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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 Drumochter Duals Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) Phase 3

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to remove the existing central reservation vehicle restraint system (VRS) on the A9 near Dalnacardoch. The VRS currently includes a rope safety barrier and a concrete drainage ditch on a small section adjacent to the carriageway. Following these works, the original VRS and rope safety barrier will be replaced with a Flex Beam system and new rope safety barrier. Additionally, new VRS (Flex Beam) will be installed in an area with no existing safety barriers along with a new concrete drainage channel on a small section adjacent to the A9 carriageway and manhole cover and QuadGuard CEN crash cushion within the scheme extent. All works will be undertaken within the central reservation.

The works are currently programmed to commence on 01/06/2026 for a duration of 30 days, between the working hours of 08:00-18:00 (Monday to Friday only). The works are required to ensure the central reservation VRS is suitable to protect errant vehicles from entering the central reserve and reaching roadside hazards of rocks, trees and slopes.

Traffic Management (TM) will consist of temporary Lane 1 closures on the relevant side of the A9 dual carriageway adjacent to the central reserve, with a temporary speed limit of 30mph in accordance with [Traffic signs manual chapter 8](#). Due to the nature of the work, the restriction will be in effect for 24 hours a day.

All materials will be stored at BEAR Kingussie Depot and transported to site daily, as required. The site access will be determined on site by operatives. Access to junctions and private roads will be maintained.

Location

The scheme is located on a 1000m stretch of the A9 trunk road within the Perth & Kinross Council Administrative area, approximately 7.2km southeast of the town of Dalnaspidal (Figure 1 & 2), between the following National Grid References (NGRs): **Start:** NN 71695 70605; **End:** NN 72322 70327.

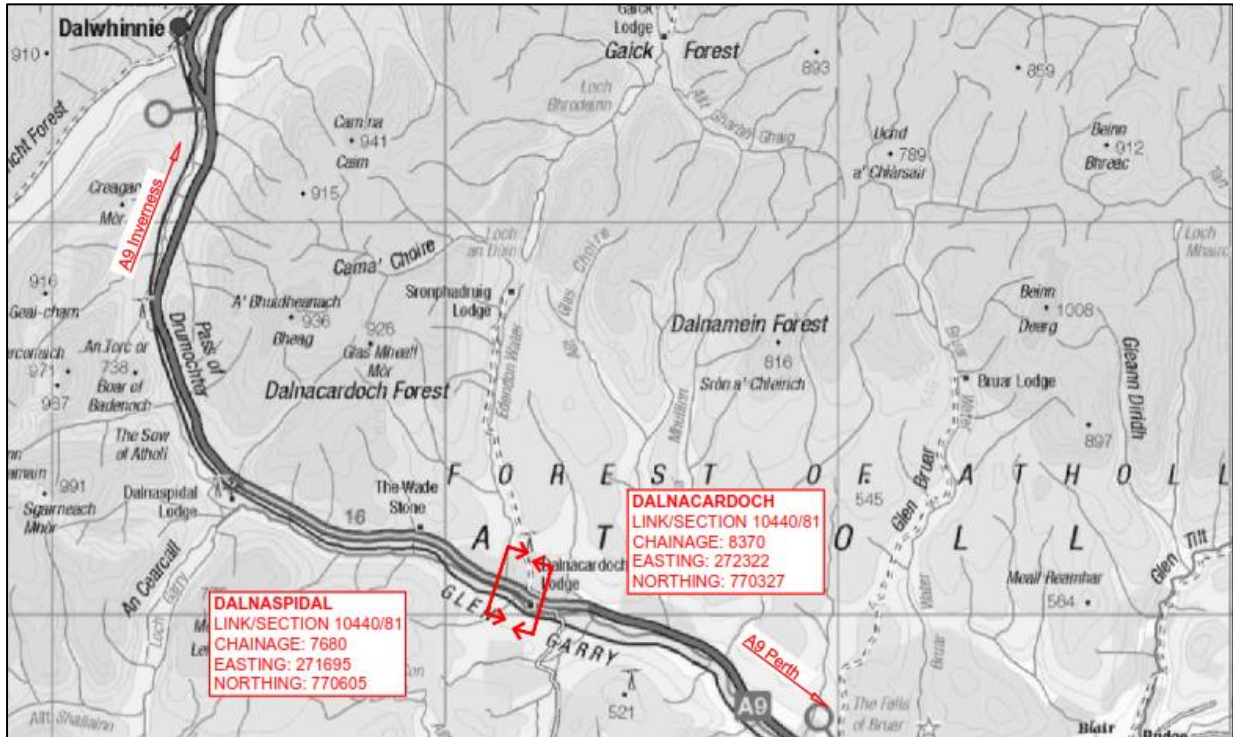


Figure 1: Scheme location shown in the wider area.



Figure 2: Scheme location and extent

Description of local environment

Air quality

No Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared by the Perth & Kinross Council are located within 10km of the scheme ([Scottish Air Quality](#)).

There are no registered Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) sites 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

A search of the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) [PastMap](#), records the Category B Listed Building Dalnacardoch Lodge (Reference: LB6014) approximately 35m south of the scheme.

Of lesser cultural heritage value, several Historic Environment Records (HERs) and National Records of Historic Environment (NRHEs) lie within 300m of the scheme extent, the closest of which both lie directly adjacent to the scheme extent:

- Dunkeld - Dalnacardoch - Ruthven - Aviemore - Inverness Military Road; Dalnacardoch HER
 - Classification: Military Road - Early Modern
 - Reference: MPK9303

- A9 Dualling Programme: Pitlochry to Glengarry NRHE
 - Classification: No class (event) (period unassigned)
 - Reference: 369047

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

Construction of the A9 is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the area. Due to the lack of cultural heritage assets within the scheme footprint, the proposed project does not carry the potential to cause direct or indirect impact to cultural or archaeological features. As such, impact has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme is located wholly within the Cairngorms National Park (NP) (Site Code: [8623](#)), which has the following general qualities:

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

The scheme is not located within any other areas designated for landscape character or quality, such as National Scenic Areas ([Sitelink](#)).

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) within the scheme extents is recorded as ‘Upland Glen – Cairngorms’ ([LCT 126](#), which has the following 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 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.

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.

Biodiversity

No European sites (i.e. Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Ramsar sites) are located within 2km of, or hold ecological connectivity to, the scheme extents ([Sitelink](#)).

There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) designated for biodiversity features within 300m of, or with connectivity to the scheme ([Sitelink](#)).

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

Under the same search criteria, the NBN Atlas holds no records of protected mammal species.

Under the same search criteria, the NBN Atlas holds no records of injurious weeds or invasive non-native species (INNS).

The Transport Scotland Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds records of the injurious weed, common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), within the scheme extent.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders ([TPO](#)) within 300m of the scheme.

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

Surrounding habitat consists of primarily grassland and some woodland in the surrounding area. The River Garry runs parallel to the A9 to the south and is located approximately 80-240m from the southbound carriageway.

An ecological constraints survey (ECS) was completed prior to phase 1 & 2 of the works, which overlaps with the survey area of phase 3 (the proposed works). The survey was conducted on 02/09/2025 by the BEAR Scotland Environment Team and remains valid.

Geology and soils

The Glen Garry SSSI (NatureScot site code: [710](#)) is located approximately 20m north of the scheme at its closest point and is designated for earth sciences (Dalradian): bare outcrops of different bands of sedimentary rocks, mostly in the middle Highlands.

The western extent of the scheme lies within the A9 Road Cuttings and River Garry Gorge Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) (Site code: [9251](#)) which is an area with an exceptional example of Dalradian polyphase folding on a large scale. The GCRS is partially underpinned by Glen Garry SSSI; however, the works are restricted to engineered ground within the central reservation of the A9 carriageway and are not located within the SSSI boundary.

Bedrock geology within the scheme extent is comprised of Gaick Psammite Formation-Psammite ([British Geological Survey](#)). Superficial deposits within the scheme extents are comprised of hummocky (Moundy) Glacial Deposits-Diamicton (sand and gravel) ([British Geological Survey](#)).

The component soils recorded by [Scotland's Environment](#) within the scheme extents are peaty gleyed podzols.

The scheme is located within the following two class zones of carbon and peatland importance ([Scotland's Environment](#)):

- Class 0: Peatland habitats are not typically found on such soils.
- Class 4: Predominantly mineral soil with some peat soil

Material assets and waste

The proposed works are required to ensure that a suitable VRS system (including rope safety barrier and QuadGuard CEN crash cushion) is in place to reduce the risk of errant vehicles entering the central reserve and reaching roadside hazards. Additionally, an existing concrete drainage ditch will be replaced and a new manhole added as part of the drainage system. Materials used will consist of:

- Beams and posts for safety barrier
- Terminal P1
- Crash cushion QuadGuard CEN system
- Concrete bases
- Grate drainage system

The existing VRS system will be 100% recycled and all excavated earth will be redistributed on site.

The value of the scheme exceeds £350,000; therefore, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is required and will be completed as part of these works.

No site compound is required for these works. Storage of plant and material will be at BEAR Kingussie Depot and transported daily as required.

Noise and vibration

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

Round 4 Noise Mapping shows the average day, evening and night-time noise levels (LDEN) at the scheme to be between 68 – 70dB ([Scotland's noise](#))

Due to the rural nature of the surrounding habitat, baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A9 carriageway, in addition to nearby land use.

Population and human health

There are approximately three residential homes within 300m of the scheme extent, the closest of which lies approximately 30m south of the scheme extent, however, visual and acoustic screening is provided by intervening woodland.

Two junctions lie within the scheme extent, one on the southbound carriageway and one on the northbound carriageway.

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

There is one National Cycle Network ([NCN](#)) Route, 'National Route 7' that runs adjacent to the scheme and lies approximately 10m south of the southbound carriageway at the nearest point.

There are no [Core Paths](#) or routes listed on [WalkHighlands](#) within 300m of the scheme.

The nearest, most up to date, traffic counter on the A9 (ID: 0000JTC00308) which is located approximately 10.15km east of the scheme, estimated an Average Daily

Traffic (ADT) count of 11,336 in 2025 with 24.1% of that being Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

Road drainage and the water environment

The scheme is located within the Rannoch groundwater (ID: [150691](#)), in the Scotland river basin district. It is 1273.4 square kilometres in area and it was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency ([SEPA](#)) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD)

River Garry from Garry Intake to Errochty Water confluence (ID: [6911](#)) is located approximately 80m south of the scheme at the nearest point. It is in the River Tay catchment of the Scotland river basin district. The main stem is approximately 13.2 kilometres in length. 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' by SEPA in 2024.

Edendon Water (ID: [6609](#)), lies within the River Tay catchment of the Scotland river basin district. The main stem is approximately 17.5 kilometres in length and is spanned by the A9 carriageway approximately 90m west of scheme extents. It was given an overall status of 'Moderate ecological potential' in 2024 by SEPA under the WFD.

There are numerous watercourses (unclassified by SEPA) that lie within 300m of scheme extents.

There are numerous areas throughout the scheme extents that have a high likelihood (10% 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

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. The main sources are likely to be dust generated by the works, and emissions from transportation of material, the presence of construction traffic and vehicles idling. 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 the air are considered to be low.

- A water-assisted dust sweeper will sweep the carriageway after dust-generating activities, and waste will be contained and removed from site as soon as is practicable.
- Materials that have a 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 non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of exhaust systems.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles and NRMM will be switched off when stationary to prevent exhaust emissions (e.g., there will be no idling vehicles).
- Cutting, grinding, and sawing equipment (if required) will be fitted or used in conjunction with suitable dust suppression techniques e.g., local exhaust ventilation system that fits directly onto tools.
- Regular monitoring (e.g., 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.
- Good housekeeping will be employed throughout the work.
- Concrete bags will remain closed when not in use to prevent cast off to the surrounding environment.

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).

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme lies wholly within the Cairngorms NP; as such, the Cairngorms NP Authority has been notified of the works and no additional mitigation measures were recommended.

There will be a short-term impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site as a result of the presence of construction plant, vehicles, and TM. However, people, ancillary plant, vehicles, NRMM and materials will be restricted to areas of made/engineered ground on the A9, and construction works are programmed to be of short duration, undertaken during the day on a rolling programme. As such, the visual impact of the works will be minimal.

Upon completion of the works, no significant residual impacts are anticipated. The visual appearance will remain largely unaffected, with a renewed VRS system and the addition of new VRS to fill existing gaps being the only discernible change. The proposed VRS will be in keeping with the existing/replaced street furniture, and as such, any visible change is considered to be negligible.

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, minimising the landscape and visual effects as much as possible.
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or not permitted. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape shall 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

No European sites (i.e. SPAs, SACs or Ramsar sites) are located within 2km of, or hold ecological connectivity to, the scheme extents. Additionally, there are no SSSIs, LNCSs or LNRs designated for biodiversity within 300m of the scheme.

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity that may be present in the area as a result of an increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats. However, no protected species resting places were identified during the ECS. However, it was noted in the ECS that the surrounding habitat is suitable for nesting birds, the risk of disturbance is considered to be low due to the existing noise levels and visual disturbance associated with traffic on the A9. However, no vegetation clearance is required as part of the works, and as such, a pre-work nesting bird check is not required.

The works are restricted to the central reserve of the A9 carriageway, which is already subject to high levels of noise and disturbance due to traffic, and noise produced during works is not expected to differ significantly from baseline conditions. 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 scheme is of short duration (30 days) and will be undertaken on a rolling programme during daylight hours. The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is therefore considered to be low.

The NBN Atlas did not record any injurious weeds or INNS within the scheme extent; however, the injurious weed common ragwort was recorded on AMPS within the scheme extent. This will be managed as per the NW Landscape Management plan and disposed of accordingly if required. Works are restricted to the central reservation of the A9 trunk road and should any injurious weed or INNS be identified within the works area, relevant mitigation measures to prevent spread will be detailed within the SEMP and followed on site.

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:

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and to carry out the works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing, which will be included in the SEMP. The toolbox talks will provide information on the legislation, general ecology, and best practice measures for relevant protected species.
- 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.
- Artificial lighting (if required) will be directed away from areas of woodland and waterbodies as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- If an active bird nest (e.g., eggs or young present, adult sitting on nest) is identified on site, all works within 30m of the nest will stop until the BEAR Scotland NW Environment Team can provide advice.
- Personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of INNS or injurious weeds in road verges throughout the works period. Should any INNS be identified in working areas, works will be restricted to a 7m buffer of any growth where reasonably practicable.
- A 'soft-start' will be implemented on site each day. This will involve switching on vehicles and checking under/around vehicles and the immediate work area for mammals prior to works commencing to ensure none are present and that there is a gradual increase in noise.
- Any excavations, exposed pipes/drains, or areas where an animal could become trapped (e.g. storage containers) will be covered over when not in use, at the end of each shift, and following completion of the works to avoid animals falling in and becoming trapped.
- If fencing is utilised at any point during the works, a gap of 200mm from ground level will be provided, allowing free passage for mammals and preventing entrapment.

Taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the good site practice mitigation measures which will be adopted during the works, it is anticipated that any biodiversity effects associated with the proposed works will not be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

Geology and soils

The scheme is not located within a geological SSSI. However, the scheme is located approximately 20m south of the Glen Garry SSSI and is located within the A9 Road

Cuttings and River Garry Gorge GCRS. Although the works will entail minor excavation, this will be on engineered ground within the central reservation of the A9 carriageway. NatureScot was consulted as a precaution via the [Informed Decision](#) online tool, which confirmed that SSSI consent is not required for the works to proceed within close proximity to Glen Garry SSSI.

Although the risk of impacts on geology and soils is considered to be low due to the location of works on engineered ground, the following measures will be implemented and will be carried out with good practice measures detailed in the SEMP as follows:

- Excavations will be restricted to the engineered ground of the A9 carriageway, and all machinery will operate from road level without entering ground outside the man-made surface of the A9.
- Excavated material will be kept to a minimum and reused and/or redistributed within the scheme extents.
- Multiple handling of excavated soil will be minimised.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- The parking of machinery/vehicles and storage of equipment on verges will be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.
- All relevant soil management toolbox talks will be included in the SEMP and sediment control measures will be in place to prevent soil erosion and loss of containment.
- Additional pollution prevention measures as outlined in the 'Road drainage and the water environment' section will be adhered to during construction.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any geology and soil 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.
- As the scheme's cost exceeds £350,000 a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) will be produced.
- The subcontractor will adhere to waste management legislation and ensure they comply with their Duty of Care.
- Containment measures will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- All wastes and unused materials will be removed from site in a safe and legal manner by a licensed waste carrier upon completion of the works. The appointed waste carrier will have a valid SEPA waste carrier registration, a copy of which will be provided to and retained by BEAR Scotland as early as possible.
- All appropriate waste documentation will be present on site and be available for inspection. A copy of the Duty of Care paperwork will be produced and filed appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice (as made under Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended).
- Re-use and recycling of waste will be encouraged, and the subcontractor will be required to fully outline their plans and provide documentary evidence for waste arising from the works (e.g., waste carrier's licence, transfer notes, and waste exemption certificates).
- Staff will be informed that littering will not be tolerated. Staff will be encouraged to collect any litter seen on site.
- Where applicable, all temporary signage will be removed from site on completion of the works.

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

Noise and vibration

Construction activities associated with the proposed scheme have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. However, the works are not located within a CNMA or CQA, the works are scheduled to commence within typical working hours

(08:00 – 18:00, Monday – Friday) and the proximity of road space suggests that residents within the local area will have a degree of tolerance to noise and disturbance. Works with the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will also be intermittent, temporary, transient and short-lived.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- Local residents that are likely to be affected by the works will be notified in advance of the works, likely by a letter drop, which will contain details of the proposed timings and duration of the works, in addition to contact details for the Site Supervisor.
- The Best Practicable Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum. On-site construction 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.
- Drop heights from vehicles and NRMM will be kept to a minimum to minimise noise when unloading.
- All plant; machinery and vehicles will be switched off when not in use.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and will have been maintained regularly to the appropriate standards.
- Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

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

Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and NMUs. The works will take place during the day, when traffic count is likely to be at its highest. However, the A9 will not be fully closed during the works. There will be a single lane closure on both sides of the carriageway and works will avoid the weekend. In the event of local access restrictions to residential properties, access will be granted as requested. Access to NMU facilities which lie within 300m of the scheme will be maintained.

Approximately three residential properties are within 300m of the scheme. The nearest residential property lies 30m south of the scheme; however, visual and acoustic screening is provided by intervening woodland, and the works will take place during daytime hours.

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 will be communicated to local residents and public transport operators throughout the programme.
- Given the proximity of residential properties to the scheme extents, the Toolbox Talk TTN-042 'Being a Good Neighbour' will be briefed prior to the works commencing.
- Local access will be granted as required.
- Appropriate provisions / measures shall 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](https://www.trafficscotland.org) website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR's social media platforms.

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

Road drainage and the water environment

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

Under the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR), the proposed road drainage works are classed as an activity that does not require authorisation. There is no requirement for the abstraction or transfers of water from, or discharges to, a waterbody and standard good practice measures will be in place to prevent pollution or loss of containment to the surrounding environment. 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 measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of works:

- Standard working practices to comply with 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.
- Concrete batching will be carried out on an impermeable surface at least 10m away from drains, water bodies and any open drainage facilities but as close to the works as possible to prevent any spills, drips, etc into open ground.
- Any concrete wash-out will be contained and removed off-site for appropriate treatment/disposal. Disposal of wash water into waterbodies or road drainage will not be permitted.
- Pollution prevention measures (e.g., plant nappies, bunding) will be in place to manage concrete (including any wash water) and prevent escape to the watercourse.
- Cement powder, concrete retarding and concrete curing agents (if required) will be stored in areas away from roadside gullies and any open drainage facilities, with liquids being stored in a suitable bund or storage container.
- 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

During the works there is potential for impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of equipment, vehicles, material use, and production and transportation of materials and wastes. However, considering the nature, short-term duration, size and scale of the scheme, and the mitigation detailed below, the risk of significant impacts to climate are considered to be low.

Proposed climate mitigation measures:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to its Carbon Management Policy.
- All mitigation measures detailed within 'Air Quality' and 'Material Assets and Waste' will be adhered to.
- 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 facilities, where required.

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 are numerous areas throughout the scheme extents that have a high likelihood of flooding due to river flooding and surface water and small watercourses flooding. Works will be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall. It is likely that flooding on the A9 within

the scheme extents should be reduced due to the existing concrete drainage system being replaced to improve its condition.

Works are restricted to areas of engineered ground of the A9 trunk road and traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. TM will consist of single lane closures on both sides of the carriageway. Local residents will be notified of working hours and provided with appropriate contact information. Pedestrians or other NMUs will be accommodated within the traffic management setup.

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.

The works will not result in any change in vulnerability of the A9 carriageway to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment. The replacement/ installation of new VRS is designed to protect users of the A9 trunk road and will have a beneficial impact on road users.

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

Assessment of cumulative effects

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

A search of the [Perth & Kinross Planning Portal](#) identified one planning application located approximately 20m north of the scheme, which details a proposal to erect a poly tunnel, shed composting toilet and water tank. No cumulative or in-combination effects have been identified due to the nature and scale of these works. No other planning applications within 300m of the scheme within the last 6 months were identified.

A search of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner website ([Scottish Road Works Online](#)) identified roadworks planned approximately 30m south of the scheme on General Wade's Military Road. However, this scheme is not scheduled to overlap with the proposed works VRS. Due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

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 or utilising 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) are situated in whole or in part in Cairngorms NP which is a sensitive area within the meaning of regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

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

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

Characteristics of the scheme:

- Construction activities are restricted to an area of 0.2ha along a 1000m stretch of the A9 central reservation.
- The works will entail the removal and installation of a concrete drainage system located adjacent to the A9 carriageway which does not require authorisation under EASR.
- The works will be temporary, transient, localised, and completed during daytime hours (Monday to Friday) on a rolling programme.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- A Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) will be completed for this scheme.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Ecological surveys identified suitable habitat for breeding birds, however, no vegetation clearance is required as part of the works.
- Ecological surveys have not identified any further ecological constraints within proximity to the scheme extent.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme is located within the existing A9 road boundary (central reservation) and as such, no land take will be required.
- The scheme is wholly within the Cairngorms NP, which have been notified of the works, and no further mitigation measures were advised.
- The scheme is located 20m from Glen Garry SSSI, however, NatureScot have advised that SSSI consent is not required.
- The scheme is located within the A9 Road Cutting and River Garry Gorge GCRS, however, any excavations will be restricted to engineered ground of the A9 carriageway and any excavated material will be kept to a minimum, reused, and/or redistributed within the scheme extents.
- The scheme is not located within or have ecological connectivity with a designated European site.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be non-significant and limited to the construction phase.

- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of the works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users, and human receptors during the operational phase.
- 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.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

References of supporting documentation

None

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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