

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. The A9 Trunk Road forms a strategic link between Central Scotland and the Scottish Highlands and is vital to the growth and development of northern Scotland. The A9 serves settlements along the corridor, providing access to local services, employment and tourism.
- 1.1.2. The A9 is used by a range of vehicle types including passenger vehicles, coaches and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) for strategic, local, agricultural and commercial uses. Tourist traffic also contributes to increased traffic volumes along the A9 during the summer months and holiday periods. The A9 between Perth and Inverness is 177km long of which 129km is single carriageway, with isolated sections of dual carriageway and Wide Single 2+1 (WS2+1) consisting of two lanes in one direction and a single lane in the opposite direction.
- 1.1.3. The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR)ⁱ in 2009 identified dualling of the A9 as a priority trunk road intervention. Following this, the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) 2011ⁱⁱ and IIP 2015ⁱⁱⁱ committed to dualling the A9 Trunk Road between Perth and Inverness by 2025 (see Figure 1.1, Volume 3). The delivery of the Dalraddy to Slochd project (see Figure 1.2, Volume 3) forms part of this commitment.
- 1.1.4. Following the IIP, two corridor-wide commissions were implemented to help develop a consistent approach to dualling design and assessment. These have informed the Dalraddy to Slochd project and comprised the Preliminary Engineering Services (PES) and Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA). The two closely linked strategic studies together identify the engineering and environmental constraints, issues, risks and opportunities to provide an equivalent assessment to Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1.
- 1.1.5. Based on the work undertaken to date, the A9 Dualling will be designed to deliver a Category 7A All Purpose Dual Carriageway road standard. DMRB describes a Category 7A road as a D2AP with no access except for isolated existing access with left turns only. No minor junctions are allowed at grade and no gaps in the central reserve are permitted. All major junctions are fully grade separated.

1.2. The Proposed Scheme

- 1.2.1. This Environmental Statement (ES) relates to the Dalraddy to Slochd project which has now progressed to a Stage 3 level of design in accordance with the DMRB.
- 1.2.2. The A9 Dualling Dalraddy to Slochd DMRB Stage 3 engineering design assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and reported in this ES is hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Scheme' and is shown in Figure 5.2, Volume 3.
- 1.2.3. The Proposed Scheme is approximately 25km in length, the majority of this being within the Cairngorms National Park. The southern end of the scheme ties into the Kincaig to Dalraddy dualling scheme (opened to traffic in October 2017). The first 16km of the scheme generally runs in a northerly direction passing Aviemore and Kinveachy (both to the east of the route) before crossing the River Dulnain to the west of Carrbridge. In the vicinity of Carrbridge the route begins to follow a westerly course, passing Black Mount (to the north), as it ascends towards Slochd. At Slochd the route begins to veer to the

northwest towards Slochd Summit, the second highest point on the A9, beyond which is the northern tie-in point with the existing dual carriageway.

- 1.2.4. The majority of the existing road is a single carriageway 7.3m wide with 0.7m hardstrips with the exception of a short section of Wide Single 2+1 (WS2+1) carriageway that provides northbound overtaking opportunities for approximately 1km in the vicinity of Carrbridge.

1.3. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.3.1. The requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is set out in European Commission Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended by Directive 97/11/EC relating to the assessment of the environmental effects of certain public and private projects and Directive 2003/35/EC regarding public participation. The Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999, as amended^{iv} implemented the Directive in Scotland¹. The EIA Directive has recently been updated and a new Directive (2014/52/EU) was adopted in May 2014. This was transposed into UK legislation on the 16 May 2017. A new set of Regulations, the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, implement Directive 2014/52/EU in relation to construction projects for new roads or improvement and maintenance of existing roads in Scotland.
- 1.3.2. Transitional arrangements are, however, in place such that road projects subject to a scoping procedure before 16 May 2017 will be considered in accordance with the requirements for EIA of certain road construction or improvement projects as set out in the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984^{vi}, as amended by the EIA (Scotland) Regulations 1999, hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations. The Proposed Scheme was subject to scoping in July 2016.
- 1.3.3. The EIA Regulations categorise developments according to their requirement for EIA. Schedule 1 of the Regulations lists the types of developments where EIA is always required and comprises large scale and impact developments. Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations lists developments that may or may not require an EIA depending on the potential for significant effects on the environment because of factors such as its nature, size or location.
- 1.3.4. The Proposed Scheme falls within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations on the basis that it involves widening of an existing road of two lanes to provide four lanes over a continuous length of over 10km and therefore EIA is mandatory. This is recorded in the signed Record of Determination (May 2017).
- 1.3.5. The assessments reported in the ES have followed the guidelines set out in DMRB, Volume 11 (Highways Agency, 1999; as amended), including relevant DMRB Interim Advice Notes (IAN). In addition to DMRB, other applicable guidance has also been considered, where relevant, such as the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2016). Further details on the guidance applicable to the individual assessment chapters is referenced in the relevant ES chapters.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 consolidated, updated and replaced Part II of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999, however, Parts III and IV of the former, concerning Roads and Bridges and Land Drainage remain extant.

1.4. Content of the Environmental Statement

- 1.4.1. This ES presents the findings of the EIA process undertaken for the Proposed Scheme (as described in Chapter 5). The assessments presented in the ES have followed the guidelines contained in DMRB, Volume 11^{vii}.
- 1.4.2. Regulation 4(1) of the EIA Regulations stipulates requirements relating to the information to be included in an ES. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations details the requirements under Parts I and II.
- 1.4.3. Regulation 4(1) indicates that an ES must include information referred to in Part II and such information referred to in Part I of Schedule 4 as is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development and which, having regard in particular to current knowledge and methods of assessment. The ES has been prepared in accordance with Parts I and II.
- 1.4.4. The information required along with an indication of the chapter in which the relevant information can be found in this ES, is provided below:
- A description of the Proposed Scheme including details of the site and the road design, land use requirements, and an estimate by type and quantity of any emissions arising (Chapter 5);
 - An outline of the main alternatives and the main reasons for the choice of the Proposed Scheme, taking into account the environmental effects (Chapter 3);
 - A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly impacted by the Proposed Scheme (Chapters 8 to 20);
 - A description of the likely significant impacts of the Proposed Scheme on the environment, including direct and indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary, beneficial and adverse effects, and a description of the forecasting methods used to assess the effects on the environment (Chapters 8 to 20 and 22);
 - A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment (Chapters 4 and 8 to 21);
 - An indication of any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information (Chapters 8 to 20); and
 - A non-technical summary of the above information.

1.5. Structure of the Environmental Statement

- 1.5.1. The ES is divided into three volumes as follows:
- Volume 1 – the non-technical summary and the main report;
 - Volume 2 – appendices containing additional technical information that supports the main report; and
 - Volume 3 – graphics supporting the information presented in Volumes 1 and 2, illustrating the Proposed Scheme and environmental information.
- 1.5.2. The information contained in Volume 1 is presented in:
- Chapter 1 – provides an introduction to the Proposed Scheme and the ES;
 - Chapter 2 – summarises the need for the scheme;

- Chapter 3 – provides a review of the scheme alternatives that were considered;
- Chapter 4 – outlines the development of the Proposed Scheme design and how this has been informed by environmental aspects;
- Chapter 5 – comprises a description of the Proposed Scheme;
- Chapter 6 – contains a summary of the general approach and methods used for the various assessments reported in Chapters 8 to 20;
- Chapter 7 – provides a summary of the consultation and scoping process, identifying the key issues raised and how these have been considered in the ES;
- Chapters 8 – through to 20 report the findings of the studies and assessments which have been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme. These assessments are generally presented in a standardised format which is described in Chapter 6;
- Chapter 21 – presents a summary of the environmental mitigation measures proposed; and
- Chapter 22 – provides a summary of the significant residual impacts remaining after successful implementation of mitigation that are still considered to be significant.

1.5.3. A glossary of terms and list of abbreviations are also provided at the front of Volume 1.

1.5.4. The graphics contained in Volume 3 are numbered in accordance with the chapters in Volume 1 or the appendices in Volume 2.

1.5.5. A Non-Technical Summary is bound into the front of Volume 1 and is also available as a stand-alone document.

1.6. The Environmental Impact Assessment Team

1.6.1. The EIA was undertaken and compiled by Atkins Mouchel JV (AMJV), with additional specialist input to some technical assessments as identified within the relevant ES chapters.

1.7. Environmental Statement Review and Comments

1.7.1. The ES is available for public viewing at the following locations during normal working hours:

Transport Scotland
9th Floor Reception
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

High Life Highland
Aviemore Community Centre
Muirton
Aviemore
PH22 1SF

Carrbridge Post Office
Main Street
Carrbridge

PH23 3AS

The Highland Council
(Service Point)
Castle Street
Inverness
IV1 1JJ

- 1.7.2. The ES can be viewed on the Transport Scotland website:
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/a9-dalraddy-to-slochd/>
- 1.7.3. Printed copies of the ES may be obtained for a charge of £150 (a CD version is also available for a charge of £10) from the above address, or requested by emailing: info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk. Copies of the ES Non-Technical Summary are available free of charge.
- 1.7.4. Any person wishing to express an opinion on the ES should write to the address above. Written responses are invited within six weeks of the advertised date of the publication of the ES.

ⁱ Scottish Government (2009); Strategic Transport Projects Review.

ⁱⁱ Scottish Government (2011); Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Scottish Government (2015); Infrastructure Investment Plan 2015.

^{iv} Scottish Government (1999); Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

^v Scottish Government (2011); Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011.

^{vi} Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

^{vii} Highways Agency et al. (1999); Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11 Environmental Assessment, as amended.