



**24/00283/PPD – FORMATION OF ACCESS TRACK, MIAVAIG, UIG, ISLE OF LEWIS**

Report by Chief Planning Officer

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The planning application has been subject to more than six representations and therefore in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation is referred to the Planning Applications Board for a decision.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Report recommends approval subject to conditions of a planning application for the formation of an access track to service existing Scottish Water infrastructure at Miavaig, Uig, Isle of Lewis.
- 2.2 The Report sets out a description of the proposed development, the site and its context together with the advice of consultees and the contributions submitted by the public; this is followed by an assessment of the proposed development against the policies and provisions of the Development Plan and has regard to all relevant material planning considerations.
- 2.3 The key issues raised through representation, consultees and the policy assessment are the principle of the development of an access track at this location; landscape and visual impacts; safety concerns in relation to neighbouring properties; and impacts on common grazing land.
- 2.4 The conclusion and recommendation are for approval subject to conditions that will mitigate effects. The recommendation considers that the siting of the development is acceptable. It is acknowledged that there will be initial landscape impacts, however these will lessen over time once the compacted fill has weathered and the vegetation is fully established on the verges of the track. The access is not considered to have negative or irreversible impacts on the landscape or on the National Scenic Area. The site is not within any area designated for protected species and none are present on site.
- 2.5 The volume of peat and soil anticipated on the site are not excessive and are to be utilised in connection with the development, without any waste materials arising. The development is not considered to have an unacceptable level of harm in terms of pollution, road safety, crofting, or residential amenity.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the planning application be APPROVED subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 to this Report.**

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|--------------------|---|
| Contact Officer:   | Morag Ferguson/Iain MacLeod - Telephone: 01870 604990<br>Email: <a href="mailto:mferguson@cne-siar.gov.uk">mferguson@cne-siar.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:iainmacleod@cne-siar.gov.uk">iainmacleod@cne-siar.gov.uk</a> |
| Appendix 1:        | Schedule of proposed conditions   |
| Appendix 2         | Application plans   |
| Appendix 3         | Representations   |
| Appendix 4         | Responses to consultation   |
| Appendix 5         | Site photographs  |
| Background Papers: | None  |

## IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

| Resource Implications  | Implications/None   |
|------------------------|---|
| Financial              | None  |
| Legal                  | None  |
| Staffing               | If approved, future discharge of Planning Conditions, construction stage condition compliance/post construction monitoring. |
| Assets and Property    | None  |
| Strategic Implications | Implications/None   |
| Risk                   | None  |
| Equalities             | None  |
| Corporate Strategy     | None  |
| Environmental Impact   | None corporately  |
| Consultation           | None  |

## BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

### Background

- 5.1 This Report relates to an application for Planning Permission by Scottish Water, registered as valid on 09 August 2024, for the formation of an access track to the covered reservoir at Uig Miavaig Distribution Service Reservoir at Miavaig, Uig, Isle of Lewis.
- 5.2 This Report sets out an assessment against the policies and provisions of the Development Plan and has regard to all relevant material planning considerations, to inform a conclusion and recommendation as to the determination.

### Description of development

- 5.3 The application proposes the creation of a 2.5m wide gravel access track on common grazing land. The proposed access track will connect the existing water Distribution Service Reservoir to the public road at Miavaig, Uig, Isle of Lewis. The track will have a total length of approximately 487m and a width of approximately 2.5m, therefore occupying a total footprint area of approximately 1217m<sup>2</sup>. The total area of the application site boundary is approximately 11,060m<sup>2</sup> (1.1 hectares). The route will be formed by a 75mm layer of crushed aggregate stone and is expected to be used only by all-terrain vehicle/quad bike.
- 5.4 The applicant has advised that the purpose of the track is to provide a formalised and safe route for personnel to gain access to the Uig Miavaig Distribution Service Reservoir.
- 5.5 The submitted plans set out the detail of the proposed route and construction details of the access, which can be viewed at Appendix 2 to this Report.

### Description of site and its context

- 5.6 The proposed site comprises an area of common grazings land within the rural settlement of Miavaig, Uig, Isle of Lewis, which inclines from the township road, across a hillside, and then up and onto an area of elevated but relatively level open moorland, towards an existing Scottish Water Distribution Service Reservoir.
- 5.7 The Distribution Service Reservoir is located approximately 400 metres northwest of Miavaig. The application site is characterised by semi-improved rough grassland on the lower level of the site where it inclines from the public road along the side of the hillside. On the elevated section of the site in a westerly direction to the termination of the track at the DSR, ground conditions consist of

moorland with rocky outcrops, both broken rock and bedrock in places, as can be seen in Appendix 5 to this Report, site photographs.

- 5.8 The topography slopes upwards from 0m above Ordnance Datum (OAD) in the east to approximately 68m in the west.
- 5.9 The lower level of the site is within the Dispersed crofting landscape character type, with the upper portion being within the Rocky Moorland landscape character type.
- 5.10 The application site is within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area. The Glen Valtos Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) and Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) are within 100m of the proposed access track.

#### **Variations made prior to determination**

- 5.11 On 20 March 2025, an amended site plan was submitted to reflect minor variations to the route of the track on an elevated portion of the site. This is to provide adequate safe working separation from the existing overhead line pole, following the advice from Scottish and Southern Energy Networks.

#### **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA)**

- 5.12 The application was Screened under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) and concluded that **No EIA required** (25/00105/SCR\_L).

#### **Habitats Regulations – Appropriate Assessment**

- 5.13 Not required.

#### **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 6.1 No relevant planning history.

#### **PLANNING HIERARCHY**

- 7.1 In terms of the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, the class and scale of development is such that it falls within the classification of a 'Local Development', therefore the applicant was not required by Planning Regulations to undertake formal pre-application consultation with the local community.

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

##### **The Development Plan**

- 8.1 In Scotland, the planning system is 'plan-led' and sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the Act) require that planning decisions be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2 The statutory Development Plan for the administrative area of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is comprised of [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\) \(2023\)](#) and [Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan \(LDP\) 2018](#) and its supplementary guidances. Section 24(3) of the Act provides that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of NPF4 and a provision of the LDP that whichever of them is the later in date, is to prevail.
- 8.3 The Development Plan policies with particular relevance to the application are:

##### LDP:

- Policy DS1: Development Strategy

- Policy PD1: Placemaking and Design
- Policy PD2: Carparking & Roads Layout
- Policy EI 1: Flooding
- Policy EI5 - Soils
- Policy NBH1: Landscape
- Policy NBH2: Natural Heritage
- Policy NBH5: Archaeology

NPF4:

- NPF401 - Tackling the climate and nature crises
- NPF402 - Climate mitigation and adaptation
- NPF403 – Biodiversity
- NPF404 - Natural places
- NPF405 - Soils
- NPF418 – Infrastructure First
- NPF422 - Flood risk and water management
- NPF429 - Rural development

LDP Supplementary Guidance

8.4 No relevant supplementary guidance.

**Other Relevant National Guidance**

[SEPA – Standing Advice](#)

[NatureScot Standing Advice](#)

**CONSULTATIONS**

9.1 Statutory consultation was undertaken as required by Regulations. The detailed responses of statutory and other consultation bodies are summarised as follows.

**Comhairle Archaeology Service**

9.2 Please be advised that the Archaeology Service has reviewed the accompanying desk-based report (AOC – 70825-6) and is content with its recommendations. No additional archaeological mitigation is required.

**Scottish Water**

9.3 Thank you for your consultation request. Scottish Water have no comment on this application.

**Comhairle Engineering (Roads)**

9.4 Measures to be taken to prevent surface water flowing on to the main road from the ATV track. This water should be led into a suitable watercourse. The first 3m of the track should be surfaced with bitmac.

**NatureScot**

South Lewis, Harris & North Uist NSA

9.5 There are unlikely to be any significant effects on the landscape character and special qualities of the National Scenic Area (NSA).

Protected Species

9.6 We do not have any specific local knowledge or concerns in respect of protected species in this location. As such, we do not intend to provide tailored advice on protected species which may be affected by this proposal.

- 9.7 To avoid any potential impact on watercourses and the species they may support, we recommend that best practice is followed in respect of the design of track drainage and the implementation of pollution prevention and mitigation measures during construction, especially in respect of siltation. Further guidance can be found in our guidance Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands.

#### **SEPA**

- 9.8 Thank you for the above consultation. Based on the information provided, it appears that this application falls below the thresholds for which SEPA provides site specific advice. Please refer to our consultation framework and standing advice, which is available on our website.

#### **SSEN**

- 9.9 If the access is per the attached then SSEN would register no objections but would note that prior to works commencing the applicant will need to arrange an onsite meeting to confirm the required safety precautions when working in proximity to the 11,000V overhead line and that works will need to comply with HSE guidance note GS6.

#### **Crofting Commission**

- 9.10 No response was received.

#### **REPRESENTATIONS**

- 10.1 Ten representations were received objecting to the development. The main issues raised within the representations are:

- Negative landscape impacts;
- Adverse impact on grazings.
- An existing alternative route should be used.
- Changes in ground conditions as a result of the development will cause flooding and landslide, affecting property and the public road (health and safety).

- 10.2 These issues are addressed in the Appraisal section of this Report.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- 11.1 The planning application was advertised for public comment in the public notices section of the Stornoway Gazette in the publication dated 22 August 2024 as required by regulations.

- 11.2 One notifiable neighbour was notified on 15 August 2024 and a further neighbouring property, which was identified later in the application process, was notified on 10 February 2025, as required by regulations.

- 11.3 Representations were received in relation to the application. Many raised similar issues and to avoid repetition the matters have been summarised and considered on an issue-by-issue basis. The issues relevant to planning are addressed in the Appraisal section of this Report while the details of the representations are contained in Appendix 3 to this Report. The key issues can be summarised as follows:

- Drainage of this steep slope in particular has to be given serious consideration. I fear that the considerable excavating required to form this crisscrossing track could destabilise the steep terrain and cause a landslide of the peaty soil layer, gravel and any hidden boulders. leading to serious damage to the natural environment and probable flooding below.
- The track will have negative environmental and landscape impacts.
- Visually detrimental and will have impacts on views.
- Not being informed of the proposal.

## **OTHER STATEMENTS SUBMITTED**

12.1 Three supporting documents were submitted with the planning application:

- Planning Statement
- Archaeological Survey
- Ecology Survey
- Peat and Soils

## **PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### **Spatial strategy and principle of development**

- 13.1 The spatial strategy for the Outer Hebrides is contained within the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (LDP) as set out in Policy DS1. The track would commence within an area classed as a rural settlement and pass over into an area classed as outwith settlement where the existing Scottish Water Distribution Service Reservoir which serves the local area is located.
- 13.2 Policy DS1 - Rural Settlements are primarily residential and agricultural areas. Development in rural settlements must have a siting and design appropriate to the established rural character and settlement pattern of the local area. Development on croft land should not adversely affect the operational use and sustainability of the croft, unless the development is required for reasons of over-riding public interest. Proposal sites should be sited to use the least amount of productive croft land where practical and should not fragment the croft in such a way that affects its potential to be used for cultivation or other purposeful use. Proposals should ensure access to the croft is maintained and of a suitable width for agricultural machinery to access. At a minimum this should be four metres in width.
- 13.3 The principal policy objective of development outwith settlement is to direct appropriate activity and ensure development has a quality of siting and design suitable to a more open and rural setting. All development proposals will be assessed against the capacity of the surrounding landscape to accommodate the development. Development proposals should avoid raised or high level locations to minimise visual impact.
- 13.4 The National Planning Policy Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 29 provides that the spatial strategies should set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflect the identified characteristics. It further states that the Scottish Government's 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 (URC 2020) should be used to identify remote rural areas. The site is classed as being within a 'remote rural area' and therefore NPF4 Policy 29(a)(v) will apply (essential infrastructure), which supports development proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities and local rural economy will be supported. Part c) also applies. Part c) of the policy states that development proposals in remote rural areas, where new development can often help to sustain fragile communities, will be supported where the proposal is suitable in terms of location, access, siting, design and environmental impact.
- 13.5 As noted above, the initial portion of the site is within the Rural Settlement of Miavaig, Uig, Isle of Lewis and inclines from the township road, across a hillside, and then up and on to an area of elevated but relatively level open moorland towards an existing Scottish Water Distribution Service Reservoir, which is outwith settlement.
- 13.6 The proposal being a narrow unfenced gravel track to be sited on open common grazing land, would not adversely affect the operational use and sustainability of a croft or the access to or use of the associated common grazing land. Further, the use to which the track relates (public water supply) is a resource-based activity and as such supported by LDP policy DS1.

- 13.7 The acceptability of the proposal in relation to siting and design, and landscape are assessed in response to policies PD1: Placemaking and Design and NBH1: Landscape. Subject to compliance with these policies, the principle of development of the proposed track would be acceptable in terms of LDP Policy DS1 - spatial strategy for the Outer Hebrides.

#### **Placemaking and Design**

- 13.8 The first section of the site is within the rural settlement of Miavaig, Uig, Isle of Lewis, with the longest section being located on elevated land outwith the settlement. The settlement is split into two distinct separate areas on either side of the sea loch.
- 13.9 The area south of the site consists of 2-3 dwellinghouses adjacent to the B8011 road, with a working pier/shore base also present here while the northern portion consists of a cluster of buildings which include two churches and 3 or 4 houses. It is at this latter location that the proposed access is leave the public road.
- 13.10 As can be seen at Site Photographs at Appendix 5 to this Report, the public road runs through this section of the settlement, with the coast immediately to the east and steep land immediately to the west, where it initially inclines over approximately 120 metres upwards and then levels out.
- 13.11 The route of the proposed access is challenging from a topographical perspective. However, as demonstrated from the submitted drawings and from having carried out a site inspection, the provision of an access track for off-road vehicles and associated drainage at this location is, from an engineering perspective, achievable.
- 13.12 The landscape at this location is relatively enclosed and there are not particularly wide views available of the proposed site other than from the southern part of the settlement when approaching from Stornoway and when immediately passing by.
- 13.13 Alternative routes and locations for the proposed track have been suggested via representation, however what falls to be assessed is what has been presented in this application.
- 13.14 The plans submitted make the best use of the contours in the landscape and with some screening of the verges with turves and use of grey gravel/crushed rock on the track; to be imposed as a condition on any consent, the development can be well absorbed into the landscape.
- 13.15 The proposal would not be at odds with the established rural character of the area, where there are many access tracks albeit at a lower level, and the proposal would not negatively impact on croft land.
- 13.16 While there may be an element of disruption during construction works, which can be mitigated by condition relating to hours of construction, once operational, the track use will be infrequent and is unlikely to give rise to any negative neighbouring amenity issues.

#### **Roads and Access**

- 13.17 Comhairle Engineering (Roads) have been consulted on this application and have advised that measures must be taken to prevent surface water flowing on to the main road from the ATV track and that this water should be led into a suitable watercourse. They have also advised that the first three metres of the track should be surfaced with bitmac or suitable bound material. It is proposed to append conditions to any consent relating to this advice. Providing compliance with the terms of the proposed conditions it is considered that the proposal would be in compliance with OHLDP Policy PD2.

#### **Infrastructure First and Rural Development**

- 13.18 NPF4 Policy 29 Rural Development encourages rural economic activity, innovation and

diversification. Development proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities and local rural economy will be supported, including essential infrastructure.

13.19 NPF4 Policy 18 Infrastructure First does not specifically refer to water or wastewater infrastructure, however the intention of this policy is to encourage, promote and facilitate an infrastructure first approach to land use planning, which puts infrastructure at the heart of placemaking.

13.20 The Planning Statement accompanying this application states that the proposal seeks to form a new access track to provide a formalised, safe access to the Uig Miavaig Distribution Service Reservoir and that the principle of an access track in this location is considered to be acceptable, as it is a relatively small-scale development that will serve an existing Scottish Water asset and would not significantly detract from the character of the rural area.

13.21 Following assessment, it is considered that the proposal complies with the intent of NPF4 Policies 18 and 29 in that the proposal contributes to the viability of the settlements served by this water supply.

#### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

13.22 Concerns have been raised in relation to the potential for flooding during heavy rain events and that the proposed development may exacerbate matters.

13.23 Development proposals should avoid areas susceptible to flooding and promote sustainable flood management and have regard to the probability of flooding from all sources.

13.24 The development proposes open ditches on either side of the length of the access track, as can be seen in the drawings and section at Appendix 2 to this Report. The ditches are to have a maximum depth of 0.5 metres, with a bottom width of 0.5 metres and a top width of one metre. The ditches are to discharge water into an existing culvert where the proposed access would join the public road. The water will then pass under the road to the coast.

13.25 The construction of the road itself is of a permeable nature, meaning that it is unlikely to act as a conduit for volumes of water to be transported and in any event, conditions requested by the Comhairle Engineering (Roads) will be imposed on any consent to ensure that surface water is diverted into a watercourse and will not enter the public road.

13.26 The likelihood of flooding being caused as a result of the development is unlikely and design consideration factored into the proposal, combined with the use of planning conditions, will ensure that surface water is managed appropriately.

#### **Landscape (NSA) and Visual and Natural Places**

13.27 Policy NBH1 of the LDP covers landscape and states that development proposals should relate to the specific landscape and visual characteristics of the local area, ensuring that the overall integrity of the landscape character is maintained.

13.28 Development that affects a National Scenic Area (NSA) will only be permitted where:

a) the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or b) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

13.29 The lower level of the site is within the Dispersed crofting landscape character type, with the upper portion being within the Rocky Moorland landscape character type and the application site is within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area.

13.30 As assessed at Placemaking and Design above, it is not disputed that the proposed access will traverse some relatively steep sections of land, where the topography slopes upwards from 0m



above Ordnance Datum (OAD) in the east to approximately 68m in the west and the access is likely to have some landscape and visual impacts.

13.31 While it is acknowledged that there will be a degree of landscape impacts during and immediately post construction, these will soften over time once the compacted fill has weathered and vegetation is fully established on the verges of the track.

13.32 The plans submitted make the best use of the contours in the landscape to ascend the slope and with the track verges subject to some screening which will be imposed as a condition on any consent, it is considered that as the development matures, the development can be absorbed into the landscape where views of it are extremely localised. This is a view shared by NatureScot in the consultation (which can be viewed in full at Appendix 4 to this Report, but in summary stated '*Having undertaken a site visit, we note that the proposed development is in proximity to existing development and infrastructure, that there will be only limited visibility of the new track from certain directions, and that the proposal is in keeping with its context and the existing pattern of development and features within the landscape. There are unlikely to be any significant effects on the landscape character and special qualities of the National Scenic Area (NSA)*').

13.33 It is considered that the landscape can comfortably accommodate the proposed access road (subject to condition) and that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the landscape or special qualities of the NSA.

#### **Soils**

13.34 The site is within an area mapped as Class 5 Carbon and Peatland as identified by the Carbon and Peatland 2016 map. The access is to be created to service essential infrastructure (as defined in NPF4).

13.35 Class 5 represents peat soils at a depth of 0.5 Metres or less with no peatland vegetation. This is evident when visiting the site due to the nature of ground conditions, with rocky outcrops, broken rock and bedrock in places.

13.36 In line with the above, the applicant has submitted information advising that the area of excavation is likely to have a depth of 0.5m or less, minimizing the peatland being disturbed and confirmed that all excavated ground will be landscaped and restored locally to the track to reduce the disturbance caused by the introduction of the new access track, in accordance with guidance from SEPA and NatureScot, which will be appended to any consent by way of an informative.

13.37 It has been considered that the development of the site would not impact directly on or displace a significant volume or depth of peat soils.

#### **Natural Heritage, Climate Impact and Biodiversity**

13.38 NPF4 requires that when considering all development proposals, significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises, and that developments should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. While the proposed access road is relatively long, the shallow peat and soils depths, combined with the hard and rocky nature of area of the site ensures that the level of excavation is not anticipated to be significant and it has been considered and it is determined that the development in and of itself will have a neutral impact on global climate change.

13.39 Impact on biodiversity is a key consideration in the suitability of development. Developments should conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance. Measures should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development.

13.40 The proposed access route is within 100 metres from the Glen Valtos geological SSSI, designated as such for its geological qualities. Glen Valtos is the only example in the Western Isles, of a subglacial

channel eroded by meltwater flowing at pressure beneath the Hebridean ice cap.

- 13.41 It forms part of a wider assemblage of glaciofluvial landforms that indicate glacial meltwater drainage directed eastwards from the Atlantic side of Lewis. This pattern is at variance with reconstructions of the direction of the last ice cap movement across the area and raises important questions about the pattern of deglaciation.
- 13.42 The proposed development is sufficiently distant from and does not impact on the glaciofluvial landforms within the SSSI.
- 13.43 The boundary of the Traigh na Berie Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is 2km to the west. The proposed works are in an area hydrologically separate from the SAC and will not impact on the machair protected feature of the SAC.
- 13.44 A Preliminary Ecological Survey Report was commissioned to accompany the application. There are no designated sites within the survey area. The aims of the survey were to identify any ecological constraints, in particular to establish presence of breeding birds.
- 13.45 The survey established that there were no breeding birds recorded on the footprint of the proposed access track but that a breeding pair of meadow pipit were recorded 200m from the proposed track.
- 13.46 NatureScot were consulted on this application and made the following comment:
- 13.47 *'We do not have any specific local knowledge or concerns in respect of protected species in this location. As such, we do not intend to provide tailored advice on protected species which may be affected by this proposal. Impacts on protected species should be addressed by reference to the relevant standing advice available at Planning and development: protected animals. You should consider the need for species licenses as part of any development and contact [licensing@nature.scot](mailto:licensing@nature.scot) regarding any license application.*
- 13.48 *To avoid any potential impact on watercourses and the species they may support, we recommend that best practice is followed in respect of the design of track drainage and the implementation of pollution prevention and mitigation measures during construction, especially in respect of siltation. Further guidance can be found in in our guidance Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands linked above'.*
- 13.49 It is concluded that the development, on relatively shallow ground, where any excavated materials are to be sympathetically reused and where there are no records or evidence of protected species, is such that it should not have a negative impact on biodiversity or habitats and would be sufficiently distant from designated habitats and unlikely to have an adverse effect on protected species, provided the relevant safeguards identified were put in place.

#### **Archaeology and built heritage**

- 13.50 The NPF4 policy to protect historic assets and places (Policy 7) says that proposals should be informed by national policy and guidance on managing change in the historic environment, and information held within Historic Environment Records.
- 13.51 Policy NBH4 of the LDP deals with built heritage and states that development which preserves or enhances the commemorative or historic significance of built heritage assets will be supported. All proposals shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving any heritage assets and their settings or any features of special historic, architectural or cultural interest.
- 13.52 An archaeological desk based assessment and walkover survey was carried out by the applicant. The survey was required in order to assess and record the nature and extent of any upstanding

archaeological remains affected by the proposed development.

13.53 The survey identified a stone building, formerly recorded on historical mapping as a smithy, and was recorded to the south side of the east end of the track. The structure is clearly visible site, which can be easily avoided by groundworks and therefore no mitigation was proposed.

13.54 The Comhairle Archaeology Service were consulted on the application and raised no objections to the development, stating that no additional archaeological mitigation is required.

#### **CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

14.1 This application is for the creation of a 2.5m wide access track on common grazing land to serve existing Scottish Water infrastructure. Policy lends support to development for serving infrastructure subject to it being suitable in terms of location, access, siting, design and environmental impact.

14.2 The siting of the development is considered to be acceptable. While it is acknowledged that there will be some initial landscape impacts, these will lessen over time once the compacted fill has weathered and the vegetation is fully established on the verges of the track. The access is not considered to have negative or irreversible impacts on the landscape or on the National Scenic Area, a view which has been shared by NatureScot.

14.3 The site is not within any area designated for protected species and none were identified as present on site. The volumes of peat and soil anticipated on the site are not excessive and are to be utilised in connection with the development, without any waste materials arising.

14.4 As a result of the development, there is unlikely to be an unacceptable level of harm in terms of pollution, road safety, crofting, or residential amenity, subject to the imposition of the conditions proposed at Appendix 1 to the Report.

14.5 Having assessed the application favourably against key policies the proposal is considered to be acceptable and compliant with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

14.6 Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies DS1, PD1, PD2, EI1, EI5, NBH1, NBH2 and NBH5 of the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan and Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18, 22 and 29 of the National Planning Framework 4.

#### **PLANNING OBLIGATION**

15.1 None required.

#### **DIRECTIONS**

16.1 None required.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

17.1 It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 to this Report.