

## **Appendix A13.5: Landscape Objectives**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 The proposed scheme presents significant opportunities to contribute to, and enhance, the environmental quality of the existing A9 road corridor in order to deliver a high quality, integrated, biodiverse, adaptable and sustainable transport corridor. At the broadest level these landscape opportunities have been identified with a view to meeting the four key aims of Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes policy (Transport Scotland, 2014), which are to:
- ensure high quality of design and place;
  - enhance and protect natural heritage;
  - use resources wisely; and
  - build in adaptability to change.
- 1.1.2 The vision of the Fitting Landscapes policy is to promote the more sustainable design, implementation, maintenance and management of the transport estate and ensure that the landscapes that are created and managed are of a high quality, well integrated, bio-diverse and adaptable, and deliver a meaningful contribution to national sustainability targets. In addition to meeting the above four key aims, the policy requires Landscape Objectives to be set to inform the planning, design, implementation and management of new transport infrastructure.
- 1.1.3 The following project-specific Landscape Objectives have been developed in accordance with the policy to help achieve the above four key aims. The process of setting the objectives has been informed through: engagement with statutory consultees; review of findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process including the Environmental Design Principles, and collaborative design working of the landscape architects with engineers and other technical and design disciplines such as ecology, cultural heritage, noise, hydrology, land use, community and private assets and architecture.

### **2 Landscape Objectives**

- 2.1.1 The Landscape Objectives for the proposed scheme are as follows:
- Avoid detracting from the dramatic surrounding landscape and take opportunities to provide enhancements where practicable.
  - Maintain the Special Qualities (SQs) for the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area.
  - Design to take advantage of spectacular views from the road.
  - Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed junction between ch4300 and ch6200, on the lower slopes of Creag na Ciche as an attractive 'gateway' to local communities.
  - Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed Pitlochry South Junction as an attractive 'gateway' to local communities.
  - Consider opportunities to use Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) features to enhance visual amenity and provide wildlife habitat.
  - Enhance the A9 traveller's experience of transition between Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs), most notably between the wide valley floor with farmland of the Strath Tummel LLCA and the heavily wooded steep sided slopes of the Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA.
  - Integrate embankments between at the Pitlochry South Junction, between the Pitlochry South Junction and north of Littleton of Fonab and north of the Clunie Road Bridge and the Pitlochry North Junction, with the varied valley topography.
  - Integrate the proposed large rock cuttings required between ch2500 and ch5900, on the lower slopes of Creag na Ciche and Craigower, with the natural landform.

- Consider opportunities to create spaces at underpasses to enhance the recreational value along the Non-Motorised User (NMU) paths (e.g. at ch2540, north of Middleton of Fonab and between the B8019 and A924).

### **3 Application of Landscape Objectives**

3.1.1 The Landscape Objectives are intended to guide the planning, design, implementation and management of the proposed scheme. It is recognised that they will not always be fully achievable. A range of factors need to be taken into account, including engineering feasibility; road safety; effects on landowners; and constrained locations where effects on multiple environmental sensitivities need to be balanced and the optimum solution may be a compromise.

3.1.2 Details on how the Landscape Objectives would be tailored to the receiving landscape are outlined below:

**Avoid detracting from the dramatic surrounding landscape and take opportunities to provide enhancements where practicable:**

- through limited / low key interventions;
- through careful control of views of the surrounding landscape; and
- through use of planting and seeding to reflect and integrate with surrounding vegetation patterns.

**Maintain the SQs of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area:**

- by systematic assessment of the impacts on SQs;
- by identification of the specific SQs affected by the proposed scheme;
- through protection of natural assets and/or the features which contribute to the SQs; and
- through identification of specific design measures to mitigate impacts on the SQs.

**Maintain the essential qualities of Loch Faskally and Faskally Wood as an outdoor recreational area:**

- by systematic assessment of the impacts of the proposed scheme on the users of the wood;
- through identification of specific design measures to mitigate these impacts and maintain the area as a valuable amenity resource; and
- through use of woodland planting to provide visual screening of the proposed scheme.

**Design to take advantage of spectacular views from the road (including but not limited to...):**

- open views across and along the Tummel valley;
- views north towards Pitlochry and the Atholl Palace Hotel from the route as it crosses the Tummel valley floor between Pitlochry South Junction and Foss Road;
- views over Loch Faskally from the bridge crossing;
- views from the A9 between Pitlochry North Junction and Killiecrankie; to the west across Loch Faskally towards the oak woodland covered hills and to the north towards Craig Fonvuick;
  - by controlled use of planting; and
  - by provision for laybys where practicable at locations with good views.

**Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed junctions at Pitlochry south and Pitlochry north as attractive ‘gateways’ to the town and facilities:**

- by designing the junctions to minimise the amount of earthworks required;
- by grading out to varied earthworks slopes, feathered into the adjoining landform;
- by using planting to help with visual integration; and
- by use of planting.

**Consider opportunities to use SuDS features to enhance visual amenity and provide wildlife habitat:**

- by using wet ponds, where practicable, in areas that would be most visible. For example, close to areas which are accessible on local footpaths;
- by using wet ponds to provide potential habitat ‘stepping stones’ for northern damselflies; and
- by designing SuDS features to fit with the natural landform with shapes to reflect the local landscape characteristics, for example ox-bow lakes formed by former river channels.

**Enhance the A9 traveller’s experience of transition between the relatively flat and open landscape of the Tummel Valley south of Pitlochry to the wooded hill slopes and glens to the northwest of the town:**

- through limited use of new planting to retain a relatively open character between Pitlochry South Junction and Foss Road;
- through new woodland planting to replace woodland lost between Foss Road and the northern extents of the project; and
- taking advantage of opportunities for new rock exposures in the vicinity of Pitlochry North Junction to emphasise a more rugged upland character.

**Reflect the distinctive character of the woodlands alongside the route:**

- through use of both native and non-native species including exotic conifers to reflect the distinctive estate ‘parkland’ character of the mature woodlands along the route within the estate parkland surrounding Cluniemore House and Faskally Wood.

**Consider opportunities to create spaces at underpasses to enhance the recreational value along the Non-Motorised User paths (e.g. Rob Roy Way Underpass):**

- by applying innovative design solutions/materials/lighting, where appropriate.

**Integrate the proposed large cuttings on the lower slopes of Creag na Ciche and Craigower with the natural landform:**

- through localised steepening in areas of rock to avoid excessive ‘chasing’ of cutting slopes up the hillside and or loss of valuable woodland.

## **4 References**

Transport Scotland (2014). Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes.