

AGENDA ITEM 5

APPENDIX 2

2019/0051/DET

HRA

NATURA APPRAISAL PROFORMA – UTSI'S BRIDGE 2

SITE DETAILS

1a. Name of Natura site affected & current status

1. Cairngorms SAC
2. Cairngorms SPA
3. River Spey SAC

1b. Name of component SSSI if relevant

1. Glenmore Forest SSSI
2. The River Spey SAC does not have an SSSI at this location.
3. Allt Mor SSSI

1c. European qualifying interest(s) & whether priority/non-priority:

1. Cairngorms SAC

European priority interests (species)

- Species-rich *Nardus* grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in continental Europe)
- Blanket bogs
- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*)
- Alpine pioneer formations of the *Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae*
- Caledonian forest
- Bog woodland

European interests (habitats)

- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea*
- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- Alpine and Boreal heaths
- Sub-Arctic *Salix* spp. scrub
- *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands
- Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*)
- Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
- Transition mires and quaking bogs
- Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladanii*)
- Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
- Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation

European interests (species)

- *Lutra lutra* (Otter)

- *Buxbaumia viridis* (Green shield moss)

2. Cairngorms SPA

European non-priority interest:

- Scottish Crossbill
- Golden Eagle
- Peregrine
- Merlin
- Osprey
- Capercaillie
- Dotterel

3. River Spey SAC

Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*)

1d. Conservation objectives for qualifying interests:

1. Cairngorms SAC

A. ANNEX I HABITATS

To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for the qualifying features.

To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Extent of the habitats on site
- Distribution of the habitats within site
- Structure and function of the habitats
- Processes supporting the habitats
- Distribution of typical species of the habitats
- Viability of typical species as components of the habitats
- No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitats

B. ANNEX II SPECIES

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the

site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for the qualifying features.

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species

2. Cairngorms SPA

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained.

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species

3. River Spey SAC

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below), or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species
- Population of the species, including range of genetic types, as a viable component of the site

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*)

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below), or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of

the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species
- Population of the species as viable component of the site

Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)
 Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below), or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species
- Distribution and viability of freshwater pearl mussel host species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting freshwater pearl mussel host species

Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)

PROPOSAL DETAILS

2a. Proposal title

2019/00470/FUL - Temporary replacement of bridge slightly downstream of the current bridge, at Land 1300M NW of Ranger Base Office, Cairngorm Mountain, Glenmore, Aviemore – Utsi’s bridge

2b. Date consultation sent:

5 June 2019

2c. Date consultation received

5 June 2019

2d. Name of consultee

Highland Council, then CNPA

2e. Name of competent authority

CNPA – called in the planning application

2f. Type of Case:

Planning

2g. Details of proposed operation (inc. location, timing, methods):

As described in the supporting statement submitted with the planning application:

Utsi's Bridge is a steel beam and timber decked structure located at the beginning of the Chalamain Gap trail in the Cairngorms National Park. The current bridge was built in 1979 to replace a previous structure installed by Mikel Utsi as part of the reintroduction of reindeer to Scotland. The bridge and surrounding land are now owned by Forestry Commission Scotland and the area is popular with walkers and tourists visiting the Glenmore area.

The reindeer herd is now well established, with local tours to visit the herd occurring twice a day during the majority of the year. On occasion, reindeer are taken into the Reindeer Centre at Glenmore as part of the rotation of the animals and to allow for welfare to be managed.

Slightly upstream from the bridge location, the river splits into two channels with an islet in the centre. The main watercourse usually travels on the left hand channel with the narrower right hand channel usually only active in the higher flows of winter and spring. The existing structure is a simple construction, involving steel beams which span from stone abutments to a central pier located on the islet, which are overdecked with timber. The watercourse is very active and has scoured much of the islet behind the central pier.

As a temporary measure, Forestry Commission Scotland have used gabion baskets in the past to try and deflect the worst of the flow and give some protection to the pier. The baskets are no longer suitable and the central pier is now subject to scour from the watercourse.

The access from the public road to the site is a basic trodden path that varies from around 600mm to 1m wide and which cuts down a steep hillside. Access for construction plant is extremely difficult and as such we propose to install two aerial mast type bridges as shown in the accompanying drawings. This type of bridge is supplied in lightweight sections that can be carried by hand to the location where the structure is to be erected preventing the need to build a wider access track that would not be in keeping with the surrounding area. Minimal plant is required to manage the construction and the existing structure can be cut down into smaller sections for removal.

The proposed structure has been designed to ensure a deck level well above that of a 1:100 year flood return period for the watercourse. Due to concerns for the remaining lifespan of the current bridge, Forestry Commission Scotland are keen to install the proposed bridging arrangements as soon as possible. However, we recognise that building a central supporting pier will, in time, provide similar problems to those currently being experienced. We are proposing to modify the proposed structure to introduce a cable stayed element that will support the total span and remove the need for a central pier. The adapted structure is still under design, with our Structural Engineer collaborating with the manufacturer to understand how the final structure will look and perform.

Once a fully designed and certified version is available along with the additional funding, we will re-apply for permission to amend the proposed structure and remove the central pier. At the time of writing it is unknown how long this will take to achieve and there is concern for the current structure hence this initial proposal. Kelly McKellar IEng MICE Recreation Civil Engineer 04/02/2019

Further information provided in second consultation:

"Utsi's Bridge
Outline Construction Method Statement

The following is an outline construction method statement for the installation of a new structure and removal of the existing structure known as Utsi's Bridge located at grid reference NH 9841 0715 in Glenmore Forest Park.

This method may be subject to minor changes following appointment of a suitable Contractor to undertake the works. Once a Contractor has been appointed, the updated Construction Method Statement and Programme can be passed to Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) for approval prior to works commencing on site.

Environment

Pre-construction environmental checks are to be carried out prior to commencement of construction in the area by the local Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Environmental Forester.

Any recommendations will be strictly adhered to. A copy of the report will be sent to CNPA for information prior to works commencing on site.

The FLS Environment Forester has already imposed daylight working hours only to mitigate disturbance to mammals and birds.

Pollution Control

Anti-pollution booms and anti-silt booms will be placed across the watercourse and anchored to the bank using timber pegs. Debris/silt netting will be placed across the front face of each abutment position and extend beyond by minimum 2m either side. All silt and pollution protection will be monitored for the duration of the works and removed on completion. All plant required will have a suitable spill kit and refueling will take place at least 25m away from any watercourse or tributary/drain etc.

An action plan for fuel spillage will be required by the Employer and supplied to CNPA for agreement prior to works being carried out.

Plant

Plant is anticipated to be mainly hand tools with a possibility of micro excavators and power barrows dependent of an approved Contractors method. It is anticipated that helicopters will be used to transport the main sections of the new structure and tonne bags of stone for the gabion baskets into the site and to remove the redundant bridge on completion. Use of helicopters would involve around 6-8 flying hours spread out over the 2-3 week construction period and would represent minimal disturbance to the local wildlife.

To further mitigate this, construction of the bridge will be restricted to a period between September and February (likely September/October) and not during the early summer months as previously stated.

The Contractor will also be responsible for managing members of the public and marshalling the area during each flight with a team responsible for coordinating each lift.

Managing the Site

Once an approved Contractor has been appointed, the site will be marked and an exclusion zone established to protect members of the public and to indicate the boundary of the work site. Advanced warning signs will be displayed around the area and in local car parks and on the FLS website.

Installation of new structure

The footings of the new bridge will be excavated. The excavated material will be set aside locally for use in backfilling around the new abutments and in reinstating the old abutments when removed. A layer of sub-base will be laid followed by the first layer of gabion baskets. The baskets will be filled in a way which minimizes voids. Subsequent course of baskets to be laid with galvanized holding down plate installed before final course as per the Construction Drawings. Backfill around the base to existing ground level.

Assembly of bridge trusses in car park and then lifted to site via helicopter. Trusses can then be placed straight on to abutments and fixed to holding down plates.

Access steps to be installed and timber deck and railings installed. End plates fixed and then structure securely bolted to timber sleepers.

Short length of new path to be prepared and 100mm thick layer of Type 1 material placed and compacted followed by a 50mm layer of 20mm to dust material. This should match the existing path in colour.

FLS Bridge Engineer to attend site and sign off new structure before removal begins.

Removal of existing structure

Divert members of the public to use new structure. Re-define the site area and move temporary

fencing as necessary.

Begin by removing any loose material or components from the structure. Working from one side, timber handrails and deck to be removed and bundled for helicopter lift to car park.

Hard connections to be broken and longitudinal steel lifted via helicopter to car park.

Pier broken up using sledgehammer and pieces decanted into one tonne bags for flying off site. Gabion baskets removed. Stone spread locally if CNPA approve.

Materials broken down and removed off site to skip. Contractor will need to supply FLS with waste transfer certificates before final payment is released.

Old path grubbed up and any arisings spread locally in a neat and tidy manner or removed off site.”

Kelly McKellar IEng MICE
Recreation Civil Engineer
22/5/19

APPRAISAL IN RELATION TO REGULATION 48

3a. Is the operation directly connected with or necessary to conservation management of the site?

No

3b. Is the operation likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interest? Consider each qualifying interest in relation to the conservation objectives.

Some of the following boxes include summaries of guidance relevant to that stage. Once considered the text should be deleted as it is not part of the audit trail.

Several key habitats and species are present, and should be considered further. See below.

Cairngorm SPA

Scottish crossbill (*Loxia scotica*) - present in this area but not likely to be affected by the proposed works because they feed in the Scots pine trees and are mobile, so can easily avoid disturbance.

The path is already used, so already disturbed by people. Helicopter use will disturb them.

Dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus*) - not present at this location.

Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) - may fly over this location but not likely to be affected by the proposed works. Helicopters pose a risk to golden eagle so there is a likely significant effect.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) - may fly over this location but not likely to be affected by the proposed works. Helicopters pose a risk to peregrine falcon, so there is a likely significant effect.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) - not likely to be present, river too small to fish in.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) - not likely to be present - habitat here is woodland not open heath preferred by merlin.

Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) - likely to be present.

River Spey SAC

Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) - not likely to be present this high in the catchment.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) - likely to be present and to hunt along the river.

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) - could be present but high in the catchment.

Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) - not likely to be present at this location - too high and habitat not suitable.

Cairngorms SAC

Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels - not present at this location.

High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage (Priority) - not present at this location.

Plants in crevices on acid rocks- not present at this location.

Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone- not present at this location.
 Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds- not present at this location.
 Blanket bog (Priority)- not present at this location.
 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface- not present at this location.
 Hard-water springs depositing lime (Priority)- not present at this location.
 Mountain willow scrub- not present at this location.
 Montane acid grasslands- not present at this location.
 Alpine and subalpine heaths- not present at this location.
 Acidic scree- not present at this location.
 Tall herb communities- not present at this location.
 Plants in crevices on base-rich rocks- not present at this location.
 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath- not present at this location.
 Dry heaths- not present at this location.
 Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas (Priority) - not present at this location.
 Caledonian forest (Priority) - present at this location
 Bog woodland (Priority) - not present at this location.
 Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands- not present at this location.
 Green shield-moss (*Buxbaumia viridis*) -not present at this location.
 Otter (*Lutra lutra*) - likely to be present.

Conclusion

Likely significant effect on capercaillie and Scottish crossbill (Cairngorms SPA), otter (Cairngorms SAC and River Spey SAC), salmon (River Spey SAC), Caledonian Forest and green shield-moss (Cairngorms SAC), if present at this location.

3c. Appraisal of the implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

We note that the proposal is to replace an existing bridge, but at a slightly different location, downstream of the existing bridge. They intend to use helicopters to transport the main sections of the new structure and tonne bags of stone for the gabion baskets, and to remove the redundant bridge on completion. Use of helicopters would involve around 6-8 flying hours spread out over the 2-3 week construction period. Construction of the bridge will be restricted to a period between September and February (likely September/October).

They also intend to scatter the existing stone in the area around the bridge.

Cairngorm SPA

Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) - likely to be present in the general area, but not at this location very often because of existing disturbance from people using the path. Construction the new bridge would cause very significant additional disturbance where helicopters are used. Although this would unquestionably be disturbing, it is concluded that there would be no impact on any of the conservation objectives because there would be no loss of Scots pine habitat, or effects on the structure or function of the pine wood, and disturbance small scale and temporary. The fact that the works are planned for September – October is helpful because young capercaillie will be flying and feeding themselves, but the hard winter weather would not have started. Conclude no likely impact on integrity for capercaillie.

Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – the timing of the works for winter would eliminate the risk of disturbance of birds at or near the nest. Adult birds could avoid a helicopter if they wish to do so. It is concluded that there would be no impact on the integrity of the site for golden eagle.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) – as with golden eagle, the timing of the works avoids any risk of impacts on the nest. It is concluded that there would be no impact on the integrity of the sites for peregrine falcon.

River Spey SAC

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) - likely to be present and to hunt along the river. Otter are robust and can be tolerant of disturbance. In this case because the additional disturbance would be small scale and temporary, they would avoid the area while the bridge was being built. There would be no impact on

prey availability or the otters' ability to move around the catchment. Conclude no likely impact on integrity for otter.

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) - could be present but high in the catchment. The water course itself would not be impacted by the proposed works, which are all on dry land. Duncan Ferguson of the Spey Fishery Board has advised that there would be no impact on salmon. Spreading the stone may result in some stone in the water course, but this has been on site for a number of years and the introduction of a small amount of stone is unlikely to have any measurable effect on the habitat. Conclude no impact on the integrity of the site for salmon.

Cairngorms SAC

Caledonian forest (Priority) - present at this location. This is the habitat around the bridge, and important both for its own sake and also as a habitat for capercaillie and Scottish crossbill. There would be no felling of trees and the replacement bridge is slightly downstream of the existing one, so very little additional path works to link it to the path. The woodland would still function as it does at the moment, and there would be no impact on any of the other conservation objectives. Conclude no impact on the integrity of the site for Caledonian forest.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) - likely to be present but already assessed above and concluded no impact on the integrity of the site for otter.

Green shield moss – this species is not known from this location. The bridge is extremely unlikely to impact on this species as it is very unlikely to be present, but to be certain, a recommendation will be made to survey for this species prior to construction of the bridge or linking path.

Conclusion

No impact on the integrity of any of the Natura sites.

4. Conditions or modifications required.

Condition: That survey should be carried out for green shield moss and otter and if found, that location should be avoided.

Reason: To be certain that there is no impact on either of these species.

5. Advice sought.

Duncan Ferguson, Spey Fishery Board, on impacts on Atlantic salmon.

6. RESPONSE

a) Natura Comments

Likely significant effect but no adverse effect on site integrity.

b) SNH Comments

For SNH advice to other authorities:

No objection to planning application.

For SNH response to request for opinion on effects of permitted development:

For SNH response to application for consent/licence:

Appraised by	Anne Elliott
Date	20 June 2019
Checked by	
Date	

SSSI

The area is also SSSI for the following features which are included here to record the decisions made. This is not part of the Natura assessment.

Allt Mor SSSI - Fluvial geomorphology of Scotland

It is important that the new bridge does not interfere with the natural functioning of the river. It would involve the construction of a central pier in the short term, but this would be removed when the bridge is updated. There would be no additional interference in the functioning of the river over and above the current situation. Conclude no impact.

Glenmore Forest SSSI - Quaternary geology and geomorphology: Quaternary of Scotland - see above.

Biological

Birds: Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* - see above.

Birds: Scottish crossbill *Loxia scotica* - see above

Invertebrates: Narrow-headed ant *Formica exsecta* - add a condition to survey for wood ants including this species before the bridge is built. If any nests are found they should be avoided or moved.

Vascular plants: Vascular plant assemblage - not sensitive at this location.

Woodlands: Native pinewood - see above