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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 Kessock Bridge

Anemometer and Tower Rescue System Installation

Contents

Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out two schemes on the A9 Kessock Bridge: Anemometer Installation and Tower Rescue System Installation, details of which are provided below. Due to proximity and similar construction periods, this RoD has been combined to cover both schemes.

Both schemes will make use of the existing BEAR Scotland compound at the south abutment under span 1 of the bridge beside Stadium Road, so no further site compound is required. Both works are currently programmed to be completed within the 2024/2025 financial year (April 2024 to March 2025 inclusive), however changes to the programme may result in a later commencement date.

Anemometer Installation:

The '*Anemometer Installation*' scheme works scope includes provision of a new anemometer at the top of the north-west pylon (P8W) of the A9 Kessock Bridge, to monitor wind speeds on the bridge. Works are currently programmed to commence in August 2024, for a duration of four weeks (Monday to Friday; daytime). The construction activities will involve:

- A galvanised steel support structure is to be fabricated and installed onto the pylon parapet and a new electrical power cable provided.
- The power cable is to be fitted onto the existing cable tray inside the pylon and from the under deck Crossbox to the new anemometer location.
- Pylon wall protective coatings are to be removed and repainted in the location of the new support structure.
- The new Vaisala WMT703 anemometer, Arca enclosure, and data processor will be provided and installed by Vaisala.

Equipment required for the works will involve small hand tools for pylon work, lifting equipment to raise components up the outside of the pylon from footway to top of pylon, and scaffolding around the top of the pylon to give access to carry out the anemometer installation.

Traffic Management (TM) will include a northbound footway/cycleway closure with pedestrian and cyclist diversion to the southbound footway/cycleway. It may be possible to keep the footway/cycleway open with supervised entry and exit to the pylon. If the programme changes, this may result in amendments to the exact TM requirements.

Tower Rescue System Installation:

The '*Tower Rescue System Installation*' scheme is proposed to install a new rope winch inside each of the four pylons to assist rescue and access, as current person rescue is difficult inside the pylons. Works are currently programmed to commence in September 2024, for a duration of three months (Monday to Friday; daytime). The proposal is to:

- Construct new hatched openings and hatches at various internal platforms.
- Widen existing openings at platforms.
- Install 'Limpet System' and an additional maintenance platform, and new guide rail.
- Construct four strengthening ring frames below an existing platform (welded).
- Fit additional vertical ladders to allow use of the limpet in assist lift / descent and fall arrest (bolted).
- Maintenance painting will be required inside the pylons and on the outside faces.

A temporary works scaffolding is required to access and carry out paint repairs to the pylons.

Overnight northbound (NB) and southbound (SB) lane 1 intermittent closures will be needed to bring and remove materials off site. Additionally, one of the footways / cycleways will be closed at a time to allow access to the site, and to the temporary works scaffolding for painting. If the programme changes, this may result in amendments to the exact TM requirements.

Location

The works are located on the A9 Kessock Bridge, which connects Inverness with North Kessock within the Highland council (Figure 1). The bridge centre point has the National Grid Reference (NGR) NH 66528 47602.

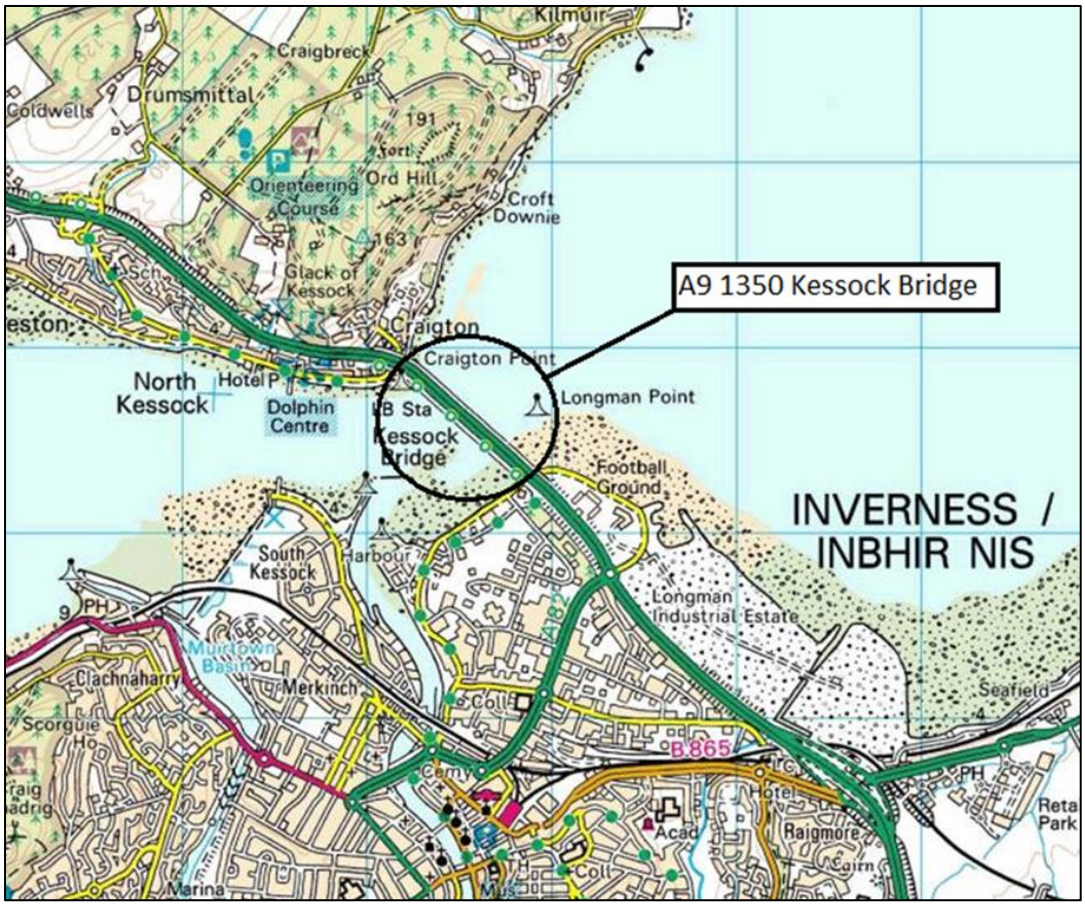

Figure 1. Location of the A9 Kessock Bridge. Source: BEAR Scotland. F108 – Environmental Assessment Request (Scheme ref: 22-NW-1203-69).

Description of local environment

Air quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) (Air Quality Scotland) declared by the Highland Council within 300m of the works.

There are no air quality monitoring sites located directly within the works area. The closest monitoring site is in Inverness, which lies approximately 2.2km south (Scottish Air Quality). This monitoring site records measurements of nitrogen dioxide, and at the time of the search the levels are recorded as low. It is expected that levels within the works area will be lower or similar to those found at the monitoring site due to localised moderate traffic levels on the bridge.

One facility which records air pollutant releases is listed on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) (Scotland's Environment) within 10km of the works location. ‘Allanfearn Sewage Treatment Works, Inverness’ is located 4km east of the bridge and is listed for emissions of methane.

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 trunk road. Secondary releases are likely delivered by urban activity within the wider area, however this influence is significantly reduced due to location over the Inverness Firth.

Cultural heritage

The A9 Kessock Bridge (Drochaid Ceasaig) is a category B Listed Building (LB52506) (PastMap).

Of lesser Cultural Heritage value, numerous records on Canmore database and Historic Environment Records (HERs) lie within 300m of the works. The nearest of these pertains to the A9 Kessock Bridge within the scheme extents (PastMap).

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

Landscape and visual effects

The Kessock Bridge spans Inverness Firth. The landscape north and south of the bridge features a combination of urban development, grassland and woodland. Inverness Firth and the A9 Kessock Bridge form major landscape features within the area.

The scheme does not fall within a National Park (NP), National Scenic Area (NSA), or any other area designated for its landscape character or quality (SiteLink).

The A9 Trunk Road connects Perth with Thurso. It commences immediately north of Inveralmond Roundabout in Perth leading generally northwards for 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. The A9 on the Kessock Bridge is a dual carriageway.

Biodiversity

The Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Moray Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) lie within 2km of the works (SiteLink). Both sites are located within the Inverness Firth coastal waterbody. The A9 Kessock Bridge at this location spans the Inverness Firth, and as such spans both the Moray Firth SPA and SAC.

Inner Moray Firth SPA (also recorded as a Ramsar) is located 2.2km from the works, and has connectivity with the works area.

A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been undertaken in consideration of potential impacts from the works on the above sites.

The NBN Atlas also holds record of numerous bird species within 2km over a 10-year period. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, all wild birds and their active nests are protected.

The NBN Atlas holds the following records of invasive non-native species (INNS) as listed on WCA (predicted with *), injurious weed species as listed under the Weeds Act 1959, and invasive native perennials, as listed in the Trunk Road Inventory Manual under the same search criteria:

- Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
- Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
- Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)*
- Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
- Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*)
- Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*)
- Common Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*)*

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) does not hold any record of INNS or injurious weeds within 300m of the works.

Geology and soils

The works are restricted to the elevated bridge deck, and as such no soils are recorded within the works area.

The scheme does not lie within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) or geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

As a result of the works taking place strictly within the elevated bridge deck, it has been determined that the proposed project does not carry the potential to cause direct or indirect impact to geology or soils.

As such, impact has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

Material assets and waste

The proposed works entail two separate schemes; one to install an anemometer on top of a pylon, and one to install a tower rescue system within a pylon. Materials used will consist of:

- Fabricated steel.
- Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) mesh panels.
- Steelwork removed will be recycled.
- Fabricated steel with hot dip galvanising (for anemometer support).
- Protective paint coatings.
- Cabling.

Expected wastes are likely to consist of:

- Paint coatings in areas where the existing coatings are removed.
    - Paint has no or < 0.5 % lead and is not classed as hazardous.
- Cut/broken-out material (such as steel).

Wastes will be re-used or recycled where possible (e.g. steel). Where re-use or recycling is not feasible (on or off-site), wastes will be sent to a licenced waste facility.

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) (Transportation Noise Action Plan (TNAP)).

Modelled noise levels of the A9 within the scheme extents for Day, Evening and Night (Lden) levels are recorded as ranging between 70 and 80 dB (Scotland's Noise Scotland's Environment).

Baseline noise levels at the scheme extents are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 and local road network. Secondary influences are likely provided by urban activity and water traffic movements within the wider area.

Population and human health

The A9 Kessock Bridge spans Inverness Firth between the city of Inverness and the village of North Kessock. As such, there are numerous residential, commercial and

community properties located at the north and south settlements of the bridge. However, only two residential properties and Kessock Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) lie within 300m of the scheme (both located at the northern bridge abutment). The closest property is located 240m northwest of the pylon. Properties nearest to the scheme have no or only limited screening from the A9 Kessock Bridge.

The A9 Kessock Bridge has pedestrian footpaths either side of the bridge deck.

A9 Kessock bridge facilitates National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 (OS Maps), and walking route 'John o' Groats Trail: Inverness to Culbokie' as listed on WalkHighlands on the bridge deck.

There are no core paths (SE Map) on the A9 Kessock Bridge deck within the scheme extent.

Traffic Management will include a northbound footway / cycleway closure with pedestrian and cyclist diversion to the southbound footway / cycleway. It may be possible to keep the footway / cycleway open with supervised entry and exit to the pylon.

Average Annual Daily Flow (AADF) for the A9 carriageway 500m northwest of the bridge accounted for 31,203 vehicles in 2023, of which 4% were heavy goods vehicles (HGV) (Road Traffic Statistics).

Road drainage and the water environment

The A9 spans transitional waters referred to generally in this report as the Inverness Firth, however these are classified separately as Beauly Firth (ID: 200441) immediately west of the bridge and Moray Firth (ID: 200440) immediately east of the bridge.

Beauly Firth is a classified waterbody by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) (SEPA Water Classification Hub) and was last classified by the SEPA in 2022 as having 'good overall condition'

Moray Firth is a classified waterbody by the SEPA under WFD and was last classified by the SEPA in 2022 as having 'good overall condition'.

No risk of flooding has been recorded on the A9 Kessock Bridge deck (SEPA Flood Maps).

Climate

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out the target and vision set by the Scottish Government for tackling and responding to climate change (The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009). The Act includes a target of reducing CO_2 emissions by 80% before 2050 (from the baseline year 1990). The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amended the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to bring the target of reaching net-zero emissions in Scotland forward to 2045 (Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019).

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

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

Policies and plans

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

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. Activities undertaken on site may cause dust and particulate matter to be emitted to the atmosphere. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to air are considered to be low.

- All plant, machinery and vehicles associated with the scheme will be maintained to the appropriate standards and will be switched off when not in use.
- All delivery vehicles carrying material with dust potential will be covered when travelling to or leaving site, preventing the spread of dust beyond the work area.
- Material stockpiles will be reduced as much as is reasonably practicable by using a 'just in time' delivery system. All material will also be stored on made ground.
- Green driving techniques will be adopted, and effective route preparation and planning shall be undertaken prior to works.
- 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 RoD.

Cultural Heritage

The A9 Kessock Bridge is a Listed Building, and as such there is potential for amendments to this structure to result in change to its' character and/or quality. The Highland Council has been notified of the proposed works, and are yet to advise of any required consent, however any change is considered to be only minor/negligible, and unlikely to adversely affect the Listed Building status. Any consent will be obtained as advised.

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. 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 is potential for minor, temporary visual impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase as a result of obstructed views due to scaffolding, vehicles and machinery. Works will occur for combined duration of four months in total, with the majority of the works occurring internally. As such, any temporary impact is considered negligible.

Proposed works will be restricted to the elevated A9 Kessock Bridge deck, and will include localised changes to the pylon structures of the bridge. Slight permanent visual change to the local landscape will occur due to installation of the new anemometer, however this will be insignificant and in keeping with the surrounding character of the bridge. Consultation with Highland Council will be undertaken regarding any potential impacts to the character of the Listed Building; however this is assumed to be negligible. In addition, the following mitigation measures will be put in place during works:

- Where advised, relevant consent will be obtained from Highland Council regarding any visual changes to the Listed Building.
- 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.

- The working area and site compound location will be appropriately reinstated following works.
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or does not have permission to do so. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- The site will be left clean and tidy following construction.

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

Biodiversity

The scheme is located in proximity of three sites designated for biodiversity features, Moray Firth SPA, Moray Firth SAC and Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar. A HRA Proforma concluded that the combined works would not result in Likely Significant Effects on these sites based on the following factors:

- All works are restricted to the A9 Kessock Bridge above-deck and internal pylon structures.
- Containment measures will be in place on the bridge, and on any elevated platforms/scaffolding to prevent materials from entering the watercourse below.
- There is no requirement for land take (or resources) or site clearance from within the sites and no works are required within any part of the site boundaries.
- The works will not involve any in-stream works, nor any discharges to the natural water environment.
- Noise is not considered to be a defining factor of the works, and all construction activities will be localised to the pylon areas.
- Presence of additional operatives and plant is considered negligible with regards to additional noise/visual impact, due to the moderate baseline traffic noise and movements.
- No significant dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions (DPMEE) sources will be introduced by the works, and standard pollution prevention measures will be in place during works.

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to on site. Any protected species in the area are likely to be accustomed to road noise on the A9. 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 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.
- No in-stream works will be permitted.
- Containment measures will be in place on elevated works platforms and on the bridge to prevent escape of material into the water environment below.
- Although unlikely to be present, any species in the area are likely to be accustomed to road noise on the A9 bridge. Relevant toolbox talks will be included in the SEMP. The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance considered negligible.
- 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 works fall within the nesting bird season March – August inclusive (but subject to species and seasonal variations), a pre-works nesting bird survey will be carried out to ensure that there are no nests present in areas that will be immediately affected by the works.
- Artificial lighting (if required) will also be directed away from waterbodies as far as is safe and 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.

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.

Material assets and waste

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

- Materials will be sourced from recycled origins as far as reasonably practicable within design specifications.
- Care will be taken to order the correct quantity of required materials to prevent the disposal of unused materials.
- Where possible, minimal packaging will be requested on required deliveries to reduce unnecessary waste and production of packaging materials.

There is potential for impacts during works as a result of the improper storage or disposal of waste. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- The subcontractor will adhere to waste management legislation and ensure they comply with their Duty of Care.
- Containment measures will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- All wastes and unused materials will be removed from site in a safe and legal manner by a licensed waste carrier upon completion of the works. The appointed waste carrier will have a valid SEPA waste carrier registration, a copy of which will be provided to and retained by BEAR Scotland as early as possible.
- All appropriate waste documentation will be present on site and be available for inspection. A copy of the Duty of Care paperwork will be provided and filed appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice (as made under Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended).
- Re-use and recycling of waste will be encouraged, and 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 works have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. Residual noise levels will remain unchanged. The works will employ a day-time working pattern. The proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary negligible to minor adverse noise impacts. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The Best Practicable Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum. On-site construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.
- 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, 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 should be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

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

Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site may have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of vehicle noise and delays due to traffic management measures. No local access is likely to be obstructed by presence of works/TM. Road users will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times. TM on the A9 will only be in place as required and will be localised to the works area. No full road closures are expected.

Temporary closure of the footways / cycleways on the A9 bridge deck will be required to facilitate the works, however these will be signposted in advance, and diversions for non-motorised users (NMUs) will be in place. With the following

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

- Any changes of schedule will be communicated to local residents throughout the programme.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the traffic management to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site.
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the Traffic Scotland website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR Scotland's social media platforms.

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

Road drainage and the water environment

During the works, there is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment. Potential changes in water quality from pollution events (either by accidental spillage of sediments, particulate matter, chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain or tidal movements) during works have the potential to have a direct or indirect effect on the surrounding waterbodies. The following mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of works:

- The scheme will not entail any in-stream works.
- Containment systems will be in place on elevated works platforms and the bridge structure to prevent escape of any materials/pollutants into the waterbody below.
- Standard working practices to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works in or near water are detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and will be adhered to on site.
- No discharges directly 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 contaminated waste.
- Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and / or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not bunded then drip trays will also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%.

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

Climate

Construction activities associated with the proposed scheme works have the potential to cause local air quality impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of vehicles and machinery, material use and production, and transportation of materials to and from site. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to their Carbon Management Policy.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emitted as part of the works.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with materials movement, and waste will be disposed at local landfill.

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

Major Accidents and Disasters

The A9 within the scheme extent has not been highlighted as being risk of surface water flooding.

Works are restricted to the elevated A9 carriageway boundary and any traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. The proposed works are anticipated to last for a total of four months, however TM is not expected to be required to the entire works period. Traffic management will consist of single lane closures where required. Where required, alternative pedestrian routes will be included in the traffic management setup, to minimise impact of the works on NMUs.

These measures, along with mitigation measures and standard working practices, will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

As the works will be limited to pylon amendments with an improvement element, there will be no change in vulnerability of the road to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment. The vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and disasters is considered to be low.

Assessment of cumulative effects

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

A search of the Highland Council Planning Portal (Map Search) identified no planning applications within 300m of the scheme in the last six months.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner's website (Map Search) has identified that no other road works are currently ongoing, or noted as being planned, on the A9 trunk road in proximity at the same time as this scheme. Due to the nature of the proposed works and minimal TM requires, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

BEAR Scotland programme all of their proposed works in line with appropriate guidance and contractual requirements. All schemes are programmed to take into account existing and future planned works, with a view of limiting any cumulative effects relating to traffic management. As a result of this exercise, where a potential for cumulative impacts is identified, BEAR Scotland 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. An Habitats Regulations Appraisal has concluded that the works will not result in Likely Significant Effects on designated features of the Moray Firth SAC, Moray Firth SPA, Inner Moray Firth Ramsar or Inner Moray Firth SPA.

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 road safety and it is located within the Moray Firth SAC and SPA, which are 'sensitive areas' 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 EIA is required under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended by The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017). Screening using Annex III criteria, 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 the elevated bridge structure.
- The works will be temporary and localised, with any permanent changes being minor or internalised.
- Containment measures of the working area will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.

- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.

Location of the scheme:

- Although the works are located within the boundaries of the Moray Firth SAC and Moray Firth SPA, and 2.2km from the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar. The HRA concluded that the works would not result in any LSE on the qualifying features of these sites.
- The scheme will be confined within the existing bridge deck/A9 carriageway boundary and as a result will not require any land take and will not alter any local land uses.
- Any impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase will be minor, temporary and not considered significant. In addition, no operational impacts are anticipated.
- The site compound will be located on made ground.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- Any short-term noise increases (i.e. during construction) are considered to be negligible, and not of a level to result in disturbance to potential surrounding species.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works.
- 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.

References of supporting documentation

A9 Kessock Bridge Anemometer and Tower Rescue System Installation Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma; BEAR Scotland (July 2024).

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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