

10-Year Marine Licence Application A87 Skye Bridge

Section 5(i)

The 10-year maintenance programme is split up into three types of activities: schemes, cyclic maintenance and investigations. Schemes represent specific projects that are planned and will be required at some point over the next 10 years, whilst cyclic maintenance works are carried out regularly and may be required at any time (likely more than once) over the next 10 years. Cyclic maintenance activities are not necessarily planned but may be identified as required during regular inspections or investigations. Investigations are tasks required to understand the degree of maintenance work needed and may be carried out at any time as necessary.

At A87 Skye Bridge, the activities ‘bridge deck resurfacing and waterproofing’, ‘structural health monitoring system installation/maintenance’, ‘internal access improvements’, and ‘bentonite replacement’ are schemes. Remaining activities are smaller cyclic maintenance or inspection works which can be carried out on a regular basis.

Much of the proposed maintenance work will be restricted to the A87 carriageway and will be carried out from the bridge deck with standard containment measures in place. However, some activities will require a degree of work under the bridge. To prevent materials entering the marine environment from any of the activities on or under the bridge, good practice measures will include implementation of debris netting, protective shelters, containment and sumps (depending on the activity). In the event that hydro-demolition activities are required, additional measures will be in place to fully contain the water and debris produced, and appropriate authorisation from SEPA will be obtained as required to permit any discharge of water used in hydro-demolition.

Some works and inspections may include in-water works or require access from the waterbody via barges or boats; however appropriate containment measures will be in place on any watercraft used to prevent pollution or debris from entering the marine environment.

The A87 Skye Bridge spans the Inner Hebrides and the Minches Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Lochs Duich, Long, and Alsh Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (MPA NC), and is located just west of the Lochs Duich, Long, and Alsh Reefs SAC. Additionally, the A87 Skye Bridge is located 300m south of the southern end of the Loch Carron MPA NC, and is located 3.1km from the coastal areas of the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC. These European sites are designated for a variety of predominantly marine habitat and sediment features, with some mammal (marine and terrestrial), and terrestrial habitat features. Of note, flame shell beds are present throughout the Lochs Duich, Long, and Alsh Reefs SAC, including directly below the A87 Skye Bridge. Flame shell beds may be at risk of direct impacts due to physical disturbance and/or sedimentation from in-water works and a risk of indirect impacts on these features due to pollution, which can reduce water quality.

A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) was completed to assess potential impacts of the proposed works on the qualifying features of these sites (refer to the supporting document ‘F565 HRA Proforma – A87 Skye Bridge 10YR ML’). Likely Significant Effects (LSE) could not be ruled out for most features; 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. Furthermore, NatureScot confirmed via email correspondence in February 2024 that they agree that works are unlikely to result in AESI provided that appropriate good practice and mitigation measures are in place.

The proposed works do not meet the thresholds to be considered Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 projects under the Marine Works (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This legislation transposes the European Union’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by 2014/52/EU) into Scottish law for projects within the Scottish Marine

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Area and includes the thresholds for Annex I and Annex II projects from the EIA Directive (as determined by the criteria within Annex II of the EIA Directive) within Schedules 1 and 2.

Proposed works will also be assessed under The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, which transposes the EIA Directive into Scottish law for projects related to trunk roads. Under this legislation, some of the proposed works could meet the threshold to be considered Annex II projects and may therefore require screening to determine whether a full EIA is required. In these cases, a Record of Determination (RoD) will be prepared which will provide evidence and information for the determination of whether a full EIA will be required. The RoD will include the main potential effects of proposed works on the environment and mitigation to be implemented that will minimise the environmental impact. Although unlikely, where a full EIA is required, the RoD will help to inform the screening and scoping process.