

A9000 Forth Road Bridge 10 Year Marine Licence

Document: Appendix A: Supporting Statement

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Appendix A

Supporting Statement A9000 9 Forth Road Bridge



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1. Introduction

Transport Scotland awarded the Network Management Contract for the South East Trunk Road Unit to BEAR Scotland on the 16 August 2020. BEAR Scotland is responsible for the management and maintenance of trunk road assets within the South East of Scotland, which includes the A9000 Forth Road Bridge, until at least the year 2028 with the possibility of a 4 year extension.

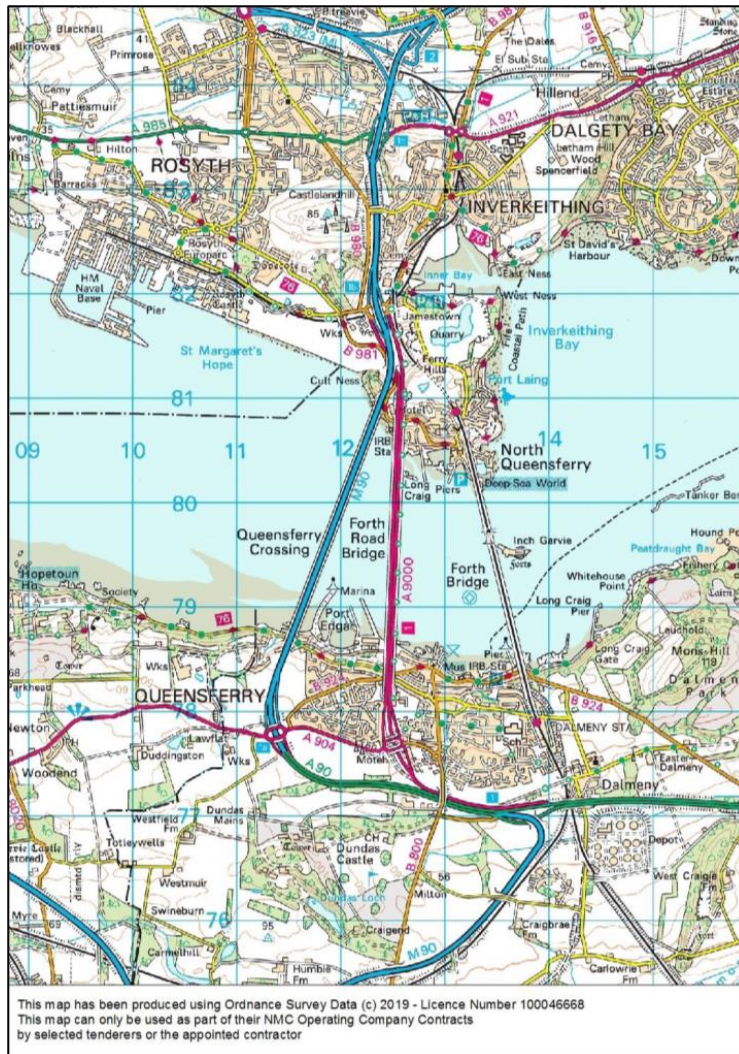


Figure 1: Location Plan of the A9000 Forth Road Bridge

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Photograph 1: The Forth Road Bridge from the north east looking toward South Queensferry, with the Queensferry Crossing visible in the background

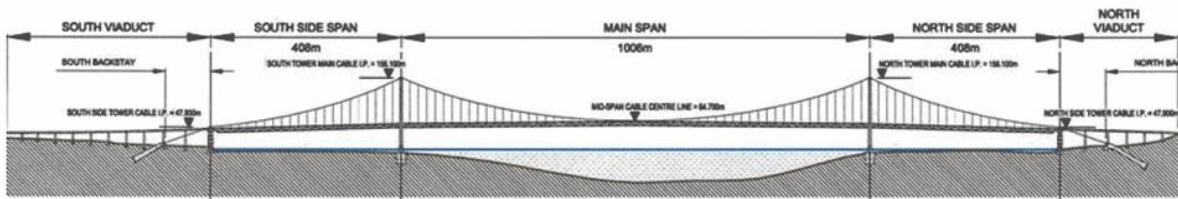


Figure 2: Elevation drawing of the Forth Road Bridge

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2. Background

The Forth Road Bridge (FRB) first opened in September 1964 and has been classified as a Category A listed structure due to its national and international significance. Located 15km to the west of Edinburgh, the FRB is a key piece of infrastructure in the south east of Scotland as it transports the A9000 over the Firth of Forth between South Queensferry and North Queensferry.

As shown on Figure 2, the long span suspension bridge has a total length of 2513 metres, including the approach viaducts, and carries four lanes of the A9000 over the Firth of Forth. The bridge also provides a separate footway and cycle path along the north-bound and south-bound carriageways. The main span of the bridge is 1006m and stretches between the north and south towers. The side spans are both 408m long, and carry the deck to the north side and south side towers, which are flanked by the approach viaducts.

The deck to the side spans consists of a 203mm thick reinforced concrete slab, which have an identical surfacing specification to the main span. The main and side span decks are both supported on steel stringer beams that span between large steel cross girders which are spaced at 9.144 metre centres. These cross girders are supported by two longitudinal stiffening trusses which are supported by the main cables.

In August 2017, the Queensferry Crossing opened to provide an additional crossing over the Firth of Forth. Since then, the FRB is utilised as a dedicated route for public transport (buses), taxis, pedestrians and cyclists, and therefore still requires routine maintenance works to keep the bridge operational and safe. The FRB is also key resilience for the Queensferry Crossing, providing an alternative route should any planned or emergency closure of the Queensferry Crossing occur.

The FRB passes directly over three European/Ramsar designations within the Firth of Forth. These include the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Firth of Forth Ramsar site, which cover near identical areas and are designated due to the overwintering populations, assemblages and passage migrant birds of wildfowl, wader and seabirds. The third designated site is the Forth Islands SPA, which covers a number of islands including Long Craig Island, and is designated due to the presence of breeding bird populations. The FRB spans over the top of Long Craig Island, which contains a breeding tern colony.

In 2021, a 5-year Marine Licence was granted by the Marine Scotland – Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT) to allow for different maintenance activities to be carried out during the licence period. This 5-year licence is due to expire on the 30 September 2026. It is proposed that the new Marine Licence will commence on the 1 May 2026 and last until 30 May 2036 .

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3. Pre-Application Screening

3.1 Statutory Pre-Application Consultation

In 2021, Marine Scotland – Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT) advised that the 5 year marine licence application did not require statutory pre-application consultation.

This application for a 10 year marine licence is not subject to statutory pre-application consultation.

3.2 Environmental Impact Assessment

In 2021, MS-LOT confirmed for the maintenance works for the 5 year marine licence application were not an EIA project under the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 as they were not listed as a Schedule 1 or 2 development under the relevant EIA Regulations.

The proposed works for this application for a 10 year marine licence are not classed as an EIA project under the terms of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

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4. Marine Licence

4.1 Marine Licence Application

This application for a Marine Application includes the following:

- Marine Licence Application Form
- Appendix A: Supporting Statement (this document)
- Appendix B: Works Programme
- Appendix C: Habitats Regulations Appraisal
- Appendix D: Marine Policy Assessment
- Appendix E: Drawings

The listed supporting documents address the requirements outlined within the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. They provide a detailed submission for the works which are required to maintain viability and prolong the lifespan of the FRB.

4.2 Works Programme

Appendix B details the maintenance projects that are proposed to be carried out over the proposed 10 year period. It outlines the description of works, required plant hire and equipment, outline method statement, restrictions and proposed specific mitigation.

An overview of the proposed works to be carried out over the proposed 10 year period are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Overview of works

Name of Works	Estimated Construction Period
Suspended Span Painting Works	2026-2036
Suspended Span Truss Strengthening Works	2026-2036
Suspended Span Resurfacing	2030-2034
Footpath Resurfacing	2027-2032
Suspended Span Under Deck Access (SSUDA)	2026-2028
Footpath Elastomeric Bearing Replacement	2026-2036
Main Tower Lateral Thrust Bearing Replacement	2026-2028
Side Tower Rocker Replacement	2026-2028
Main Cable Intrusive Investigation	2031-2032
Pedestrian Balustrade Strengthening	2028-2033

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Name of Works	Estimated Construction Period
Runway Beam Bracket Replacement and New Suspended Span Underdeck Access Gantry	2026-2030
Vehicle Restraint Barrier/Grillage Refurbishment	2026-2036
Suspended Span Half Joint Replacement	2026-2032
Suspended Span Carriageway Concrete Deck	2026-2027

4.3 Habitats Regulations Appraisal

Appendix C contains the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA), which provides an assessment of likely significant effects that could impact European designated sites. The HRA has five appendices, as follows:

- Appendix A: Programme of Works
- Appendix B: Bird Data
- Appendix C: European and Ramsar Sites Included Within Stage One
- Appendix D: Tern Site Management Plan
- Appendix E: Construction Noise Management Plan (see section 4.3.1 below)

The HRA concludes that Implications for the Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar and Forth Islands SPA's conservation objectives were avoided through design of the works programme and through application of mitigation measures. It is identified that mitigation to safeguard the conservation objectives of the breeding tern qualifying interests, through prevention of significant disturbance, will also contribute to safeguarding the conservation of other species of the SPAs and Ramsar sites.

Even though a precautionary approach has been taken in relation to the proposed programme and the methods for the proposed works included within the HRA, the Contractor may identify additional requirements to amend these, for example due to bad weather delaying activities, or improved methods. If the proposed works do change in nature or timing then a no worse environmental test will be undertaken by the Contractor, and NatureScot and/or the Marine Directorate (as appropriate) will be consulted to confirm the protection of European and Ramsar sites is assured and the conclusions of the HRA remain valid.

With mitigation in place, it is concluded that there will be no implications for the conservation objectives of the Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar sites and the Forth Islands SPA for the ten-year duration of the proposed works. There will therefore be no adverse effects on site integrity (AESI) for the sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

4.3.1 Construction Noise Management Plan

A Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP) for the FRB which covers the duration of the proposed Marine Licence over the proposed 10 year period, between 1 May 2026 until the 30 May 2036 is contained in Appendix E of the HRA.

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The CNMP covers the methods proposed to be put in place to consider the potential impacts upon the terns that breed on and otherwise use Long Craig Island, which forms part of the Forth Islands SPA. This assessment forms part of the HRA. This has included a baseline noise assessment in the vicinity of the SPA, and construction noise calculations for the works currently designed and programmed.

Mitigation to minimise noise and vibration impacts will be utilised to reduce the impacts of the construction works. Noise monitoring may be carried out in response to complaints or for the purpose of refining work methods or techniques to minimise noise.

4.4 Marine Policy Assessment

Appendix D provides an assessment of the proposals in relation to the relevant provisions of Scotland's National Marine Plan (SNMP). The assessment states that subject to the prescribed mitigation measures the proposed works will not result in any significant non-compliance with applicable policies of the SNMP.

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5. Summary

In summary, the proposed works are representative of the essential maintenance required so the FRB can continue to function as a piece of key infrastructure within Scotland's transport network. Considering the nature of the works and the proposed mitigation which has been provided, the proposed development will not have any significant impacts upon the marine environment or negatively impact the navigation of vessels within the Firth of Forth.