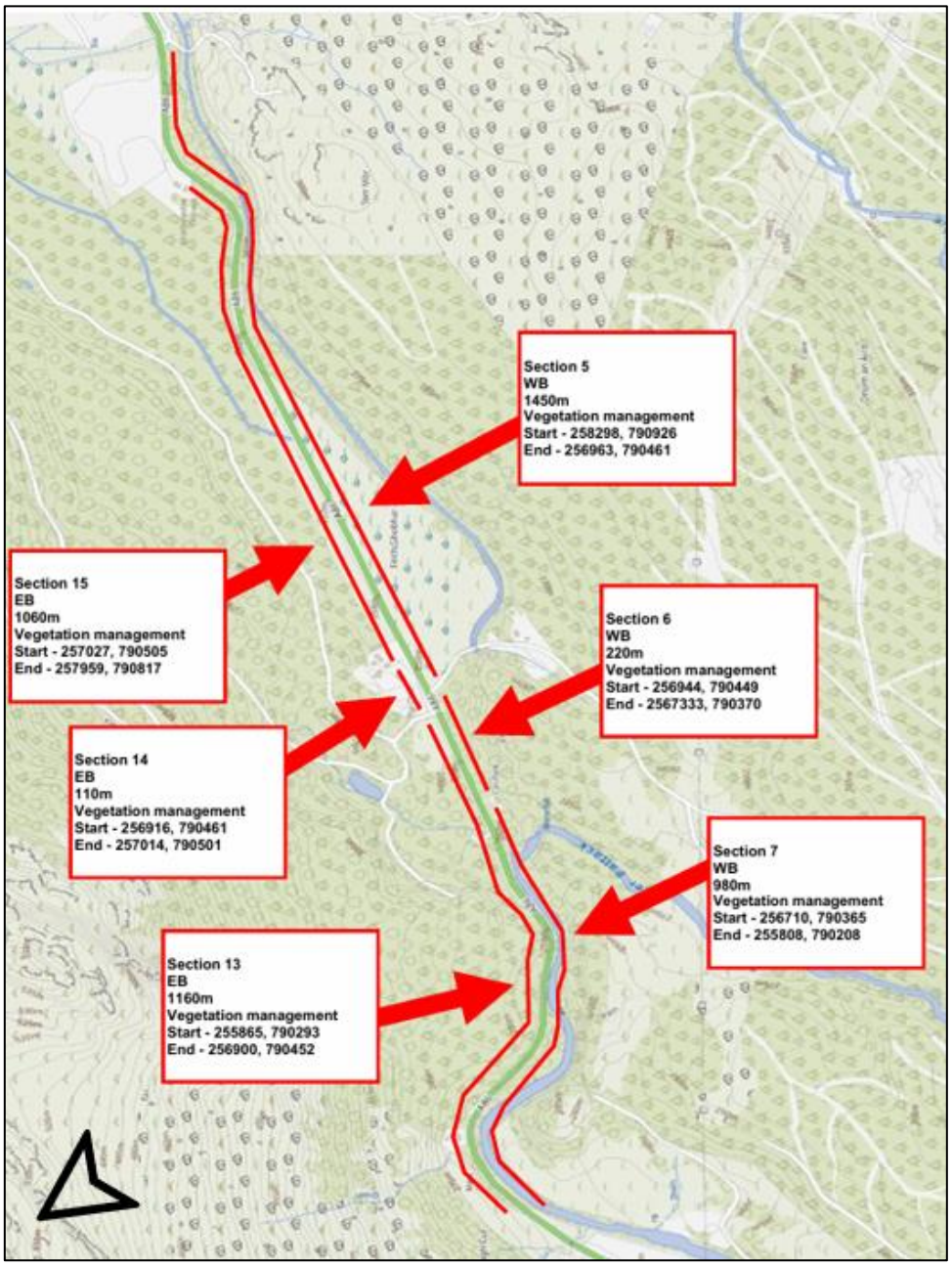


Figure 5: Sections 5, 6, 7, 13, 14 & 15. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

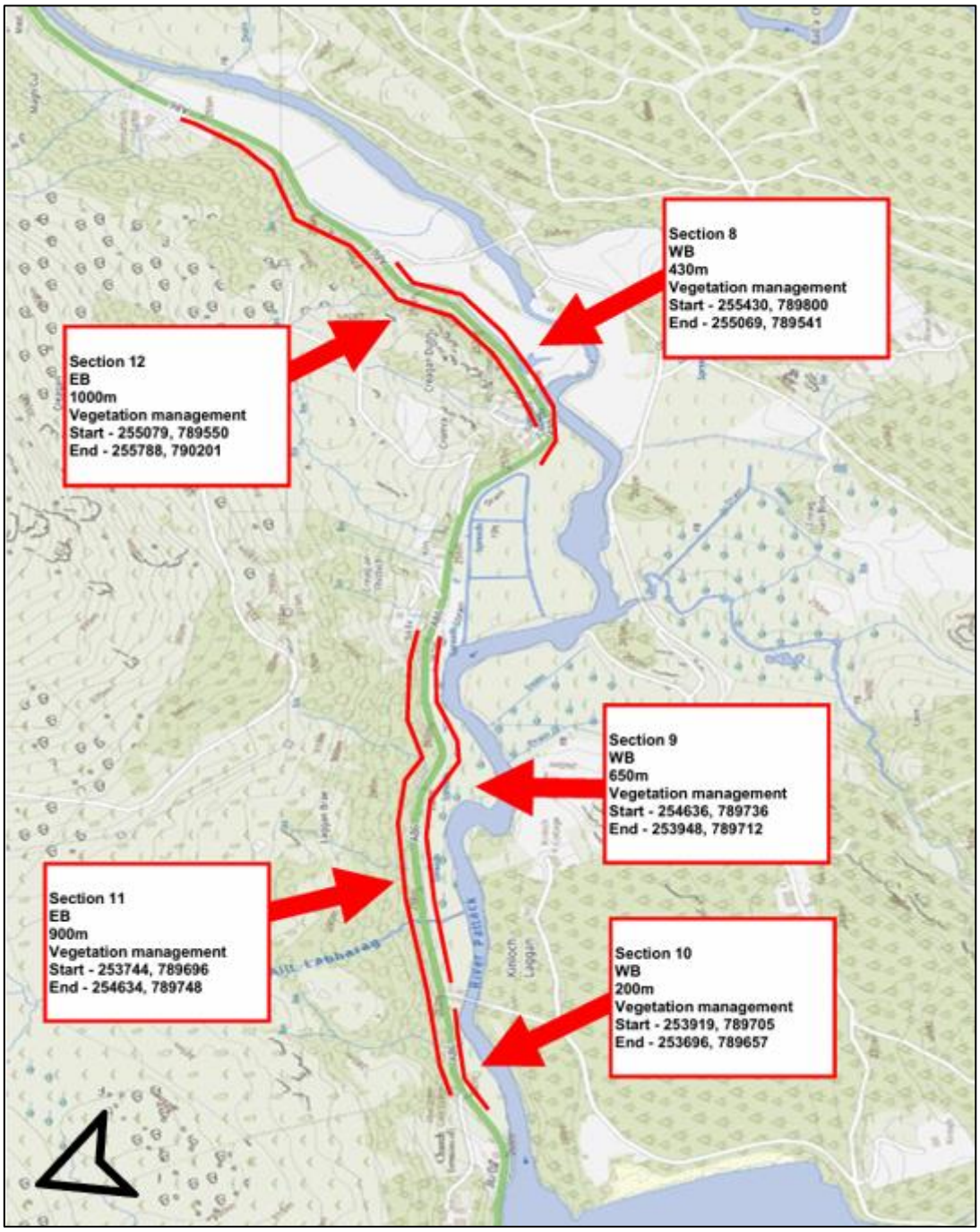


Figure 6: Sections 8, 9, 10 ,11 & 12. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

Description of local environment

Air quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), no Air Quality Monitoring Station (AQMS) or sites listed on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) within 10km of the scheme.

Due to the large geographical extents of the scheme, air quality levels are expected to vary throughout. However, considering the predominantly rural location of the scheme, air quality within the scheme is generally expected to be good. Road traffic on the A86 within the scheme is assumed to provide the main impact on air quality.

Cultural heritage

A search through the cultural heritage mapping tool PastMap revealed that the following Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments are within 300m of the scheme extent:

- Several Listed Buildings:
    - Kinloch Laggan Lime Kiln Listed Building, Category C (LB6908) – 14m north of the scheme
    - Ardverikie Gate Lodge, Gate Piers And Bridge Over River Pattack Listed Building, Category A (LB6911) - 25m south at the nearest point
    - Dalchully Bridge Over River Mashie Listed Building, Category B (LB6897) – 50m south of the scheme
    - Old St Kenneth's Church Burial Ground, Excluding Scheduled Monument No 5703 'St Kenneth's Church And Cross Slab', Kinloch Laggan Listed Building, Category C (LB6907) – 225m west of the scheme
- St Kenneth's Church And Cross Slab, Laggan Scheduled Monument (SM5703) – 220m west of the scheme

Of lesser cultural value, there are numerous Historic Environment Records (HERs) and National Records of the Historic Environment (NRHEs) within 300m of the scheme. The following HERs lie within the scheme extent and the NRHE is the closest to the scheme.

HERs within scheme extent

- Ardverikie House, Gate Lodge, Gatepiers & Bridge Over River Pattack (Lodge; MHG45655)
- March Stone, Feagour (Boundary Marker; MHG51259)
- Strathmashie House (Farmstead; MHG27142)
- Kinloch Laggan (Castle; MHG29656)
- Gorstan (Farmstead; MHG32741)
- Telford Road – Laggan (Military road/causeway/road; MHG56083)

The closest NHRE, Ardverikie House, Gate Lodge (Gate Lodge/Pier; 106494), lies approximately 20m south of scheme extents.

There are no Garden & Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Battlefields or World Heritage Sites within 300m of the scheme.

The construction of the A86 trunk road is likely to have exposed any potential items of cultural heritage interest present within the upper engineered layers; as such, the likelihood of presence of undiscovered features is considered to be low.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme lies within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) (Site code: 8623) which has the following special 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 or Local Nature Reserve (SiteLink).

The majority of the scheme lies within the Landscape Character Type (LCT): 'Upland Glen – Cairngorms' (LCT 126). A small section of the eastern end of the scheme lies within LCT 127, 'Upland Strath'.

LCT 126 key characteristics:

- Strong evidence of glacial processes, including steepened sides and level floors, shattered rock faces on higher slopes, hummocks of resistant rock on some glen floors and terraces of glacial deposits at the edges of glen floors.
- Often form arrival points into the Cairngorms National Park.
- Size varies from large e open passes to narrower, more secluded glens.
- Enclosed predominantly by steep slopes.
- Frequently differing land-use on one side of the glen to the other - linked to aspect.
- Improved, grazed fields on glen floors and floodplains.
- Mostly settled, some only sparsely, but often extensive evidence of past settlement, including prehistoric hut circles and associated field systems, pre-improvement townships, and seasonal shielings.
- Some landmark historic buildings.
- Access varies from narrow roads, estate and forestry tracks to main routes, but most have some form of road running through them.
- Varied experience when passing through glens from open and expansive to sheltered and secluded.
- Views to adjacent uplands; from which parts of the glens are visible and provide contrast.

LCT 127 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.

Land use within the scheme extent varies among the following land use types, however the most prominent was 'Reticular Fields and Farms' (HLA map).

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

The A86 trunk road connects Spean Bridge and Kingussie. It commences at the A86 / A82 junction within Spean Bridge leading generally north-eastwards for a distance of 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) (Site code: 8365) lies directly adjacent to the scheme extents.

Due to the ecological connectivity with the above SAC, a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been completed. Refer to the Biodiversity Impacts and Mitigation section below for further details.

The scheme lies directly adjacent to the River Spey Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Site code: 1699).

It is possible that the following invasive plant species and injurious weeds, as listed in the Network Management Contract (NMC), may be present in the wider landscape of the scheme:

- Broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
- Common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
- Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Curly dock (*Rumex crispus*)
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- Horsetail (*Equisetum spp.)*

- Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*)
- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*)
- Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) has no records of INNS or injurious weeds within 300m of the scheme.

The following woodland areas on the Ancient Woodland Inventory lie on the A86 trunk road verge:

- Black Wood (Wood ID: 16819) - Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Black Wood (Wood ID: 16826) - Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Unnamed (Wood ID: 16790) - Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Unnamed (Wood ID: 16791) - Ancient (of semi-natural origin)

The Highland Council records no Tree Preservation Orders within 300m of the scheme.

Habitats surrounding the scheme include a variety of agricultural land uses, woodland types, urban areas, grasslands and uplands.

An Ecological Constraints Survey (ECS) was conducted by the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team on 03/09/2026 and 10/09/2026.

Rosebay willowherb was identified adjacent to the trunk road. However, the invasive species was identified behind fences on private land, and as such, will be left undisturbed.

Geology and soils

The scheme lies within the Kinlochlaggan Boulder Beds SSSI (Site code: 858), which is designated for Dalradian geology.

Kinloch Laggan Road Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) (Site Code: 9704) lies within the scheme extents and is underpinned by the Kinlochlaggan Boulder Beds SSSI (SiteLink).

The majority of the scheme lies within soils of carbon and peatland class of 0, which is mineral soils with no peatland vegetation (Carbon and Peatland Map). The remainder of the scheme lies within the following carbon and peatland classes:

- 1 – Peat soil with peatland vegetation
- 4 – Predominantly mineral soils with heath vegetation and some peatland
- 5 – Peat soil with no peatland vegetation

Component soils throughout the scheme extent comprise of the following soil types (Scotland's Soils):

- Humus-iron podzols with peaty podzols
- Peaty podzols with blanket peat with peaty gleys
- Mineral alluvial soils with peaty alluvial soils

Bedrock geology throughout the scheme extent consists of the following soil types (Geology Viewer) :

- Kinlochlaggan Quartzite Formation-Quartzite.
- Aonach Beag Semipelite Formation-Schistose semipelite, micaceous psammite and quartzite.
- Creag Dhubh Psammite Formation-Micaceous psammite.
- Pattack Gneisses-Schistose semipelite and psammite.
- Glen Banchor Subgroup-Gneissose psammite and gneissose semipelite.
- Unnamed Metamorphic Rocks, Neoproterozoic-Amphibolite.

Superficial deposits throughout the scheme extent consists of the following soil types (Geology Viewer):

- Till, Devensian-Diamicton.
- Alluvium-Clay, silt, sand and gravel.

Material assets and waste

The vegetation works are necessary to ensure public safety by removing encroaching vegetation that is obscuring forward visibility and obstructing signs, junctions, and laybys.

No materials are required for this scheme.

The value of the scheme does not exceed £350,000; therefore, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required and will not be completed as part of these works.

A site compound is not required for this scheme.

As the majority of trees will not be fit for sawn timber, they will be chipped for biomass or removed from site to a licenced waste contractor for shredding to be repurposed as chipboard. Where possible, some felled vegetation may be left in 'habitat piles' to improve habitat quality of designated sites and associated invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.

Noise and vibration

The scheme does not fall within any Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan (TNAP) (Road Maps).

Modelled noise level data for day, evening and night (LDEN) for the A86 carriageway at this location records noise ranges between 50-65dB (Scotland's Environment).

Baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A86 carriageway. Secondary sources are likely derived from local agricultural activities, forestry and recreational activities and day to day activities within Dalwhinnie and Laggan.

Population and human health

The scheme covers a large stretch of the A86 and as such, there are numerous residential and commercial properties within 300m of the scheme. The closest lies within 5m of the scheme extent with minimal acoustic or visual screening.

The scheme commences at the junction between the A889 and the A86. Throughout the scheme extent, there is a 60mph speed restriction and there are numerous access ways, junctions and laybys on the EB and WB carriageways.

There are no bus stops, paths or street lighting within the scheme extent.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) within the scheme was recorded in 2025 by an automatic counter (ID: 0000ATC01050). This recorded an ADT of 2,003 motor vehicles with 20.1% of them being Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

There are no National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes within 300m of the scheme.

There are a few routes listed on WalkHighlands located within 300m of the scheme, however none of these paths utilise the A86 or adjacent pavements/paths.

The Highland Council note numerous Core Paths adjacent to the A86 and within the scheme. It is also assumed that there are a number of footpaths, laybys, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, local access road junctions, and other NMU facilities along the A86 within the scheme.

Additionally, the Laggan Wolftrax biking trails lie within 300m of the scheme extent, the closest running adjacent to the scheme approximately 15m east of the scheme at the nearest point. However, none of the tracks overlap with the scheme extent.

Road drainage and the water environment

The scheme is largely underpinned by Strathnairn, Speyside and Cairngorms groundwater (ID: 150709), in the Scotland river basin district. It is 3726.0 square kilometres in area and was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD). However, the western extent of the scheme falls within the Upper Glen Coe groundwater (ID: 150693), in the Scotland river basin district. It is 1393.7 square kilometres in area and was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by SEPA.

River Mashie (ID: 23149), in the River Spey catchment of the Scotland river basin district is spanned by the A86 within the scheme extent. The main stem is approximately 16.5 kilometres in length and forms part of the River Spey SAC. The waterbody has been designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact on water storage for hydroelectricity generation and was given and overall status of 'Moderate ecological potential' in 2024 by SEPA.

River Pattack - Loch Laggan to Loch Pattack (ID: 20347), in the River Lochy catchment of the Scotland river basin district lies adjacent to the scheme. The main stem is approximately 16.6 kilometres in length and was given an overall status of 'Moderate' in 2024 by SEPA.

Loch Laggan lake (ID: 100198), in the River Lochy catchment of the Scotland river basin district. It is 7.6 square kilometres in area is located approximately 100m west of the scheme. The water body has been designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact on water storage for hydroelectricity generation and was given an overall status of 'Good ecological potential' in 2024 by SEPA.

Numerous minor/unclassified watercourses are spanned by the A86 and/or flow within 300m of the scheme.

There are a high number of areas within the scheme extent that have a high likelihood (10% chance each year) of flooding due to river flooding and surface water and small watercourses flooding (SEPA Flood Maps)

Climate

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

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

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

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

Policies and plans

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

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. Activities will require a range of ancillary plant, vehicles, and machinery which will contribute to local dust and air pollutants. The main sources are likely to be sawdust generated by the felling of trees, as well as exhaust emissions from ancillary plant and vehicles. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to the air are considered to be low.

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

- Good housekeeping will be employed throughout the work.

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

Cultural heritage

The works are not located within any protected cultural heritage sites, and no change will occur to nearby Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments. In addition, construction of the A86 trunk road and adjacent agriculture works are likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within this road corridor, and no excavation is required as part of the works.

As standard, the following good practice measures will be in place to reduce the risk of impacts to undiscovered features of cultural heritage interest:

- There will be no storage of vehicles, plant, or materials against any buildings, walls or fences.
- Should any unexpected archaeological evidence be discovered, works will stop temporarily in the vicinity and the BEAR Scotland Environment Team contacted for advice.
- Historic Environment Scotland will be consulted with as required, in the event of any discovery/exposure of suspected archaeological features.
- People, plant, and materials will, as much as is reasonably practicable, only be present on areas of made / engineered ground (including forestry tracks). Access required out with these areas will be reduced as much as is reasonably practicable and will utilise as few access points/tracks as possible.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any cultural heritage 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 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. In addition, there will be a long-term visual impact upon completion of works due to the removal of trees and vegetation from the corridor of the A86.

The works are not located within any National Scenic Area or Local Nature Reserve; however, the works are located within CNP. The extent of any vegetation clearance will be localised and limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the required road safety objectives. The majority of works comprise removal of young self-seeded trees and branch trimming rather than felling of larger, established trees. Furthermore, vegetation clearance will take place at an existing woodland edge at the roadside and surrounding woodland will be retained; therefore, the impact of visual changes as a result of works is considered to be low. The CNP authority was notified of the proposed works, and their response advised no further mitigation measures.

It is expected that all tree removal will take place within the trunk road boundary. If any tree clearance is required on third-party land, landowner consent will be obtained. If more than $5m^3$ of timber will be removed from third-party land, a felling licence from Scottish Forestry will be required, which is likely to include compensatory planting as a condition of the licence.

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

- Throughout all stages of the works, the site will be kept clean and tidy, with materials, equipment, plant and wastes appropriately stored, reducing the landscape and visual effects as much as possible.
- Tree felling and vegetation clearance will be kept to the minimum amount necessary to ensure the safety of the relevant infrastructure (i.e. A86 trunk road boundary).
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or not permitted. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape 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 has ecological connectivity to the River Spey SAC, and as such an HRA was completed to assess the impacts of the proposed works on the SAC, including the associated SSSI.

With appropriate mitigation measures in place, the works are not anticipated to result in adverse effects on site integrity (AESI) due to the following considerations:

- Measures to reduce noise and lighting will be implemented during works.
- Hydrological connectivity is limited between the scheme extent and nearby watercourses.
- Vegetation clearance will be limited to the minimum extent necessary to maintain safe conditions and suitable forward visibility for trunk road users.
- Trees will be retained wherever practicable, with selective branch trimming undertaken in preference to tree removal where this is compatible with road safety requirements.
- Trees to be removed will be recorded so that compensatory planting can be carried out in an appropriate area in future.
- Standard good practice measures to prevent pollution will be implemented during construction.
- The surrounding area to the scheme is located within a highly disturbed area by agricultural and local biking trail activities.
- The works do not require excavation.

The scheme lies directly adjacent to the River Spey SSSI. NatureScot has been consulted using the online tool 'InformedDECISION'. Works will not commence until SSSI consent has been granted. Additionally, any if any additional mitigation measures are advised by NatureScot, these will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and will be adhered to on site.

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. There will also be a residual impact following the completion of works due to the felling of trees which may be used as habitat for protected species. A search of the NBN Atlas was not undertaken due to the extensive area of the scheme; however, no field signs were found within 200m of works during the walkover survey.

Due to the timing of works outside of the breeding bird season, the works are not expected to impact any nesting birds. However, if the works are delayed into bird breeding season (March – August inclusive), a pre-works bird nest check will be conducted two-weeks and 48-hours prior to the commencement of the works.

Injurious weeds were identified on site within close proximity to the works. However; these injurious weeds were outside the scheme extents and works will not require excavation of soil, so there is limited potential to spread or introduce INNS, invasive native perennials, or injurious flowering plant species. Additionally, a relevant

Toolbox Talk will be included within the SEMP in case any INNS are found in working areas.

The scheme lies partially within areas of ancient woodland. However, vegetation clearance in these areas will be limited to the trunk road boundary, which is at the edge of the ancient woodland and along the roadside. Furthermore, trees and vegetation growing in the trunk road boundary are likely subject to sub-optimal habitat conditions due to the proximity of the trunk road and runoff from the road. Therefore, felling of trees and vegetation clearance along the edge of ancient woodland areas is unlikely to significantly affect the overall woodland.

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. Any protected species in the area are likely to be accustomed to road noise on the A86 and the high level of human disturbance that exists in proximity to the works. The scheme will be undertaken on a rolling programme. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low:

HRA Mitigation:

- Toolbox Talk will be included in the SEMP and provided to all site staff prior to works commencing.
- The working area and any machinery stored on site will be checked at the start of each shift. A soft start will be implemented to ensure a gradual increase in noise and activity.
- Any excavations, entrances to pipes/drains, or areas where an animal could be 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.
- If excavations (e.g., trenches) cannot be covered, escape ramps will be installed.
- If fencing is used at any point during works, a gap of 200mm from ground level will be provided.
- Passage under bridges and along watercourses will be maintained for the duration of works where possible.
- If animals are observed in the area of works prior to works starting, no works will commence until they have moved at least 50m away.
- If animals are observed during works, all works will cease until they have moved at least 50m away.

- Although the works are scheduled during daytime hours, there may be requirement for the use of artificial lighting, which is to be used for as short a duration as possible and directed on the immediate area of works. Artificial lighting will avoid being directed onto nearby watercourses or habitats as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- Plant, machinery and equipment will be fitted with effective silencers where available utilised for the works. Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where possible, inherently quiet plant will be selected for construction works. Where appropriate, pumps and generators will be sound-reduced models with fitted, lined, and sealed acoustic covers.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and be switched off when not in use.

General Mitigation:

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and to carry out the works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- No tree-felling or in-stream works will be permitted.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing, which will be included in the SEMPs. 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 any protected species throughout the works period. Should a protected species be noted during construction, works will temporarily halt until the species has sufficiently moved on. Any sightings of protected species will be reported to the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. If required, NatureScot will be contacted for advice.

All ancillary plant such as generators 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 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 located within a Kinlochlaggan Boulder Beds Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Kinloch Laggan Road GCRS. NatureScot has been consulted for SSSI consent to permit works within the SSSI. The works will not commence until consent has been obtained. Due to location within the GCRS boundary, there is potential for the proposed works to result in impacts to the qualifying features of the site. However, it is not anticipated that any changes to the GCRS will occur by the virtue of the following factors:

- There is no requirement for land take (or resources) or excavation, and the works are limited to engineered ground within the existing A86 carriageway verges.
- Works will follow best practice and will not promote the known negative pressures on the features; no development or dumping/storage of materials will occur outside of the existing engineered carriageway boundary.
- Standard good practice measures to prevent water and soil pollution will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

All works are confined to the A86 carriageway boundary. Although excavation is not required, the vegetation clearance and tree felling may result in localised and minor soil exposure or disturbance. The following measures will be applied on site:

- The parking of machinery/vehicles and storage of equipment on road verges will be avoided.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape (i.e., damage to verges) will be reinstated.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- 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, and no changes are anticipated to the designated features of the GCRS as a result of proposed works. 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 of machinery and transportation. However, the use of machinery will be limited to

chainsaws, a pole saw, a Fastrac, wood chipper (if required) and a Hiab lorry and machinery will not be left idling when not in use.

There is potential for impacts during works as a result of the improper storage or disposal of waste. As the majority of trees will not be fit for sawn timber, they will be chipped for biomass or removed from site to a licensed waste facility for shredding to be repurposed as chipboard. Where possible felled vegetation may be left in 'habitat piles' on site to improve local biodiversity. The following mitigation measures will also be put in place:

- If more than 5m^3 of timber will be removed from third-party land, a felling licence from Scottish Forestry will be required, which is likely to include compensatory planting as a condition of the licence
- Felled vegetation material will be disposed of appropriately in line with the NW NMC (Schedule 5, Appendix 0/1, 3010SR Maintenance of Established Trees and Shrubs).
- 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 will be removed from site in a safe and legal manner by a licensed waste carrier upon completion of the works. The appointed waste carrier will have a valid SEPA waste carrier registration, a copy of which will be provided to and retained by BEAR Scotland as early as possible.
- All appropriate waste documentation will be present on site and be available for inspection. A copy of the Duty of Care paperwork will be provided and filed appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice (as made under Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended).
- Vegetation arisings will, where practicable, be left in habitat piles as deadwood to benefit invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals or otherwise be removed from site by a licensed waste contractor.
- Staff will be informed that littering will not be tolerated. Staff will be encouraged to collect any litter seen on site.
- Where applicable, all temporary signage will be removed from site on completion of the works.

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

Noise and vibration

Activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and plant for the proposed activities. The works will employ a daytime working pattern, for a period of ten weeks.

Numerous residential properties lie within 300m of the scheme, the nearest of which is within 5m of the scheme. As such, the proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary minor noise increases for nearby residential properties during the construction programme. However, felling works have been programmed during daylight hours, works will take place on a rolling programme, and 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 tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.
- 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. No significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours.

Increased journey times may occur, but these are considered insignificant considering the low traffic counts and works being undertaken outwith the peak tourist season. No NMU facilities are present within the scheme.

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

- The works schedule and any changes to this will be communicated to local residents prior to and throughout the programme.
- Non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the traffic management to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site.
- 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

Due to the required tree removal, the likelihood of localised flooding and surface water runoff could increase due to the loss of natural water absorption and flow reduction provided by the trees. However, the presence of existing drainage infrastructure and additional vegetation is expected to limit any significant impact on local flooding. Additionally, tree stumps will be left in situ, where practicable, to help maintain ground stability and reduce erosion. Works will also be programmed, as far as reasonably practicable, to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall.

There is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment due to operation of plant within and within proximity to various watercourses, including the River Spey, 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 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 Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (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.
- An incident response (contingency) plan will be put in place to reduce the risk from pollution incidents or accidental spillages. All necessary containment equipment, including suitable spill kits (for oil and chemicals) will be available on site, quickly accessible if needed, and staff trained in their use.
- All spills will be logged and reported. In the event of any spills into the water environment, all works will stop and the incident will be reported to the project manager and the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. SEPA will be informed of any such incident as soon as possible using the SEPA Pollution Hotline.
- All plant and equipment will be regularly inspected for any signs of damage and leaks. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.
- Storage of hazardous material, oil and fuel containers will be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.
- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. Spill kits will be quickly accessible to capture any spills should they occur. The ground / stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special waste.

Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and / or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not bunded then drip trays will also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%. 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

Activities associated with the proposed 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, plant use, and transportation of waste from site. Although works will involve cutting down a large number of trees, the majority are of a small size, and the impact on climate and local carbon storage is considered minimal. Additionally, trees to be felled will be recorded to inform possible future compensatory planting.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to its 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.
- Vegetation arisings will, where practicable, be left in habitat piles as deadwood to improve local biodiversity or otherwise be removed from site by a licensed waste contractor.
- Trees removed from the trunk road boundary will be recorded to inform future compensatory planting.

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

Vulnerability of the project to risks

There will be no anticipated change to the likelihood of flooding on the A86 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works. Although the trees along the verges participate in flooding reduction by slowing down the flow of rainwater, absorbing rainwater and reducing erosion, it is not expected that removal of the trees will significantly impact local flooding due to the presence of drainage and additional vegetation. Additionally, tree stumps will be left in place to reduce erosion. Works will also be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall.

Works are being carried out to improve road safety and to give clearer visibility to travellers on the A86. Therefore, the works will result in a beneficial impact on road users.

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

A search of the Highland Council Planning Portal did not identify any approved planning applications within 300m of the scheme extents over the last two years. Therefore, due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner website (Map Search) identified no roadworks commencing within the same time frame as the proposed works, within 300m of the scheme. Additionally, no other large-scale tree felling or vegetation clearance schemes are planned on the A86 in the current financial year.

Trees to be removed are located along the A86 road corridor and within falling distance of the A86. The majority are of a small size, unstable, diseased, or otherwise defective. Trees to be removed across the scheme consist of trees that are not suited for tree growth, such as where they block visibility splays, encroach on signage, overhang the carriageway, etc. Furthermore, they will be removed from areas where it has been assessed that their growth will be detrimental to existing woodland assets. Tree removal will be limited to the minimum number required to ensure the safety of road users and will be focused on the trunk road corridor, which is likely to provide sub-optimal habitat for adjacent trees due to the proximity of the trunk road and exposure to salt and other runoff from the road. The total quantity of trees to be removed from the A86 trunk road has been assessed as negligible in the context of both the local and wider landscape, with woodland remaining a dominant feature along the trunk road corridor for much of the extent between Laggan and Moy. In addition, the cumulative number of trees/vegetation to be removed will be considered and recorded for future compensatory planting in appropriate locations. Suitable locations for replanting are highly limited within the trunk road boundary in proximity to these schemes; therefore, BEAR Scotland will seek to identify alternative suitable locations for compensatory planting, in discussion and consultation with Transport Scotland. The above scheme is due to begin in on 02/11/2026 for a duration of 10 weeks. BEAR Scotland programme all of its 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 traffic management. 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 traffic management to complete multiple schemes at once. This approach allows BEAR Scotland to effectively manage the potential cumulative effects as a result of traffic management, 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

The HRA concluded that with additional mitigation measures in place the works would not result in AESI on the site.

Statement of case in support of a Determination that a statutory EIA is not required

This is a relevant project in terms of section 55A(16) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as it is 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) exceed 1 hectare in area, and are situated in whole or in part in CNP SSSI which s 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:

- Construction activities are restricted to an area of approximately 5.18ha, covering 7.1km on both the EB and WB carriageway of the A86 trunk road.
- The works will be temporary, transient, localised and completed during daytime hours on a rolling programme.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- Works have been programmed to avoid the breeding bird season.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Works will include the clearance of vegetation and trees to 5m from the road edge and will result in improved safety for road users by improving forward visibility.

Location of the scheme:

- The works will be carried out within the existing A86 road boundary and as such, no land take is required.
- The HRA concluded that with additional mitigation measures in place the works would not result in AESI on the site.
- No significant negative impacts have been identified on Kinlochlaggan Boulder Beds SSSI and River Spey SSSI. However, NatureScot has been consulted regarding SSSI consent. If consent is required, the works will not commence until consent has been obtained.
- The scheme is located entirely within CNP; as such, the CNP authority were notified of the works, however no further mitigation measures were advised.
- Part of the scheme passes through areas listed on the AWI. If any trees are removed from within the AWI woodland, it is likely to be from the trunk road verges and on the edges of sections of the AWI woodland. These sections are subject to suboptimal habitat conditions due to the proximity of the trunk road, and any loss of marginal habitat is not considered to be significant.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users and human receptors during the operational phase.

- No other protected species field signs were identified within working areas or relevant disturbance buffers.
- As the works will be limited to vegetation clearance, there will be no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.
- 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 presence is located on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.
- Extensive areas of woodland remain a dominant habitat feature in the wider area; therefore, the proposed works are not considered to result in significant cumulative impacts on a landscape scale.
- Trees to be felled will be recorded to inform future compensatory planting.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

References of supporting documentation

‘Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma A86 Moy to Laggan’ produced by BEAR Scotland Environmental Team.

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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