

# Appendix 13.3

## Landscape Objectives

Transport Scotland

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# 1. Introduction

1.1.1. Strategic Landscape Principles were identified as part of the development of the A9 Dualling Programme Strategic Environmental Design Principles set out in Appendix 4.1. These Strategic Landscape Principles were considered in the production of the landscape and visual chapters of the Environmental Statement at DMRB Stage 3, including the development of the Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Strategy. They are set out in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1: Strategic Landscape Principles and Project Area Specific Objectives**

Landscape Objective Number	Landscape Objective
L1	Respect for the distinctive local landscape character and qualities of the A9 corridor shall inform all aspects of the dualling process.
L2	Ensure road alignment and design responds to the qualities and key characteristics of each landscape character areas through which the route passes.
L3	Whilst respecting the distinctive character and qualities so the landscape and places along the route, ensure a consistency of approach to design to reinforce the overall identity of the A9 between Perth and Inverness.
L4	Enhance the views from the road to maximise the positive traveller experience. Key views shall inform the siting of laybys, around appropriate opportunities to showcase natural and built heritage along the route.
L5	Ensure potential construction and long term (25years plus) landscape effects both inform the landscape design of the road.
L6	Secure adequate land for integrated solutions.
L7	Design for low maintenance and to accommodate future change.
L8	Use natural characteristics in design and encourage the use of sensitive and innovative methods to mitigate adverse environmental and visual effects, including rock cuttings, to deliver appropriately balanced solutions.
L9	Minimise the effect of the road on the experience of the wider landscape, including lighting and noise.
L10	Minimise the landscape impacts of verge and boundary treatments, within the context of safety standard requirements.
L11	Avoid or reduce the effects on landscape features, retain and make best use of existing vegetation and re-use site won materials wherever possible.
L12	Maintain and where possible enhance ecological and landscape connectivity and minimise fragmentation
L13	Protect species and habitats to support biodiversity, natural processes and LBAP targets.
L14	Use locally native and characteristic plant species and species mixes.
L15	Aim to ensure the enhanced reputation of the A9 as one of the world's great tourist routes, through landscape of national and international importance.

1.1.2. Project general and specific landscape objectives were developed for the Dalraddy to Slochd section of the A9 Dualling Programme. These were produced in the context of the Strategic Landscape Principles and in response to the local landscape of this section of the A9 and are set out in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 respectively below.

**Table 1.2: Strategic Landscape Principles and Project Area Specific Objectives**

Dalraddy to Slochd General Objectives (GO)	Actions Required to Demonstrate General Objectives
D-S -GO1 - Respect the character and sensitivity of the local landscape and integrate the road into the landscape (L1, L2).	Consult effectively with statutory consultees for continuity as part of the ESG and the A9 Landscape Forum to agree a corridor wide approach to the assessment process. Early consideration of the landscape character through the design and assessment process to identify areas of local landscape character against which the assessment is undertaken and specific mitigation measures developed.
D-S -GO2 - Vary the gradients of engineered slopes in response to local landforms (L1, L2).	Several locations identified as having slope profiles relaxed/steepened in order to provide an integrated approach to the final design.
D-S -GO3 - Tops and bottoms of slopes and ends of cuttings to be rounded and feathered into the adjacent landform (L1, SP2).	Several locations identified as having slope profiles relaxed/steepened in order to provide an integrated approach to the final design.
D-S -GO4 - Promote a clear identity for this section of the A9 between Dalraddy-Slochd through consulting with the Cairngorms National Park Authority, and other consultants, promoting the reputation of the A9 as an iconic tourist route (L3, L15).	Early consideration of the landscape character. Consult effectively with statutory consultees for continuity as part of the ESG and the A9 Landscape Forum to agree a corridor wide approach to the assessment process. The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Strategy has been developed maintaining views of the iconic Scottish landscape, whilst identifying and enhancing several layby areas affording visitors to pause and benefit from the wider scenery.
D-S -GO5 - Provide and maintain various interesting and scenic views both of and from the A9 (L4).	Seek opportunities for key views and enhanced laybys in design development through an initial review of potential locations and development of the design.
D-S -GO6 – Avoid or reduce landscape effects on land and people through consultation with statutory consultees and local stakeholders (L8, L9).	Consultation with statutory consultees on local designations and landform fit as part of the ESG and A9 Landscape Forum.
D-S -GO7 - Use plant species and mixes that are appropriate to the landscape context and are locally distinctive (L1, L2, L14).	Consult effectively with statutory consultees for continuity as part of the ESG and the A9 Landscape Forum to agree a corridor-wide approach to the assessment process. Early consideration of the landscape character through the design and assessment process to identify areas of local landscape character against which the assessment is undertaken and specific mitigation measures developed. The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed proposing the use of native species, appropriate to the location and capable of establishing within the challenging growing conditions and that reflect the mosaic of local habitats, species include the use of birch and pine woodland.

Dalraddy to Slochd General Objectives (GO)	Actions Required to Demonstrate General Objectives
D-S -GO8 - Specify plants of local provenance where appropriate i.e. seeds/cuttings sourced from native planting within the north east of Scotland (L11).	The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using existing landscape features, including several areas of native woodland within the proposed scheme to maintain a sense of maturity and native species, appropriate to the location. The Plans propose the use of native species, appropriate to the location and capable of establishing within the challenging growing conditions.
D-S -GO9 - Veteran trees, and significant landscape trees or woodlands to be identified and safeguarded where possible (L4, L7, L13).	<p>Seek opportunities for key views and enhanced laybys in design development through an initial review of potential locations and development of the design.</p> <p>The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using native species, appropriate to the location and capable of establishing within the challenging growing conditions.</p> <p>The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using existing landscape features, including several areas of native woodland within the proposed scheme along with new native planting to replace habitat loss and maintain local connectivity.</p>
D-S -GO10 – Ensure naturalistic rock cuts which maintain or enhance the sense of drama and landscape character (L1, L2, L4, L8)	The design of rock cuts has been developed to achieve a natural effect, enhancing the rock face and retaining a sense of drama (for detail refer to Appendix 13.2: Rock Cuts).

**Table 1.3: Strategic Landscape Principles and Project Area Specific Objectives**

Dalraddy to Slochd Specific Objectives (SO)	Actions Required to Demonstrate Specific Objectives
D-S-SO1 - Ensure that notable views are protected and maintain their status as staging points along the A9 route (GO4, GO5)	<p>Seek opportunities for key views and enhanced laybys in design development through an initial review of potential locations and development of the design, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• views to the Cairngorm Massif between the start of the scheme and Loch Vaa</li> <li>• views to the Torr Alvie and the Duke of Gordon’s Monument at and immediately north of the Aviemore South Junction;</li> <li>• views along the strath from the Dulnain Bridge crossing;</li> <li>• views south to the receding ridgelines at Black Mount; and</li> <li>• views of the rock features at Slochd including the Soldier’s Head – a natural weathered rock face feature.</li> </ul>

Dalraddy to Slochd Specific Objectives (SO)	Actions Required to Demonstrate Specific Objectives
D-S-SO2 - Provide opportunities for glimpsed views to Loch Alvie whilst ensuring that the mitigation planting delivers appropriate screening and landscape integration (GO4, GO5)	<p>Early consideration of the landscape character through the design and assessment process to identify areas of local landscape character against which the assessment is undertaken and specific mitigation measures developed.</p> <p>Seek opportunities for key views e.g. Loch Alvie, Cairngorm Massif, Dulnain Strath, receding ridgelines to the south and features such as the Soldier's Head – a natural feature of the weathered rock face - and laybys in design development through an initial review of potential locations and development of the design.</p>
D-S-SO3 - Replanting of native woodland as part of the landscape and ecological mitigation strategy (GO7, GO8, GO9)	<p>The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using native species, appropriate to the location and capable of establishing within the challenging growing conditions. In addition, existing landscape features, including several areas of native woodland have will be retained within the proposed scheme, along with new native planting to replace habitat loss and maintain local connectivity, reflecting the mosaic of local habitats.</p>
D-S-SO4 - Define locations where slope profiles are to be eased to reflect local landform, or steepened to reduce the loss of existing woodland, including ancient woodland (GO2, GO3)	<p>Several locations (ref to ES Appendix 13.1: Slope Profiling) identified as having slope profiles relaxed/steepened in order to provide an integrated approach to the final design. E.g. at Laggantygown slopes have been relaxed to align with the localised topography and landscape character. Elsewhere the profiles of SuDS features have been designed so as to avoid the appearance of engineered slopes and provide a more natural appearance.</p>
D-S-SO5 - Maintain opportunities for inter-visibility between the A9 and the Highland Mainline Railway (GO4, GO5)	<p>Seek opportunities for key views and enhanced laybys in design development through an initial review of potential locations and development of the design.</p>
D-S-SO6 – Natural stone will be used on structures which are considered to require a level of additional aesthetic treatment to integrate better with the localised landscape character and/or to 'humanise' the scale of s specific structure for visual receptors.	<p>Locations identified as being suitable for natural stone treatment are the retaining wall on the B9152, the Craig Dhu Underpass and retaining wall, Craigellachie and Milton NMUs and associated retaining walls and the Slochd Mhuic South and Slochd Mhuic North underpasses.</p>
D-S-SO7 – Planting of wet woodland as part of the landscape and ecological mitigation strategy at some SuDS or watercourse locations (GO7).	<p>The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using native species and appropriate treatments that are capable of establishing in challenging conditions, appropriate to the location and in keeping with the natural characteristics of the landscape. Adapting to reflect the mosaic of local habitats.</p>
D-S-SO8 – Retention and replanting of native woodland as part of the landscape and ecological mitigation strategy (GO7, GO8, GO9)	<p>The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using native species and appropriate treatments that are appropriate to the location and in keeping with the natural characteristics of the landscape e.g. rock cuttings treatments, slope profiles and the light and airy birch woodland planting proposals near Craigellachie.</p> <p>The Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plans have been developed using existing landscape features, including several areas of native woodland within the proposed</p>

Dalraddy to Slochd Specific Objectives (SO)	Actions Required to Demonstrate Specific Objectives
	scheme along with new native planting to replace habitat loss and maintain local connectivity.
D-S-SO9 - Ensure that open views to the south are maintained, reflecting the existing views and unique qualities of the local landscape character and A9 corridor therein (GO5).	Locations have been identified as not being suitable for intensive mitigation planting in order to align with the landscape character e.g. the Slochd Summit and the unclassified road at Slochd Beag, or to retain key views such as towards the receding ridgeline horizon at Black Mount.
D-S -SO10 -Use of site-won stone to enhance local character through reflecting local materials and enhance the location for tourism (GO1, GO4).	Both Aviemore South Junction and Granish Junction design will integrate the forms and structures into the landscape character through use of native planting and also through the use of local materials. Large boulders will intersperse with native tree planting proposals reflecting the character of the landscape. Low level stone walls are proposed as a feature at Granish Roundabout to mirror similar treatment at the roundabout in Aviemore town and the local vernacular character of stone walls.
D-S -SO11 – Ensure rock cuts achieve a naturalistic appearance which align with the landscape character and maintain or enhance the drama (GO10).	The design for reconfiguration (tidying up) of the rock face at Aviemore South and the rock cuts at Slochd Beag, Slochd Mor and Slochd Summit have been developed with landscape input to the geotechnical solutions (for more detail see Appendix 13.2).
D-S SO11 – Lighting shall be limited to areas where it replaces existing lighting, or where it is considered a requirement for an enhanced experience of NMU underpasses, or where it is a design requirement of a junction underpass in order to minimise its impact (L9).	Lighting has been generally been limited to areas currently lit (Craig Dhu/Grampian Road ch.4700; Old Meall Road chainage 7400. Lighting will be a new element at the Granish Junction roundabout and associated underpass and to the NMU underpasses at Slochd chainages 23600 and 24300 – though it is expected to be contained within the underpass structures.