

## **6 Scoping and Consultation**

### **6.1 Introduction**

- 6.1.1 Scoping and consultation are closely linked components of the EIA process. Scoping is undertaken at the outset of each DMRB assessment stage according to the guidance provided in Planning Advice Note (PAN) 58: Environmental Impact Assessment, and subsequently if substantial changes are made to the scheme route or design. Consultation provides an iterative input to the progression of the scheme proposals throughout the EIA and design processes.
- 6.1.2 This chapter describes the scoping and consultation process undertaken for the purposes of the EIA, provides a summary of the key issues raised by consultees and reports the conclusions reached with regard to scoping as a result of consultations and desk studies.
- 6.1.3 The purposes of the scoping and consultation are to:
- ensure that statutory consultees and other bodies with a particular interest in the environment are informed of the proposal and provided with an opportunity to comment;
  - obtain baseline information regarding existing environmental site conditions;
  - establish key environmental issues and identify potential impacts to be considered during the EIA;
  - identify those issues which are likely to require more detailed study and those which can be justifiably excluded from further assessment; and
  - provide a means of identifying the most appropriate methods of impact assessment.
- 6.1.4 Scoping was carried out as part of the EIA conducted for the AWPR (Northern Leg, Southern Leg and Fastlink). As indicated by Section 6.3 (Key Issues Raised by Consultees), all usual EIA environmental topic areas were scoped 'in' for environmental assessment.

#### **Consultation**

- 6.1.5 A range of statutory bodies, non-statutory bodies, community councils and landowners were consulted throughout the EIA process to provide an iterative input to the progression of the scheme proposal. The consultation process is summarised in this chapter and referred to within the assessment of each environmental parameter as appropriate. In addition to the consultation described in this chapter, ongoing liaison has been undertaken as part of the EIA process and although not detailed in this chapter, the issues raised are referenced in the respective assessment chapters as appropriate.
- 6.1.6 An informal public consultation was held from March to April 2005 comprising a series of exhibitions at various locations throughout the North East of Scotland. The purpose of the exhibitions was to inform the public of the alternative route options that were under consideration at that time (as discussed in Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered) and to provide an update on the progress of the project design of the preferred route at that time. Feedback from the public was collated and summarised in the AWPR Report on Public Consultation, March – April 2005 (Scottish Executive, 2005).
- 6.1.7 Due to significant changes to the AWPR scheme proposals (as discussed in Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered), it was necessary to re-consult for the Southern Leg and Fastlink in early 2006.
- 6.1.8 As explained in paragraphs 1.1.7 and 1.1.8 of Chapter 1 (Introduction), an ES was published in December 2006. This document was issued to statutory consultees, made available for public

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inspection, and was posted on the AWPR website. ES publication was followed in January 2007 by a series of public exhibitions on the scheme proposals.

**6.2 Approach and Methods**

**Stages of Consultation**

6.2.1 The approach to consultation for the Northern Leg, Southern Leg and Fastlink is described below. Table 6.1 provides the timescale across which these consultations were carried out.

**Table 6.1 – Timescale of Consultation and Scoping Exercise**

<b>Date of Consultation/ Scoping Exercise</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
1990s onwards	Undertaken by Councils, Mouchel and RSK	Northern Leg
February 2004	Comparative Assessment	Northern Leg
January 2005	Strategic Review	Northern Leg
March – April 2005	Informal Public Consultation	Northern Leg
April 2005	Letters to key consultees	Northern Leg
February 2006 – June 2006	Letters to key consultees	Southern Leg & Fastlink
December 2006	Environmental Statement published	All scheme
January 2007	Public Exhibitions	All scheme

Consultation (to June 2006)

*Northern Leg*

6.2.2 Consultations were conducted as part of earlier assessments, during the development of route proposals from 1990 onwards by Grampian Regional Council (and following Local Government reorganisation in 1996, by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council), Mouchel and RSK.

6.2.3 In February 2004, Jacobs (then Jacobs Babbie) was commissioned to develop options within the then preferred route corridor. A consultation exercise was undertaken as part of the assessments undertaken at that time. Letters were sent to statutory and non statutory consultees, community groups and relevant parties in order to provide relevant baseline data, facilitate stakeholder participation and identify constraints associated with the AWPR.

6.2.4 In January 2005, the Minister for Transport instructed that a review of alternative corridors be undertaken in parallel with the development of the proposed alignment within the preferred route corridor. This additional review updated the previous assessment of the route options considered in the 1990s by the former Grampian Regional Council. As part of this, consultation was undertaken with statutory consultees to obtain views on the alternative route corridors proposed. The informal public exhibitions were held during March and April 2005, providing an opportunity for local communities to comment on the proposed alternative corridors.

6.2.5 In April 2005, as part of the assessment for the Northern Leg, all consultees were contacted by letter, informing them of the details of the proposed development and requesting that they provide any specific baseline information that they may hold or any comments they may have concerning the proposed scheme. The information requested was tailored specifically for each consultee and was based on the consultations undertaken at previous stages of the assessment. A plan of the proposed route alignment accompanied the letter.

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*Southern Leg and Fastlink*

- 6.2.6 As a result of the preferred route decision in December 2005, an additional consultation exercise was undertaken to inform the ongoing assessment for the Southern Leg and Fastlink. Letters to consultees requesting information for this stage of the assessment were issued in February 2006.
- 6.2.7 Consultation letters for the Southern Leg and Fastlink were issued in June 2006. These informed consultees of the proposed mainline route alignment, requested more specific information and provided opportunity for further input into the design and mitigation proposals.

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- 6.2.8 The December 2006 ES was subject to a period of formal consultation from its publication on 14 December 2006 to 09 February 2007. Copies of the ES were issued to all statutory consultees, and comments invited. Follow-up meetings were also held with key consultees such as SNH and SEPA, to discuss the findings of the ES in detail.
- 6.2.9 As part of the formal consultation, the ES was available to view at Council offices and libraries. It was also available for purchase, or for viewing/downloading free of charge at the AWPR website.
- 6.2.10 Where possible, any comments raised by statutory consultees, other groups or members of the public regarding the 2006 ES have been addressed during further environmental assessment and preparation of this 2007 ES, which supersedes the 2006 ES.

Public Exhibitions (2007)

- 6.2.11 As explained in paragraph 6.1.8, a series of public exhibitions was held at various locations in and around Aberdeen during January 2007. These exhibitions provided an opportunity for members of the public to review the scheme proposals and the 2006 ES. The exhibitions also supported the formal consultation process described above.
- 6.2.12 Where possible, queries and comments raised during the public exhibitions were taken into account during design updates and preparation of the 2007 ES.

**List of Consultees**

- 6.2.13 Initial consultations were undertaken with the statutory and non-statutory bodies, as well as all landowners directly affected by the proposed route. The organisations consulted are listed in Appendix A6.1.
- 6.2.14 Consultations were subsequently undertaken with Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Community Councils as listed in Appendix A6.1. Initial contact was made in April 2005 during the consultation for the Northern Leg, and continued for consultations for the Southern Leg and Fastlink.

**6.3 Key Issues Raised by Consultees**

- 6.3.1 Table 6.2 and 6.3 list the environmental parameters scoped 'in' for further environmental assessment and identifies which consultees identified issues or provided information.
- 6.3.2 Liaison with individual landowners occurred throughout the EIA process. However, as they were not sent consultation letters, the correspondence details are not included in this chapter.
- 6.3.3 A summary of consultation responses is provided in Appendix A6.2.

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**Table 6.2 – Scoping Matrix of Key Consultee Issues (Northern Leg)**

Consultee	Comments / Issues Raised														
	General	Land Use	Geology Contaminated Land and Groundwater	Hydrodynamics, Water Quality	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape	Visual Issues	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Traffic Noise & Vibration	Pedestrians, Others & Community	Vehicle Travellers	Disruption due to Construction	Policies and Plans	None / no response
Aberdeen Bat Group					•								•		
Aberdeen and District Angling Association				•	•					•			•		
Aberdeen Cycle Forum											•				
Aberdeen City Council		•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•			•	
Aberdeenshire Council		•		•	•	•		•	•		•			•	
Aberdeen Countryside Project						•					•				
Aberdeen University					•										
Belhelvie Community Council	•								•	•	•				
Benholm and Johnshaven	•														
Bridge of Don Community Council	•														
British Geological Survey			•	•											
British Horse Society											•		•		
British Waterways Scotland															•
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology				•	•										
Chamber of Commerce															•
Council for Scottish Archaeology															•
Cyclists' Touring Club											•				
Don Salmon Fisheries Board				•	•										
Forestry Commission		•			•	•					•				
Forestry Commission Ranger	•	•			•						•				
Grampian Badger Surveys					•										
Grampian Fungus Group		•			•										

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Consultee	Comments / Issues Raised														
	General	Land Use	Geology Contaminated Land and Groundwater	Hydrodynamics, Water Quality	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape	Visual Issues	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Traffic Noise & Vibration	Pedestrians, Others & Community	Vehicle Travellers	Disruption due to Construction	Policies and Plans	None / no response
Grampian Police															•
Grampian Red Squirrel Group					•						•				
Health and Safety Executive															•
Historic Scotland							•								
Kingswells Community Council	•				•		•		•	•	•				
Mintlaw & District Community Council	•														
National Farmers Union of Scotland		•													
North Kincardine Community Council				•	•		•			•			•		
North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Coordinator					•										
NES Biological Records Centre					•								•		
Ramblers Association															•
Road Haulage Association															•
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds					•										
Royal Deeside Preservation Trust											•				
Royal Deeside Railway Preservation Society	•														
Scottish Executive		•		•	•										
Scottish Landowners Federation															•
Scottish Ornithologist Club					•										
Scottish Wildlife Trust					•										
Scotways : Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society											•				
SEPA			•	•	•										
SNH				•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	
Sustrans Scotland											•				
The Garden History Society in Scotland								•							

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Consultee	Comments / Issues Raised														
	General	Land Use	Geology Contaminated Land and Groundwater	Hydrodynamics, Water Quality	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape	Visual Issues	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Traffic Noise & Vibration	Pedestrians, Others & Community	Vehicle Travellers	Disruption due to Construction	Policies and Plans	None / no response
VIPRE Transport Consultants											•				
West Don Community Council	•										•				
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust					•										
<b>Scoped IN/ OUT</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>n/a</b>

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**Table 6.3 – Scoping Matrix of Key Consultee Issues (Southern Leg and Fastlink)**

Consultee	Comments / Issues Raised														
	General	Land Use	Geology Contaminated Land and Groundwater	Hydrodynamics, Water Quality	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape	Visual Issues	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Traffic Noise & Vibration	Pedestrians, Others & Community	Vehicle Travellers	Disruption due to Construction	Policies and Plans	None / no response
Aberdeen Bat Group					•										•
Aberdeen and District Angling Association															•
Aberdeen Cycle Forum											•				
Aberdeen City Council		•		•	•						•			•	
Aberdeen City Local Outdoor Access Forum											•				
Aberdeen Biodynamic Land trust		•						•							
Aberdeenshire Council			•		•	•		•	•	•			•	•	
Aberdeenshire Local Outdoor Access Forum									•	•			•		
Aberdeen Countryside Project					•										
British Geological Survey			•												
British Horse Society											•				•
British Waterways Scotland															•
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology					•										•
Chamber of Commerce															•
Council for Scottish Archaeology															•
Cove and Altens Community Council	•														
Culter Community Council	•			•	•	•				•	•				
Cults, Bieldside & Milltimber CC	•														
Cyclists' Touring Club											•				•
Dee District Salmon Fisheries Board															•
Forestry Commission		•			•						•			•	
Garden History Society						•									•

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Consultee	Comments / Issues Raised														
	General	Land Use	Geology Contaminated Land and Groundwater	Hydrodynamics, Water Quality	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape	Visual Issues	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Traffic Noise & Vibration	Pedestrians, Others & Community	Vehicle Travellers	Disruption due to Construction	Policies and Plans	None / no response
Grampian Badger Surveys					•										•
Grampian Fungus Group					•										
Grampian Police											•	•			•
Grampian Red Squirrel Group															•
Health and Safety Executive	•														
Historic Scotland							•								
Laurencekirk Community Council		•		•	•	•									
National Farmers Union of Scotland		•		•	•										
North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Coordinator					•										
North Kincardine Community Council	•			•	•					•	•		•		
NES Biological Records Centre Manager															•
NES Local Biodiversity Action Plan					•										
NESTRANS															•
Ramblers Association											•				
Road Haulage Association															•
Royal Deeside Preservation Trust	•														
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	•				•										
Scottish Executive	•				•										
SEPA			•	•											
Scottish Canoe Association															•
Scottish Landowners Federation															•
SNH	•				•	•	•				•				
Scottish Ornithologist Club															•
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association															•

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Consultee	Comments / Issues Raised														
	General	Land Use	Geology Contaminated Land and Groundwater	Hydrodynamics, Water Quality	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape	Visual Issues	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Traffic Noise & Vibration	Pedestrians, Others & Community	Vehicle Travellers	Disruption due to Construction	Policies and Plans	None / no response
Scottish Water	•														
Scottish Wildlife Trust															•
Scotways : Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society											•				
Stonehaven Community Council	•														
Sustrans Scotland											•				
The Garden History Society in Scotland								•							
University of Aberdeen															•
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust															•
<b>Scoped IN/ OUT</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>n/a</b>

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#### 6.4 Summary of Key Issues

6.4.1 The key environmental issues identified through consultation, including those from the scoping exercises of earlier route options that are relevant to the preferred route alignment (as discussed in Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered), are summarised below according to the relevant chapter headings of the ES.

6.4.2 The issues that have been raised are presented for the Northern Leg, and then for the Southern Leg and Fastlink.

##### **Northern Leg**

6.4.3 This section summarises the responses and main issues raised during consultations for the Northern Leg section of the AWPR route, and following publication of the December 2006 ES.

##### Land Use (Part B: Chapter 7)

6.4.4 The main issues that were raised during consultation, in relation to land use, were potential effects on fishing (particularly at the River Don), agriculture, soils, forestry (particularly in relation to existing forested areas) and loss and change to habitats.

##### Geology, Contaminated Land & Groundwater (Part B: Chapter 8)

6.4.5 The main issues that were raised during consultation in relation to geology, contaminated land and groundwater were the potential for contaminated sites to be present in the study area and impacts from blasting on aquifers near contaminated sites.

##### Water Environment (Part B: Chapter 9)

6.4.6 The main issues that were raised from consultation in relation to hydrodynamics, surface water quality and drainage were:

- impacts at the River Don crossing points both during construction and operation, particularly in relation to the placement of bridge piers in the watercourses and flood plain;
- impacts on water quality and flood risk and the importance of effective Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) implementation;
- impacts on fluvial geomorphology;
- water movement in soils and changes to water table levels that could affect habitats of importance, particularly the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) at Corby Loch, Lily Loch and Bishops Loch;
- effects on small burns with cobbles that will have salmon present; and
- effects on watercourses and wetlands that may have various species of fish, spiders, amphibians, insects and botany present, as detailed below under the Ecology and Nature Conservation heading.

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##### Ecology and Nature Conservation (Part B: Chapter 10)

- 6.4.7 The main issues that were raised during consultation, in relation to ecology and nature conservation, were:
- impacts on protected species such as salmon, freshwater pearl mussel, otter, badgers, red squirrel, bats and water vole;
  - impacts on birds including geese and waders;
  - impacts on spiders, such as the nationally scarce *Lepthephantes insignis* likely to be found in the Craibstone area, potentially diverse range of species at Corby Loch, Lily Loch and Redmoss;
  - impacts on nationally important SSSIs at Corby Loch, Lily Loch, Bishops Loch and Balmedie Quarry;
  - impacts on locally important Sites of Importance to Natural Science (SINS) at Corby Loch, Lily Loch, Bishops Loch and Hawkshill;
  - impacts on locally important District Wildlife Site (DWS) at River Don, Farburn Wood, Brimmond Hill, Gough Burn, Aberdeen – Inverness – Kittybrewster Railway Line and Newton of Shielhill;
  - impacts on wildlife corridors between woodlands; and
  - impact on habitats of value to birds caused by changes to air quality and local climate change.

##### Landscape and Visual (Part B: Chapters 11 and 12)

- 6.4.8 The main issues that were raised during consultation in relation to landscape and visual issues were:
- the need to comply with Aberdeen City Council's Landscape Strategy (Part 1). This was approved by the Council in April 2001 and identifies Areas of Local Landscape Significance on plans 1-6 in the Strategy document;
  - impacts on the landscape character of numerous areas including the Don Valley (to the north of Kirkhill Industrial Estate), Craibstone, Balgossie Hill, Standing Stones Wood, East Woodlands and Brimmond Hill; and
- 6.4.9 Existing rural areas through which the proposed route would pass currently have low levels of light pollution. Street lights, signs and vehicles are likely to increase light emitted and have been raised as a concern by consultees.

##### Cultural Heritage (Part B: Chapter 13)

- 6.4.10 Consultations undertaken to date have identified a significant number of sites of cultural heritage importance from the prehistoric period to modern times, within the study area. Sites range in importance from Local – National importance. The concentration of known sites also indicated that the area has a high potential for the presence of unrecorded archaeology.

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6.4.11 In addition to the potential for impacts on these sites and areas, the potential for impact on the setting of the following sites was also raised during consultation:

- Aberdeenshire canal;
- Goval Bridge;
- Parkhill House;
- Parkhill Pumping Station, Lade and Reservoir;
- Pitmedden House; and
- West Lodge.

#### Air Quality (Part B: Chapter 14)

6.4.12 The main issue arising from consultations related to the potential changes to air quality for residents and others where the route and junctions pass close to houses, industrial and commercial properties and areas of public access.

#### Traffic Noise and Vibration (Part B: Chapter 15)

6.4.13 The main issue arising from consultations related to traffic noise and vibration was the potential for localised increased noise for residents, particularly around junctions, and created by HGVs. Concerns were also raised regarding potential effects on angling interests.

6.4.14 Site visits and desk studies have also shown that traffic noise and vibration during construction and operation of the road is likely to be an important issue where the route passes close to houses, industrial and commercial properties and areas of public access.

#### Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects (Part B: Chapter 16)

6.4.15 One of the key issues raised during consultation related to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians was the implication of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. This legislation introduces a Right of Responsible Access for all abilities and types of users.

6.4.16 This infers that all structures that would be installed as part of the AWPR scheme for access should not restrict the types or abilities of users unless absolutely necessary. Wherever possible, access facilities should be suitable for walkers, cyclists and horses as well as all abilities, as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

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- 6.4.17 The following locations were identified as having the potential for specific access related impacts:
- links from Kingswells to the west;
  - routes in and around the Brimmond and Elrick Hills;
  - Craibstone Estate (desired sustainable transport route between Bucksburn and Kirkhill south of A96, through Craibstone and on to Blackburn);
  - cycle paths that currently exist on the A96;
  - Right of Way running from Chapel of Stoneywood to Bankhead, via Walton Road;
  - route between Howemoss and Standing Stones Wood;
  - walkers, cyclists and horse riders using paths and horse riding facilities in and around Kirkhill woods (west of Dyce);
  - Formartine & Buchan Way;
  - Middleton (ch330600) as access will be closed due to the proposed route; and
  - links between recreational areas throughout the study area.

#### Vehicle Travellers (Part B: Chapter 17)

- 6.4.18 Consultee responses indicated that where road improvements were proposed to existing access to settlements, safety would be improved, therefore creating a positive impact. However, where realignments of existing roads are proposed in conjunction with the AWPR these must be carefully considered with safety in mind.

#### Disruption Due to Construction (Part B: Chapter 18)

- 6.4.19 The main issues that were raised during consultation with regard to the construction phase of AWPR were:
- impacts on ecological issues and particularly issues related to freshwater pearl mussel and spiders;
  - access and disturbance to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians;
  - construction impacts on water quality;
  - the existing low capacity transport infrastructure which may struggle to support construction traffic. Location and undertaking of excavation works and borrow pits must also be considered carefully; and
  - the need to consider sustainability with regard to raw material use, waste generation and carbon dioxide emissions.
- 6.4.20 Site visits and desk studies have shown that the potential for disruption due to construction in terms of noise, vibration and visual impact is likely to be an issue where the route passes close to houses, industrial and commercial properties and areas of public access.

#### Policies and Plans (Part B: Chapter 19)

- 6.4.21 The main issue that was raised during consultation in relation to Policies and Plans was in connection with the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan: Green Spaces, New Places. A Public Inquiry of the draft document took place from 21 February – 14 March 2006 and the finalised Plan is anticipated to be adopted in mid 2007 at the earliest.

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- 6.4.22 Issues raised by consultees relevant to the draft plan include policies for land use, a new Green Space Network designation, sites proposed for future development, wildlife, flooding, landscape, and access.

#### **Southern Leg and Fastlink**

- 6.4.23 This section summarises the responses and main issues raised during consultations for the Southern Leg and Fastlink, and following publication of the December 2006 ES.

#### General

- 6.4.24 The key general issues raised during consultation were:
- the need for justification regarding the requirement for the bypass and highlighting the need for an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken;
  - design should take account of existing pipelines (BP Forties Cruden Bay to Grangemouth; and Shell NGL St Fergus to Mossmorran);
  - design should take account of the reopening of the Old Deeside Railway Line by providing adequate clearance between the existing track and the underside of the road bridge; and
  - the direct link of the proposed route to the A90 roundabout to the North of Stonehaven is welcomed since it will lessen existing heavy traffic pressures on B979 Netherley Road.

#### Land Use (Parts C & D: Chapters 22 and 37)

- 6.4.25 The main issues that were raised during consultation in relation to land use were:
- potential severance effects and loss of greenspace;
  - loss of farmland especially that used for organic food production;
  - potential impacts on agriculturally productive soils and lowland raised peat bogs;
  - loss of woodland (including ancient and afforested areas) and associated habitats;
  - major impact on businesses in terms of landtake and disruption to their operation; and
  - potential impact on access and egress from the Forestry Commission's official car park facilities at Rotten O'Gairn. Mitigation measures should be given due consideration to maintain accessibility to the car park.

#### Geology, Contaminated Land & Groundwater (Parts C & D: Chapters 23 and 38)

- 6.4.26 The main issues that were raised during consultation in relation to geology, contaminated land and groundwater were:
- bedrock along the length of the route is likely to predominantly comprise relatively low permeability strata, though it is suggested that bedrock aquifers should be considered as potential groundwater receptors despite this;
  - the potential of disturbing contaminated land due to its former industrial use, and the potential impact on groundwater supplies through contamination;
  - impacts of blasting on aquifers near contaminated sites;
  - the location of the active landfill sites; and
  - recommendation to undertake a thorough groundwater investigation and implementation of a monitoring scheme to establish a baseline dataset.

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##### Water Environment (Parts C & D: Chapters 24 and 39)

- 6.4.27 The key issues raised during consultation in relation to hydrodynamics, surface water quality and drainage were:
- the provision of adequate drainage so local hydrology is not impacted upon and the potential for flooding does not become an issue;
  - impacts on existing floodplains, in particular at the River Dee;
  - impacts on existing watercourses and drainage – through increased run-off, contamination, and culverting;
  - impacts on SACs through contamination or increased flow of watercourses draining into the areas; and
  - impacts on fishing activities due to the proposed bridge construction downstream of the existing Maryculter Bridge.

##### Ecology and Nature Conservation (Parts C & D: Chapters 25 and 40)

- 6.4.28 The main issues raised during consultation in relation to ecology and nature conservation identified potential impacts on:
- mammals including:
    - i. red squirrel – recommendation for habitat management since red and grey squirrels are present in most Forestry Commission woodlands (especially Countesswells) along the proposed route
    - ii. badger
    - iii. otter
    - iv. water vole
    - v. bats – in the Kingcausie Estate, around Kirkton of Maryculter, and Peterculter, especially in residential properties proposed for demolition
    - vi. roe deer
    - vii. brown hare
    - viii. hedgehogs;
  - Atlantic salmon, and potentially on freshwater pearl mussels;
  - birds of red and amber status. Peregrine, merlin, goshawk, buzzard, kestrel, sparrowhawk, and owls have all been sighted. There is also a heronry and a rookery in the study area;
  - wetlands and moorland, which provide a variety of habitat and wildlife corridors for frogs, toads and mosses;
  - great crested newts thought to be present at Netherley;
  - botany, particularly due to the variety of unusual flora thought to be present along the Southern Leg, including rarities such as Herb Paris, Orchids, Corbie Lynne, Twinflower and unusual varieties of Sedges;
  - nationally important Red Moss of Netherley, the River Dee and Invercrynock Burn (both SSSIs and SACs);
  - River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC), including parts the Crynoch Burn;
  - locally important Sites of Interest to Natural Science (SINS) due to the extremely high value of these areas in terms of biodiversity and Study of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (SESA);

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- locally important District Wildlife Sites (DWS) at the River Dee and Invercrynoch Burn (SAC, SSSI) Old Deeside Railway, Bingham Wood, Rotten O'Gairn, Moss of Auchlea, and West Hatton Wood; and
- ancient woodlands and associated fragile ecosystems e.g. Kingcausie.

6.4.29 Concern has been raised regarding potential felling of woodland at Rotten O'Gairn due to wet ground and likely resulting windthrow. Consideration should be given to landscape and long term stability of the remaining woodland.

6.4.30 The RSPB request that habitat creation (particularly woodlands and wetlands) should be factored into proposals and the purchase or management of such areas should be factored into compensation proposals, since habitat loss is likely and wildlife connectivity between habitats will be reduced.

6.4.31 SNH advised that an Appropriate Assessment would be required to ascertain that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the River Dee SAC.

#### Landscape and Visual (Parts C & D: Chapters 26-27 and 41-42)

6.4.32 The key concerns identified during consultation in relation to landscape and visual issues were:

- impacts resulting from deep cutting into the Hills of Megray, Cookney and Stranog;
- intrusive impacts on residential properties and cutting through woodlands;
- impacts on the existing developed field system with substantial dry stone dyke walls;
- views from public footpaths;
- concern regarding key viewpoints around Stonehaven, in particular the Black Hill War Memorial viewpoint immediately to the north of Stonehaven;
- landscape impacts on Red Moss SSSI and River Dee SAC;
- the potential impact on two landscape designations: 'Area of Landscape Significance' and the 'Aberdeen City Green Belt'; and
- the likely increase in light emitted from street lights, signs and vehicles in rural areas of existing low levels of light pollution.

#### Cultural Heritage (Parts C & D: Chapters 28 and 43)

6.4.33 The consultation has identified a significant number of sites of cultural heritage importance from the prehistoric period to modern times, within the study area. Potential impacts on Local to Nationally important sites have been identified including Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), listed buildings and designed landscapes. The key sites are listed below.

##### *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

- White Hill, house and field system (index no 4875);
- Cantlayhills Cairn (index no. 3298) and Kempstone;
- East Crossley, field systems and houses 600m NW of (index no. 4658);
- Craigentath, field system and houses 250m SE of (index no. 4500, centred on NO876973);
- Proposed scheduled monument at Beans Hill.

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##### *Listed Buildings*

- Netherley Bridge – Category C listed;
- Marchstone no.23 Beans Hill (Category B listed);
- Ury House, North lodge (Category B listed); and
- Kingcausie House (category B listed: site 16489): The designed landscape at Kingcausie is of local and regional significance.

##### Air Quality (Parts C & D: Chapters 29 and 44)

- 6.4.34 Similar to the Northern Leg, the main issue arising from consultations related to the potential changes to air quality for residents and others where the route passes close to houses, industrial and commercial properties and areas of public access.

##### Traffic Noise and Vibration (Parts C & D: Chapters 30 and 45)

- 6.4.35 The main issue raised during consultation related to traffic noise and vibration, was the potential for localised increases in noise for communities or residences situated close to the proposed route.
- 6.4.36 As with the Northern Leg, site visits and desk studies have confirmed that traffic noise and vibration both during construction of the road and in its operational phase may be a key issue where the route passes close to houses, industrial, commercial properties and areas of public access. This issue will therefore be addressed in the EIA in conjunction with noise mitigation measures.

##### Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects (Parts C & D: Chapters 31 and 46)

- 6.4.37 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 introduces a Right of Responsible Access for all abilities and types of users, with emphasis upon the provision of suitable infrastructure to facilitate the exercise of access rights. One of the key issues raised during consultation related to Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects was the implication of this legislation.
- 6.4.38 All proposed structures in the AWPR scheme that have the potential to affect access should not restrict the types or abilities of users unless absolutely necessary. Wherever possible, access facilities should be suitable for all non-motorised users (NMUs) including walkers, cyclists and horses. Crossings should be safe and within 1 mile of an existing access route to minimise detours, especially near population centres such as Stonehaven, Netherley and Maryculter.
- 6.4.39 Other key issues raised through consultation were:
- the maintenance of existing cycle route infrastructure and opportunity for improved infrastructure;
  - minimise impact on popular local walking, cycling and equestrian routes including areas around Culter House Road and Contlaw Road, East Brotherfield, Countesswells/Foggieton Woods, Kingshill, and Gairnlea Forest.
  - consideration should be given to the severing of forest routes and the impact on grant schemes promoting access;
  - access between Rotten O'Gairn car park and a number of woodland walks into Kingshill wood should be maintained;
  - important to retain links and hence access (to existing roads and footpaths) near to junctions (e.g. Milltimber, Burnhead);
  - provision of footbridges should be considered at all appropriate points and not ruled out simply due to lack of funding;
  - underpasses should be accessible to all with lighting where necessary;

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- ramp gradients should be considered carefully and made accessible to all (notably along the Deeside Line);
- the Old Deeside Line threatens mixed motorised and non motorised use which should be avoided, preferably by continuing the existing Old Deeside Line over an elevated bridge, or by a short diversion alongside the AWPR;
- access for equestrians should be provided at the Formartine & Buchan Way, Old Deeside Line (also known as Deeside Old Railway District Wildlife Site) and Kirkhill Forest. Existing rights of way should be maintained at Kingswells, North Westfield, Beanshill and Contlaw;
- it was noted that no public areas in Aberdeenshire are considered to be affected or impinged on by the proposed route; and
- the potential impacts on existing bus routes and services.

#### Vehicle Travellers (Parts C & D: Chapters 32 and 47)

- 6.4.40 With respect to vehicle travellers, Grampian Police raised concern over the proposed 'two plus one' from Stonehaven to Burnhead (now superseded by dualled design). They believe that it would be inherently dangerous with potential conflict between opposing traffic and should be avoided. They request that consideration be given to dualling this stretch of road in its entirety.

#### Disruption Due to Construction (Chapters 33 and 48)

- 6.4.41 The main issues raised in consultation related to construction were:
- disturbance to local ecology especially related to the protection of mammals and ancient woodlands;
  - disruption to access routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. It was stressed in Stage 3 consultation that access should be maintained for NMUs throughout the construction period, with safe alternative diversion routes in place.
  - potential contamination of watercourses;
  - increased noise and traffic flow on local roads; and
  - the need to consider sustainability with regard to raw material use, waste generation and carbon dioxide emissions.

As with the Northern Leg, site visits and desk studies have shown that disruption due to construction in terms of noise, vibration and visual impact is likely to be an issue where the route passes close to houses, industrial and commercial properties and areas of public access.

#### Policies and Plans (Parts C & D: Chapters 34 and 49)

- 6.4.42 The main issue arising from consultations relating to Policies and Plans was in connection with the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan: Green Spaces, New Places. A Public Inquiry of the draft document took place from 21 February – 14 March 2006 and the finalised Plan is anticipated to be adopted in mid-2007 at the earliest.
- 6.4.43 Issues raised by consultees relevant to the draft Aberdeen Local Plan include policies for land use, a new Green Space Network designation, sites proposed for future development, wildlife, flooding, landscape, and access. Consultation feedback also indicated that the EIA should address the impact of the route on national, regional and local policies and plans.

## **6.5 Conclusion of Key Issues**

- 6.5.1 Key issues were raised by consultees relating to all environmental parameters of assessment. Each subject area is therefore considered to be important in the assessment, and all have been scoped in. The subject areas are discussed individually in Parts B, C and D.

## **6.6 References**

Highways Agency (1993, as amended). Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

Scottish Executive (1999). Planning Advice Note (PAN) 58: Environmental Impact Assessment.

Scottish Executive (2003). Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG).

Scottish Executive (2005). Report on Public Consultation (March – April 2005). November 2005.