

## **Appendix A13.3: Special Qualities of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 This appendix provides an assessment of the impacts of the proposed scheme upon the Special Qualities (SQs) of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area (NSA) and has informed the development of appropriate mitigation proposals during the landscape and visual impact assessment at DMRB Stage 3.
- 1.1.2 The SQs have been identified through review of Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH's) Commissioned Report No.374 'The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas: SNH Commissioned Report No.374' (SNH, 2010). This document defines the Special Qualities (SQs) of each NSA in Scotland and expands upon each one. These NSA SQs are presented by SNH to clarify "*what needs to be safeguarded to maintain its outstanding scenery*" and to provide a "*basis for future consultation and policy development, particularly in relation to managing development and land use change within NSAs.*"
- 1.1.3 Loch Tummel NSA covers the landscape surrounding Loch Tummel and the Tummel valley to the west and the Pass of Killiecrankie to the east. It is characterised by beautiful woodland and a fertile, lowland strath whilst on the higher slopes there is a wilder landscape of rocky crags and bare, heather-clad summits.
- 1.1.4 The River Garry, existing A9 and the Highland Main Line railway all run broadly parallel in a north-south direction through the NSA, along the Pass of Killiecrankie, with the northern boundary of the NSA lying adjacent to the southern periphery of the Cairngorms National Park.
- 1.1.5 Two LLCAs which lie within the Loch Tummel would be directly impacted upon by the construction of the proposed scheme, the Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA and Glen Garry: Lower Glen LLCA.
- 1.1.6 The Special Qualities of the Loch Tummel NSA are listed in SNH's Commissioned Report as being:
- a breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland;
  - Loch Tummel, the heart of the NSA;
  - rich and varied woodlands;
  - peacefulness and tranquillity;
  - the celebrated Queen's view;
  - spectacular and famous mountain gorge – the Pass of Killiecrankie; and
  - the picturesque Linn of Tummel.

### **2 Assessment of Impacts on the Special Qualities of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area**

- 2.1.1 For the assessment, relevant SQs for each LLCA have been identified. Locations where the landscape characteristics underpin these SQs have been identified and assessed, mitigation measures which are proposed are outlined and an assessment made as to whether these impacts would present a significant risk to the defining qualities of the SQs.
- 2.1.2 Tables 1 and 2 provide assessments of the SLQs of the two LLCAs which are directly impacted upon by the proposed scheme.

**Table 1: Assessment of direct impacts on the Special Qualities of the Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA**

<b>Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA</b>				
<b>Relevant and Related SQs</b>	<b>Locations where Landscape Characteristics underpin SQ</b>	<b>Potential Impacts of the Proposed Scheme on SQs</b>	<b>Summary of Proposed Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Significant Residual Risk to SQ (post mitigation)?</b>
A breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland.	A renowned steep sided wooded glen with a wilder landscape of rocky crags and bare, heather-clad summits on higher slopes.	The large scale landscape would be largely unaffected by the proposed scheme, with grand panoramas and views from within the LLCA to the steep glens kept intact. From higher more open locations the new earthworks to the east of Killiecrankie would be visible within the landscape.	Existing views would be retained and protected from the intrusion of large earthworks by grading out embankment slopes at Killiecrankie and planting new mixed woodland.  <b>(Mitigation Items P05-LV8, P05-LV10 and P05-LV17)</b>	No  Following the grading out of embankments, and establishment and maturation of the proposed woodland planting there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.
Rich and varied woodlands.	Extensive AWI mixed woodland along the Pass of Killiecrankie adds an unusual richness and variety of species and gives changing colour and texture throughout the seasons. Ancient oakwoods frame the western flanks of the Pass of Killiecrankie.	The northbound widening of the A9 would lead to a relatively small area of woodland would be felled between ch1100 and ch1200. The impact on the SQ as a result of this felling would result in a minor impact.	The reinstatement of lost mixed woodland with a similar varied species composition would ensure that the qualities of the SQ are preserved.  The retention and protection of existing woodland would be undertaken as far as practicable.  <b>Mitigation Items P05-LV9, P05-LV10 and P05-LV15)</b>	No  Following establishment and maturation of the proposed mixed woodland planting utilising an appropriate species mix there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.
Peacefulness and tranquillity.	The area is a major draw for visitors seeking peacefulness and tranquillity. In locations away from the A9 on sheltered paths and tracks natural sounds predominate, with the roar of the rapids, birdsong in the woods or the sound of the wind in the trees.	The perceived peacefulness and tranquillity of the NSA would be temporarily impacted upon during construction of the proposed scheme however these impacts would reduce once these activities are completed and the road in operation.  There would be a slight increase in traffic together with night time lighting from headlights which would result in a minor impact upon tranquillity in areas close to the A9. Due to the shielding nature of the steep sided landform this increase would not be felt in the areas where natural sounds currently predominate or impact on the qualities of the SQ.	Reinstatement of mixed woodland would help noise reduction close to the road.  <b>(Mitigation Items P05-LV10 and P05-LV15)</b>	No  Establishment and maturation of the proposed mixed woodland planting would reintegrate the proposed scheme and ensure that there would not be any significant impact on the SQ over and above the impacts currently associated with the existing A9.
Spectacular and famous mountain gorge – the Pass of Killiecrankie.	The renowned Pass of Killiecrankie (or Coille Creitheannich, the Aspen Wood) is one of the main routes between the	The historical landscape would be unaffected by the proposed scheme, with views to the famous mountain gorge kept	The reinstatement of lost mixed woodland with a similar species composition would ensure that	No

<b>Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA</b>				
<b>Relevant and Related SQs</b>	<b>Locations where Landscape Characteristics underpin SQ</b>	<b>Potential Impacts of the Proposed Scheme on SQs</b>	<b>Summary of Proposed Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Significant Residual Risk to SQ (post mitigation)?</b>
	Highlands and the Lowlands. Within the pass, the River Garry flows through a spectacular, steeply-sided wooded gorge with deep pools and the narrow Soldier's Leap. Extensive AWI mixed woodland adds an unusual richness and the wide variety of species gives changing colour and texture throughout the seasons.	intact.  As indicated previously a limited quantity of AWI mixed woodland) ch1100 to ch1200) would be lost but would have limited impacts on this SQ of the NSA.	the qualities of the SQ are preserved.  Use of aspen to reflect the passes' historical name "the Aspen Wood" would be incorporated.  The retention and protection of existing woodland would be undertaken as far as practicable.  <b>(Mitigation Items P05-LV9, P05-LV10 and P05-LV15)</b>	Following the grading out of embankments, and establishment and maturation of the proposed woodland planting, which includes aspen, there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.
The picturesque Linn of Tummel.	The picturesque rapids of the Linn of Tummel provide an exciting spectacle of sound and vision, contrasting with the peacefulness of Loch Tummel above and Loch Faskally below.	There would be no impact on this SQ.	None required	No  There would be no impact on the SQ.

**Table 2: Assessment of Direct Impacts on the Special Qualities of the Glen Garry: Lower Glen LLCA**

<b>Glen Garry: Lower Glen LLCA</b>				
<b>Relevant and Related SQs</b>	<b>Locations where Landscape Characteristics underpin SQ</b>	<b>Potential Impacts of the Proposed Scheme on SQs</b>	<b>Summary of Proposed Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Significant Residual Risk to SQ (post mitigation)?</b>
A breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland.	The northern part of the NSA lies in part of the LLCA close to Killiecrankie, between ch1200 and ch2200. It encompasses a patchwork of agricultural land and woodland with a wilder landscape of rocky crags and bare, heather-clad summits on higher slopes.	The large scale landscape would be largely unaffected by the proposed scheme, with grand panoramas and views from within the LLCA to the steep glens kept intact.  The loss of woodland and introduction of embankments close to Killiecrankie would slightly increase the visibility of the A9 but would not significantly impact on the appreciation of this SQ.	Existing views would be retained and protected from the intrusion of large earthworks by grading out embankment slopes at Killiecrankie and planting new mixed woodland.  <b>(Mitigation Items P05-LV8, P05-LV10 and P05-LV17)</b>	No  Following the grading out of embankments, and establishment and maturation of the proposed woodland planting there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.
Rich and varied woodlands.	Mixed woodland including AWI woodland to the north and east of Killiecrankie gives changing colours and textures throughout the seasons.	To the north-east of Killiecrankie where the proposed scheme crosses Allt Girnaig a small area of AWI mixed woodland would be lost but this would result in a negligible	Reinstatement of lost mixed woodland with a similar varied species composition would ensure that SQ is preserved.	No  Following establishment and maturation of the proposed

<b>Glen Garry: Lower Glen LLCA</b>				
<b>Relevant and Related SQs</b>	<b>Locations where Landscape Characteristics underpin SQ</b>	<b>Potential Impacts of the Proposed Scheme on SQs</b>	<b>Summary of Proposed Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Significant Residual Risk to SQ (post mitigation)?</b>
		impact on this SQ only.	The retention and protection of existing woodland would be undertaken as far as practicable.  <b>(Mitigation Items P05-LV9, P05-LV10 and P05-LV17)</b>	mixed woodland planting utilising an appropriate species mix there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.
Peacefulness and tranquillity.	The area is a major draw for visitors seeking peacefulness and tranquillity. In locations away from the A9 on sheltered paths and tracks natural sounds predominate, with the roar of the rapids, birdsong in the woods or the sound of the wind in the trees.	The perceived peacefulness and tranquillity of the NSA would be temporarily impacted upon during construction of the proposed scheme however these impacts would reduce once these activities are completed and the road in operation.  There would be a slight increase in traffic together with night time lighting from headlights which would result in a minor impact upon tranquillity in areas close to the A9. Due to the shielding nature of the steep sided landform this increase would not be felt in the areas where natural sounds currently predominate or impact on the qualities of the SQ.	The mitigation planting to replace lost mixed woodland would help noise reduction close to the road.  <b>(Mitigation Items P05-LV10)</b>	No  Establishment and maturation of the proposed mixed woodland planting would reintegrate the proposed scheme and ensure that there would not be any significant impact on the SQ over and above the impacts currently associated with the existing A9.

### **3 References**

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010) Commissioned Report No.374. The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas.