

## 10-Year Marine Licence Application A9 Cromarty Bridge

### Section 10

**General Policy 6** – A9 Cromarty Bridge is a feature on the Historic Environment Record, but it is not a Listed Building and does not have a protected status. The maintenance programme is designed to ensure that the cultural integrity of the bridge will be maintained. There are no Historic Marine Protected Areas or Protected Military Remains or Wrecks near the bridge. The nearest Canmore Maritime record lies just northeast of Arduillie Point, approximately 120m from the bridge. Works are unlikely to expose buried/undiscovered features due to most works being restricted to the elevated bridge structure and/or areas of previously engineered ground. With the exception of scour repairs (which are not expected to be required), the activities that require in-water works or access will not involve dredging or underwater excavation; therefore, the risk to any submerged features of cultural heritage interest is low. If scour repair works are required, they will be highly localised to affected bridge piers and are not expected to affect any unrecorded submerged features.

**General Policy 7** – 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 impacts will be minor and highly temporary as all works are restricted to the maintenance of an existing structure. 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 a floating pontoon jetty. 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 barges will be temporary and of short duration, which will limit visual effects on the seascape near the bridge.

**General Policy 9** – The A9 Cromarty bridge shares connectivity with several designated European Sites, some of which are adjacent to the structure. The bridge is also adjacent to Cromarty Firth Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These sites are designated for a variety of features, including 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 A9 Cromarty bridge. 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 Cromarty Bridge 10YR ML'). Likely Significant Effects (LSE) could not be ruled out for the qualifying features of Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar and for bottlenose dolphins within Moray Firth SAC; however, due to the localised and relatively minor nature of proposed works in addition to robust containment measures and specific mitigation to limit in-water 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 above designated sites. Previous advice provided by NatureScot for similar works at A9 Cromarty Bridge was used to inform this assessment. 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 (for otter (*Lutra lutra*) in particular). A Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) will be produced for each scheme or maintenance activity which will incorporate a number of good practice and mitigation measures which will be implemented during the works.

**General Policy 10** – No invasive non-native plant species (INNS) have been recorded in proximity to the A9 Cromarty bridge during previous surveys. The non-native marine species *Schizoporella japonica* has been recorded in the Cromarty Firth at Invergordon and Cromarty, approximately 12.9km and 20.3km from A9 Cromarty Bridge, respectively ([Marine Scotland - National Marine Plan Interactive](#)). The non-native marine species slipper limpet (*Crepidula fornicata*) has been recorded in the Inner Moray Firth at Fortrose, on the opposite side of the Black Isle from the A9 Cromarty Bridge ([Marine](#)

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[Scotland - National Marine Plan Interactive](#)). Any in-water works or use of barges or other boats have the potential to spread these and other marine INNS and as such, appropriate management plans will be in place during in-water works to prevent spread of marine INNS.

**General Policy 11** – Appropriate containment and other pollution prevention measures will be implemented to prevent pollution or debris from entering the water environment, specifically during activities in which a temporary platform may be required for access (such as bridge investigations). 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 Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended). During hydro-demolition works (if required), additional measures will be in place to fully contain the water and debris produced and prevent wastewater entering the marine environment. Similarly, for removal of asbestos material from the bridge, full containment will be in place and all waste will be removed by licensed special waste contractors.

**General Policy 12** – The River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District (2021-2027) has been taken into consideration. The A9 Cromarty bridge spans the Inner Cromarty Firth (ID: 200443) within the scheme extent. The Inner Cromarty 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. 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. These measures will be outlined in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

**General Policy 13** – Some underwater noise may be generated during works that require use of boats or barges; however, any in-water works will be highly localised and minor. These activities will be assessed for potential of underwater noise once methods are confirmed, and the likely thresholds of noise will be assessed against relevant guidance. One residential receptor is located within 300m of the bridge (Ardullie Lodge, located 180m north 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.

**General Policy 14** – The A9 Cromarty Bridge is situated in a semi-rural location on the A9 where vehicular traffic travelling along the carriageway is anticipated to be the dominant impact to local air quality, alongside agricultural activities on the Black Isle. During activities such as hydro-demolition and removal of asbestos material, measures will be in place to fully contain the water and debris produced. 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.