

Kilfinichen Estate - Planning Permission for Bellmouth Access (26/00445/PP) Biodiversity Method Statement

The Planning Permission (26/00445/PP) for a new Bellmouth Access joining onto the B8035 public road was approved by the Planning Authority on the 28th of May 2026. The planning permission consists of a new bellmouth access road that join onto the public road and service a new forest road at Dererach Forest, in the Isle of Mull. The access road will start at National Grid Reference NM 51220 29570, and it will extend for approximately 85 metres.

The Biodiversity Method Statement aligns with the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) Policy 3, and NatureScot's Developing with Nature guidelines.

The proposed new bellmouth access and subsequent forest road covered under this planning permission extend cover a relatively small area of approximately 420 square metres, where 103 of which will be surfaced with Bitumen for the first 10 metres of the access from the edge of the public road. Currently the land at this location is occupied by open habitats, mainly dominated by bracken ferns, refer to the Google StreetView Picture of the site below:



Bracken is an aggressive, rapidly spreading fern, that offers little benefits in an ecological sense. This vegetation does help combat critical soil erosion and provides shelter for wildlife. However, stands of bracken are well known for outcompeting native flora, covering large areas and greatly reducing biodiversity, creating heavy, acidic leaf litter, when they wither away for the winter months, that can stall and prevent any natural woodland regeneration and greatly impact the colonisation of the area by native vegetation. Furthermore, the site has a powerline running through it before the end of the planning boundary before the start of the existing commercial conifer plantation at Dererach. The site does not present any signs of protected habitats or species, and the scale of the development is minimal in the wider local setting. If signs of protected habitats or species are found within the proposed road and access location, the forest road will be re-routed to avoid damaging the sensitive species/habitats, although this isn't expected based on knowledge of the site. The impact of the road construction operations on

biodiversity will be minimised through timing, avoiding conducting operations during bird's breeding seasons (i.e. from March to August), and by closely adhering to forest and water guidelines. Earthworks will be undertaken in accordance with Clauses 601 & 602 of the MCHW. Unsuitable materials to be stripped and removed. The formation shall be shaped to keep it free of standing water. Minimise disturbance of peaty soils to retain the stored carbon. Geosynthetics as necessary over silty clay and peat formations if tree roots or natural produce is not available to float the road. Spill kits will be always made available, while works are undertaken. To help control the effect of any diffuse pollution the site, operatives will continually monitor the condition and quality of water courses around the work area. In the event there is heavy rainfall the condition and quality of water courses and drains will be examined closely and if there is evidence of silting or discolouration then work will cease and action will be taken to position silt traps in the work area. Operatives will monitor the condition of adjacent watercourses carefully and stop works if there is any significant discolouration. Powered plant will be properly maintained to prevent spillage or leakage. Bulk fuel will be held in a double banded bowser which complies with the appropriate regulations. Bowsers and fuel containers will be sited as far as possible from any drains or watercourses. A spill kit will be sited adjacent to the bowser. Fuel will be transferred to plant using appropriate arrangements by a nominated operative who has been given clear instructions on how to carry out the task and who knows what action to take in the event of leakage or spillage. The bowser will be filled from a road tanker by the driver who is appropriately trained. Absorbent material will be held on site and will be readily available to deal with spillage. Used absorbent material will be held in a leakproof container until it can be disposed of by a specialist contractor.

A roadside ditch shall be provided on the uphill side of a road and on both sides where the road formation is at or below the adjacent ground. Drains shall have a depth of not less than 150 mm below the formation edge and a longitudinal gradient of not less than 2%. Ditches and drains shall not lead directly into watercourses. Catchpits, settlement ponds and filters will be provided in and adjacent to the drains and culverts to avoid pollution and sedimentation of watercourses. Drains can help in temporary storage of flood water. Adhere to the forest and water guidelines.

To enhance the biodiversity of the site where the proposed forest road and access bellmouth will be constructed, enhancements will be added to the road construction process, including planting the road's banks and surrounding areas with native species-rich planting of shrubs and vegetation, that will help block views of the road in the wider landscape and establish new vegetation in this area dominated by bracken ferns. Additionally, brash/log piles can be left by the side of the new road to benefit invertebrate communities.