

Section 6

General Policy 6: Historic environment – A9 Kessock Bridge is a Category B Listed Building (LB52506) and has a statutory protected status. Listed Building Consent (LBC) has been secured previously for some planned works, and it is expected that many of the additional proposed works will also require LBC prior to commencement. Works will be designed to ensure that the cultural integrity of the bridge is maintained as far as possible and many of the proposed works will only entail like-for-like replacement of bridge components, which reduces the visual impact. Initial consultation has already been carried out with the Highland Council’s Conservation Officer to gain advice on the types of works that will likely require LBC. Detailed design information will be required for any LBC applications and these will be submitted in due course. For works that will require LBC, no works will take place until LBC has been secured and all conditions of the LBC will be adhered to. Therefore, the works are not expected to result in significant impacts on the character or cultural heritage of the bridge.

There are no Historic Marine Protected Areas or Protected Military Remains or Wrecks near the bridge. There are several records listed on the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) Maritime database located approximately 210m east of the bridge, near Longman Point. Several additional records are located further west of the bridge, near the mouth of the River Ness and the Caledonian Canal. No in-water works are planned and the majority of works will take place on the elevated bridge structure and/or areas of previously engineered ground. Therefore, the risk to any submerged features of cultural heritage interest is considered to be negligible.

General Policy 7: Landscape/seascape – There is potential for visual impacts on the marine landscape/seascape during works. However, the bridge is not located within a National Scenic Area, National Park, or World Heritage Site. Any visual impacts of works are expected to be minor and temporary as all works are restricted to the maintenance of an existing structure. Any changes to bridge components (e.g., anemometer, cable stay replacement) will be in keeping with the visual character of the bridge and will entail like-for-like replacement where possible. Following maintenance activities, visual effects are anticipated to be positive as a result of activities which are intended to improve the condition and structural integrity of the bridge. Visual effects for other sensitive receptors in proximity, such as residential properties, will remain unchanged. Works may require the use of temporary site compounds, parking areas, and working or access platforms. These will be in place temporarily during construction, will be appropriately managed to limit potential visual changes on or from the seascape, and will be removed upon completion of the works. Activities requiring works from boats or barges will be temporary and of short duration, which will limit visual effects on the seascape near the bridge.

General Policy 9: Natural heritage – The A9 Kessock bridge shares connectivity with several designated European Sites, some of which are adjacent to the structure. The bridge also has connectivity to several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These sites are designated for a variety of features, including several breeding and non-breeding birds, coastal and marine habitats, and the Priority Marine Features (PMFs) bottlenose dolphin and intertidal mudflats. As such, these features may be present in the local and wider waters of the Moray Firth. A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) was completed to assess potential impacts of the proposed works on the qualifying features of nearby designated sites (refer to the supporting document ‘F565 HRA Proforma – A9 Kessock Bridge 10YR ML’). Likely Significant Effects (LSE) could not be ruled out for several of the qualifying features of nearby designated sites; however, due to the localised and relatively minor nature of proposed works in addition to robust containment measures and specific mitigation to limit disturbance, it has been concluded that the proposed activities are not likely to result in Adverse Effects on Site Integrity (AESI) for any of the designated sites with connectivity to the bridge. Each scheme or maintenance activity will receive environmental assessment prior to commencement. In addition, relevant ecological surveys will be undertaken to support any assessment of impacts (e.g.,

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for otter (*Lutra lutra*). A Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) will be produced for each scheme or maintenance activity which will incorporate relevant good practice and mitigation measures which will be implemented during the works.

General Policy 10: Invasive non-native species – The invasive non-native species slipper limpet (*Crepidula fornicata*), chain tunicate (*Botrylloides violaceus*), and orange ripple bryozoan (*Schizoporella japonica*) have been recorded in the Cromarty and Moray Firths ([National Marine Plan Interactive](#)). Some works will require the use of boats and dive surveys may be required to carry out some inspections. These activities have the potential to spread marine INNS; however, standard and activity-specific working practices include provisions to reduce the risk of transporting invasive species during works. These measures follow guidance from NatureScot and the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS), such as washing equipment or vehicles prior to moving between water bodies and utilising a ‘[Check Clean Dry](#)’ methodology. These, in combination with standard containment measures, are expected to significantly reduce the risk of transporting invasive species within or around the Inner Moray Firth and wider marine environment.

General Policy 11: Marine litter – Appropriate containment and other pollution prevention measures will be implemented to prevent pollution or debris from entering the surrounding environment, specifically during activities in which a temporary platform may be required for access. Grit-blasting and painting of the bridge will be carried out within fully encapsulated working areas and a vacuum system will be employed to remove spent grit and old paint. In instances where the discharge of water into the environment may be required (e.g., hydro-demolition), activity-specific consultation with SEPA will be carried out in order to identify requirements for any consents/licences under the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018. During hydro-demolition works, additional measures will be in place to fully contain the water and debris produced and prevent wastewater entering the marine environment.

General Policy 12: Water quality and resource – The River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District (2021-2027) has been taken into consideration. The A9 Kessock bridge spans the junction between the Moray Firth (ID: 200440) and the Beaully Firth (ID: 200441) within the scheme extent. The Moray Firth was classified by SEPA under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) in 2023 as having a ‘Good’ overall status and overall ecology, and ‘High’ physio-chemical condition, hydromorphology, and water quality. The Beaully Firth was classified under the WFD in 2023 as having a ‘Good’ overall status, overall ecology, and hydromorphology and ‘High’ physio-chemical condition and water quality. All works will be contained and appropriate containment and other pollution prevention measures will be implemented to prevent pollution or debris from entering the water environment, particularly for higher-risk activities such as grit-blasting, painting, and hydro-demolition. These measures will be outlined in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

General Policy 13: Noise – Some underwater noise may be generated during works that require the use of boats or barges for access; however, no in-water works are currently planned and no percussive underwater noise is expected to be produced (e.g., pile driving). There are only a few schemes that will require in-water access and these will be highly localised and minor. Several residential receptors are located within 300m of the northern end of the bridge and several commercial receptors are located within 300m of the southern end of the bridge; however, good practice measures will be incorporated into the SEMP as standard for each scheme or maintenance activity to minimise the effects of noise on nearby receptors. In addition, full encapsulation will be installed for some activities (e.g., grit-blasting, painting) which will provide some impediment to noise. Acoustic barriers may also be used where required.

General Policy 14: Air quality – The A9 Kessock Bridge is situated on the edge of Inverness and connects a busy industrial estate to the semi-rural area around North Kessock. The dominant impacts

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to local air quality are expected to be vehicular traffic on the A9, marine traffic from the Port of Inverness, and anthropogenic activities within the Longman Industrial Estate and the village of North Kessock. Grit-blasting and painting of the bridge will be carried out within fully encapsulated working areas and a vacuum system will be employed to remove spent grit and old paint. Bird guano will be removed by hand and double-bagged to prevent volatilisation into the air. Any cutting or breaking-out works will be effectively managed to prevent dust creation. Additional good practice measures to reduce air pollution will be detailed in the SEMP for each scheme or maintenance activity and adhered to during works.