

A835 Conon Bridge

Section 6

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 a temporary site compound and parking areas. 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.

General Policy 9 – The A835 Conon Bridge shares connectivity with several designated European Sites, some of which are adjacent to the structure. The bridge is also adjacent to the Lower Conon River Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These sites are designated for a variety of features including habitats, bird species, and the Priority Marine Feature (PMF) intertidal mudflats. As such, these features may be present in the local and wider waters of the A835 Conon 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 – A835 Conon Bridge’). Likely significant effects (LSE) were ruled out for the following qualifying features of the Cromarty Firth Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site: breeding populations of common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), non-breeding (overwintering) populations of bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*), knot (*Calidris canutus*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), pintail (*Anas acuta*), red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*), scaup (*Aythya marila*), waterfowl assemblage, wigeon (*Anas penelope*), estuarine alder woodland, intertidal mudflats and sandflats, open water transition fen, and saltmarsh. LSE could not be ruled out for the following qualifying features of Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar site: breeding populations of osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), non-breeding populations of curlew (*Numenius arquata*), greylag goose (*Anser anser*) and whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*); however, due to the localised 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 Activity (AESI) for any of the above features. Additionally, the scheme has received an environmental assessment prior to commencement, a site visit was carried out in September 2025, and the Highland Raptor Study Group was consulted to support any assessment of impacts on protected species. A Site Environmental Management Plan

(SEMP) will be produced for the works which will detail good practice and mitigation measures to be implemented during the works.

General Policy 10 – Invasive non-native species (INNS) of plant, Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), was recorded in proximity to the A835 Conon Bridge during the site visit and desk survey. Invasive native weeds and injurious plant species broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) and spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) were also recorded in close proximity to the bridge during the desk survey. There is potential for INNS to spread as a result of the works, particularly for works that require access below the bridge deck. As such, biosecurity measures will be employed including agreed access routes to avoid INNS, use of membrane sheeting, strict hygiene measures to limit the spread of INNS and all machinery, vehicles, equipment and footwear to be cleared before leaving site. The non-native marine species Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) has been recorded in the Cromarty Firth at Invergordon and Cromarty, approximately 19.7km and 26.3km from A835 Conon Bridge, respectively ([Marine Scotland - National Marine Plan Interactive](#)). No in-water works will take place as part of the proposed works and there is little risk of the spread of marine INNS as a result of the works.

General Policy 11 – Appropriate containment and other pollution prevention measures will be implemented to prevent pollution or debris from entering the water environment. Wastewater generated from hydro-demolition works is considered to be a trade effluent and is required to be discharged to land on a nearby grass embankment on site with appropriate consents in place from SEPA to comply with the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR). BEAR Scotland will obtain the required relevant registration from SEPA to permit discharge of treated hydro-demolition water on site. 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. Similarly, if any removal of asbestos material from the bridge is required, 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 A835 Conon Bridge spans the River Conon which forms part of 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. No in-water works are required. 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. Wastewater generated from hydro-demolition works is

considered to be a trade effluent. It will be contained, collected and appropriately treated prior to discharge on site under appropriate authorisation from SEPA. Discharge will take place on land at least 10m away from the River Conon or any other watercourse, and not into the water environment. These measures will be outlined in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

General Policy 13 – Some noise may be generated during works; however, no in-water works will take place and no underwater noise will be produced. One commercial property is located within 300m of the bridge (approximately 250m southeast); however good practice measures will be incorporated into the SEMP to minimise the effects of noise on nearby receptors.

General Policy 14 – The A835 Conon Bridge is situated in a semi-rural location on the A835 where vehicular traffic travelling along the carriageway is anticipated to be the dominant impact to local air quality, alongside agricultural activities and the nearby railway line. During activities such as hydro-demolition and removal of asbestos material (if required), 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. The guano waste is to be marked special waste and removed by licensed waste carriers. 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 and adhered to during works.