

## **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) of the River Tay (Dunkeld) National Scenic Area.
  - Maintain the essential qualities of the Tay Forest Park as an outdoor recreational area.
  - Design to take advantage of spectacular views from the road.
  - Enhance the A9 traveller's experience along the Strath Tay: Mid Glen Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) with relatively enclosed views in the south and more open views across the Tay Valley further north.
  - Maintain the existing A9 traveller's experience within the Strath Tay: Lower Glen LLCA by retaining its enclosed and wooded character.
  - Reflect the distinctive woodland character alongside the route, taking opportunities to provide enhanced woodland wildlife habitat.
  - Minimise the landscape impact of Compensatory Flood Storage Areas.
  - Consider opportunities to use SuDS features to enhance visual amenity and provide wildlife habitat.
  - Integrate proposed cuttings and embankments with the surrounding topography.
  - Consider opportunities to minimise impacts and enhance the recreational value along the Non-Motorised User paths.

- Limit impacts on woodland and natural local topography on the valley slope on the southbound side of the A9.

### **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 set out in Section 2 above 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 Special Qualities (SQs) of the River Tay (Dunkeld) National Scenic Area:**

- by systematic assessment of the impacts on SQs;
- by identifying 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 the Tay Forest Park 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 Tay valley; and
- by controlled use of planting.

**Enhance the A9 traveller's experience along the Strath Tay: Mid Glen LLCA with relatively enclosed views in the south and more open views across the Tay Valley further north:**

- through limited use of new planting to retain a relatively open character on the northbound side; and
- through new woodland planting to replace woodland lost along the southbound carriageway.

**Maintain the existing A9 traveller's experience within the Strath Tay: Lower Glen LLCA by retaining its enclosed and wooded character:**

- through new woodland planting to replace woodland lost along the southbound carriageway.

**Reflect the distinctive woodland character alongside the route, taking opportunities to provide enhanced woodland wildlife habitat:**

- through use of predominantly native species to reflect the distinctive character of the mature woodlands along the route.

**Minimise the landscape impact of Compensatory Flood Storage Areas:**

- through returning areas to their former land cover / land use where practicable;
- through avoiding the use of retaining walls and 'hard' structures; and
- through slackening of earthwork slopes to integrate with the surrounding landform where practicable.

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

- by using wetland, where practicable, in areas that would be most visible. For example, close to areas which are accessible on local footpaths;
- by using wetland to provide potential habitat 'stepping stones' e.g. Northern Damselflies;
- by designing SuDS features to fit with the natural landform with shapes to reflect the local landscape characteristics; and
- by planting larger individual trees within riparian woodland, adjacent to SuDS to aid bat flight patterns.

**Integrate proposed cuttings and embankments with the surrounding topography:**

- through grading out of earthworks slopes, where practicable, to tie in with adjoining landform;
- through localised slope steepening to avoid 'chasing' slopes and loss of natural loss of topography;
- through varying side slope gradients to reflect the natural variations in slope;
- through use of planting and seeding to soften the impact of earthworks and integrate with the surrounding area; and
- through facilitating opportunities for land to be returned to agricultural use.

**Consider opportunities to minimise impacts and enhance the recreational value along the Non-Motorised User paths:**

- through use of planting to screen / soften views of the propose scheme;
- through careful design of Guay South Overbridge in order to achieve a slender, elegant and well-proportioned structure; and
- through careful design of proposed retaining walls, including that at Haugh of Kilmorich, potentially including patterned or relief finishes.

**Limit impacts on woodland and natural local topography on the valley slope on the southbound side of the A9:**

- through use of retaining walls and/or localised slope steepening, for example at Rotmell and Haugh of Kilmorich, to avoid 'chasing' slopes with large scale cuttings.

## **4 References**

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