

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The A9 trunk road provides a strategic link between the Scottish Highlands and the Central Belt. The Scottish Government’s Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published in 2008, recommended a range of improvements for the A9, including upgrading to dual carriageway standard between Perth and Inverness, a distance of some 177km.
- 1.1.2 In December 2011, the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment announced the Scottish Government’s commitment to dual the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025; as part of the 2011 Infrastructure and Investment Plan (IIP). This commitment was reinforced in the 2015 IIP.
- 1.1.3 The A9 Dualling Programme now includes three design ‘Sections’; North, Central and South. The Central Section (from Glen Garry to Dalraddy) consists of four design ‘Projects’:
- Project 7 – Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie
 - Project 8 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore
 - Project 9 – Crubenmore to Kincaig
 - Project 10 – Kincaig to Dalraddy
- 1.1.4 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared in relation to the Central Section Project 8, Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore. This project has been progressed to a ‘Stage 3’ level of design in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) (Highways Agency (*et al*), 2009).
- 1.1.5 In Scotland, DMRB Stage 3 requires the development of a design to a sufficient level of detail to inform the production of Roads Orders under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. Where the project is of a sufficient scale, the DMRB Stage 3 design must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). A summary explanation of DMRB Stages 1 to 3 is provided in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1: DMRB Staged Development Process

DMRB Stage	Objectives
Stage 1	Identification of route corridor options and principal environmental constraints and opportunities Selection of a preferred route corridor within which the road project will be designed and constructed
Stage 2	Development and assessment of mainline and junction options within the preferred route corridor Engineering, Economic and Environmental assessment of options to a level sufficient to inform selection of a preferred mainline route and junction location(s)
Stage 3	Further design development of selected mainline and junctions to include drainage, structures, accesses, to a level sufficient to inform and support Road Orders Assessment of the Proposed Scheme undertaken in accordance with Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011 which implements EC Directive 85/337, with publication of an Environmental Statement (ES) (if required)

1.2 Introduction to Project 8, Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore

1.2.1 Project 8 is approximately 11km in length, commencing approximately 1.3km south of the existing Dalwhinnie junction and terminating to the north where it connects to the existing Crubenmore dual carriageway. The Proposed Scheme extents are shown on **Figure 1-1**.

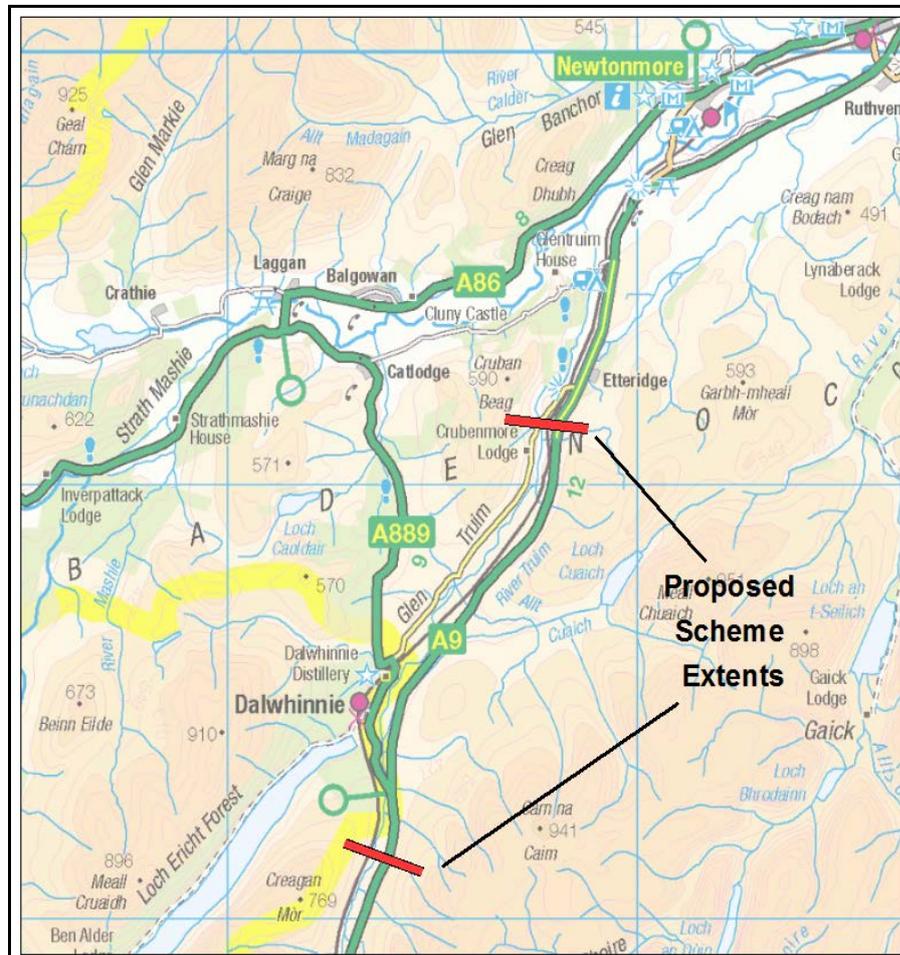


Figure 1-1: Project 8 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore – regional context

1.2.2 The local area contains a range of environmental designations and existing infrastructure constraints, as shown in **Figure 1-2** below. Much of the surrounding area is environmentally sensitive and local key designations include

- Cairngorms National Park (CNP)
- Drumochter Hills Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Drumochter Hills Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Drumochter Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- River Spey (River Truim) SAC

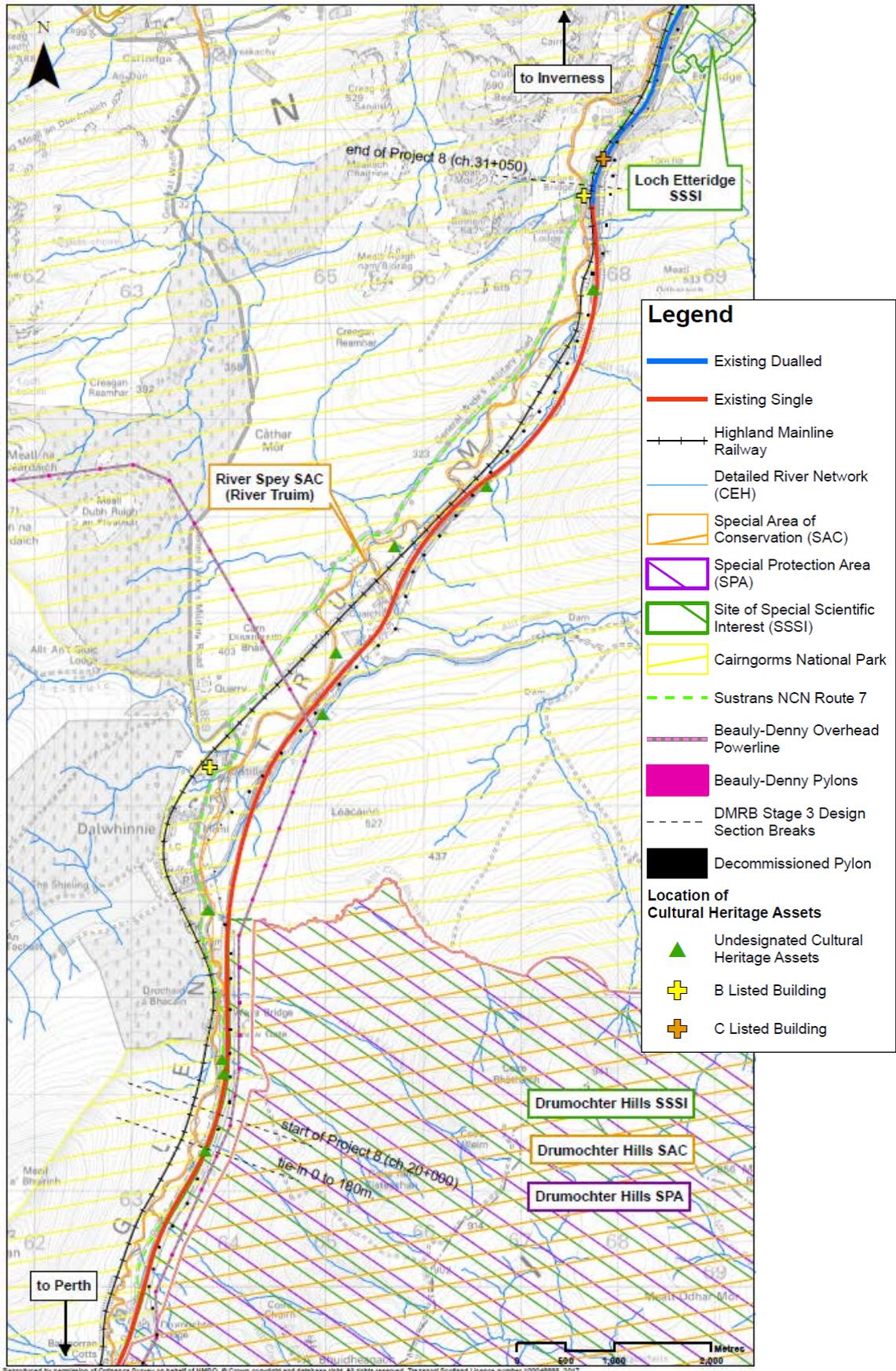


Figure 1-2: Project 8 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore location and local constraints

- 1.2.3 **Figure 1-2** also highlights significant engineering constraints within proximity including:
- the A9 trunk road itself, which will require continued operation during construction
 - the A889 trunk road, which provides access to Dalwhinnie and to the A86 trunk road beyond
 - Highland Main Line (HML) railway, running to the west of the A9
 - Beauly to Denny powerline (BDL), running initially to the east and crossing over to the west of the A9 just north of Dalwhinnie
 - National Cycle Network Route 7 (NCN7), which runs to the west of, and in close proximity to, the A9 at the southern extent of the project area before routing through Dalwhinnie
 - Aqueduct structure, operated by Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE), which runs in close proximity and crosses beneath the A9 to the east of Dalwhinnie
 - 1:200 year flood zone

1.2.4 The A9 crosses numerous watercourses within this project extent, and the topography is relatively open for much of the route, although the northern extent, once past Cuaich, is constrained by steep hillsides rising to the east of the existing A9.

1.3 Statutory Context for EIA

- 1.3.1 The requirement for EIA originates from EIA Directive (85/33/EEC). The original Directive and subsequent amendments were codified by Directive 2011/92/EU, which was further amended in 2014 by Directive 2014/52/EU. This Directive was adopted on 15 May 2014, and transposed into UK Legislation on 16 May 2017.
- 1.3.2 As such, EIA regulations relevant to trunk road projects in Scotland are The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (EIA) Regulations 2017. However, transitional arrangements provided by the 2014/52/EU Directive, confirm that EIA for projects subject to Scoping prior to 16 May 2017 can be undertaken in accordance with the previous EIA Regulations. Given that the Scoping procedure for A9 Dualling projects was undertaken prior to May 2017, this EIA is therefore undertaken in accordance with The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as amended by the EIA (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended), hereafter referred to as ‘the EIA Regulations’.
- 1.3.3 In terms of what constitutes an EIA development, Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations sets out categories of large-scale development that definitively require EIA. In addition, the ‘Roads (Scotland) Act 1984’ (as amended) requires an EIA to be undertaken for certain road projects and, with respect to this A9 Dualling project, statutory EIA is required for road widening projects greater than 10km in length.
- 1.3.4 As the proposed A9 Dualling Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore scheme is approximately 11 km in length, including tie-ins, it falls within the definitions of a Schedule 1 project and EIA is therefore required. DMRB Stage 2 options assessments were subject to non-statutory consultation via the A9 Dualling Environmental Steering Group (ESG), including feedback on issues that the Consultation Authorities required further information on through DMRB Stage 3 development.
- 1.3.5 Following DMRB Stage 2, a route-wide Scoping Report was produced covering A9 Dualling Projects across the South, Central and Northern sections. The Scoping Report confirmed that baseline information presented at DMRB Stage 2 would be further developed, as well as outlining the DMRB Stage 3 assessment approaches for each topic. The Scoping Report was issued to the ESG for Consultation on 21 August 2016.

1.3.6 Consideration of the need for EIA was recorded in a ‘Record of Determination’ (RoD) submitted to Transport Scotland on 21 November 2016. The RoD records the basic details of the Proposed Scheme and the surrounding environment, and that it is a qualifying Schedule 1 project. The RoD therefore provides an administrative mechanism to support Transport Scotland’s decision to proceed to EIA.

1.3.7 Schedule 4, Part 1 of the EIA Regulations outlines the particular information to be included in an ES and **Table 1-2** provides a simple overview on where the required information is contained in this document.

Table 1-2: Schedule 4 EIA Requirements

Specified Information		Location within ES
1.	Description of the development, including in particular –	
(a)	a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases	Chapter 5
(b)	a description of the main characteristics of the production processes, for instance, nature and quantity of the materials used	Chapter 18
(c)	an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (e.g. water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration) resulting from the operation of the proposed development	Chapters 10 to 18
2.	An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects	Chapter 3
3.	A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular: population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors	Chapters 8 – 18, see Baseline Conditions and Potential Impacts sub-sections.
4.	A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development, resulting from –	Chapters 8 – 18, see Potential Impacts sub-sections.
(a)	the existence of the development	
(b)	the use of natural resources	
(c)	the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste, and the description by the applicant or appellant of the forecasting methods used to assess the effects on the environment	
5.	A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment	Chapters 8 – 18, see Mitigation sub-sections plus Chapter 21 (Schedule of Environmental Commitments)
6.	A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 5 of this Part	Non-Technical Summary
7.	An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant or appellant in compiling the required information	Chapters 8 – 18, see Limitations to Assessment sub-sections.

1.4 Purpose and Content of the Environmental Statement

- 1.4.1 Annex E of Circular 8/2007 ‘The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 1999’ provides guidance on the EIA of trunk road schemes in Scotland. Following updates through the 2011 EIA Regulations, Parts III and IV remain extant. Guidance contained in Circular 8/2007 in Annex E therefore continues to apply. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) also provides Government guidance on the design, development and assessment of trunk road schemes.
- 1.4.2 The purpose of this ES is to report the assessment findings and mitigation recommendations of the EIA undertaken in accordance with the above guidance. Each assessment topic chapter provides details of any further topic-specific guidance applied for each relevant subject, and the full range of ES Chapters are listed in **Table 1-3** below. Further detail on the structure of these chapters is provided in **Section 6.2**.

Table 1-3: Contents of the Environmental Statement

Chapter No.	Chapter Heading
1	Introduction (this chapter)
2	Need for the Scheme
3	Alternatives Considered
4	Design Development
5	The Proposed Scheme
6	Overview of Assessment Process
7	Consultation
8	People and Communities: Community and Private Assets
9	People and Communities: Effects on All Travellers
10	Geology, Soils and Groundwater
11	Road Drainage and the Water Environment
12	Ecology and Nature Conservation
13	Landscape
14	Visual
15	Cultural Heritage
16	Air Quality
17	Noise and Vibration
18	Materials
19	Policies and Plans
20	Cumulative Effects
21	Schedule of Environmental Commitments
22	Summary of Significant Residual Impacts

- 1.4.3 It should be noted that A9 Dualling Project 8, Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore, design development has been informed by a series of environmentally-led workshops and reviews, which have themselves been informed by earlier work undertaken through previous DMRB design and assessment stages. In effect, the early involvement of environmental specialists has aimed to use

EIA as a design tool to identify the potential impacts of the Proposed Scheme and recommend appropriate changes to the developing design, which have inherently reduced the environmental impact (discussed further under **Chapter 4**).

- 1.4.4 This process identified opportunities to refine the details of the Proposed Scheme; for example, by including mammal ledges in a number of culvert designs, or refining the route alignment and earthworks extents to avoid certain habitats or the 1:200 year flood zone, to prevent or reduce potential adverse environmental effects. Such measures, included in the DMRB Stage 3 design, are referred to as ‘embedded mitigation’ throughout the topic chapters in this ES.
- 1.4.5 Further mitigation requirements, identified to address any potentially significant adverse impacts, are referred to as proposed ‘standard’ or ‘additional/ specific’ mitigation in each assessment chapter. All mitigation (embedded and proposed) is collated and detailed in **Chapter 21, Schedule of Environmental Commitments**.

1.5 Review and Comment

- 1.5.1 Copies of this Environmental Statement (ES) are available for inspection at:

Transport Scotland	Badenoch Library	The Highland Council Service Point
Major Transport Projects Infrastructure Projects (MTRIPS) Buchanan House 58 Port Dundas Street Glasgow G4 0HF Telephone 0141 272 7100 Monday to Thursday 8.30am-5pm, Friday 8.30am-4.30pm	Badenoch Centre Spey Street Kingussie PH21 1EH Telephone: 01540 661596 Mon 12-5pm, 6-8pm Tues CLOSED Wed 10am-1pm, 2-5pm Thurs 10am-1pm, 2-5pm Fri 10am-1pm, 2-5pm	The Courthouse High Street Kingussie PH21 1HR Telephone: 01540 664529 Monday to Friday 9am–12.30pm and 1.30–3pm

Please note that all locations are closed at weekends and bank holidays.

- 1.5.2 The ES is also available online from Transport Scotland’s A9 Dualling, Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore website at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/a9-dalwhinnie-to-crubenmore/>
- 1.5.3 A hard copy of the ES may be purchased at a cost of £150, and the ES is also available in DVD format, at a cost of £10, by writing to Transport Scotland at the address shown above, or by email to: info@transport.gov.scot
- 1.5.4 Any person wishing to express an opinion on this ES should write to Transport Scotland at the address above. Formal representations are invited until eight weeks after the advertised date of publication.

1.6 References

- 1.6.1 Relevant references for introductory Chapters 1 to 7 of this ES are compiled and provided at the end of Chapter 7.

