

A9 Dualling

Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project

Project newsletter

ISSUE
#01

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter to bring you a round-up of the latest news and progress on the A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project.

Since the Scottish Government committed to upgrade the A9 between Perth and Inverness to dual carriageway, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to realise this ambitious £3 billion infrastructure investment.

Road users are already enjoying the benefits of the 7.5km stretch of dual

carriageway between Kincaig and Dalraddy, the first section of the A9 Dualling Programme to be constructed, which opened to traffic in Autumn 2017.

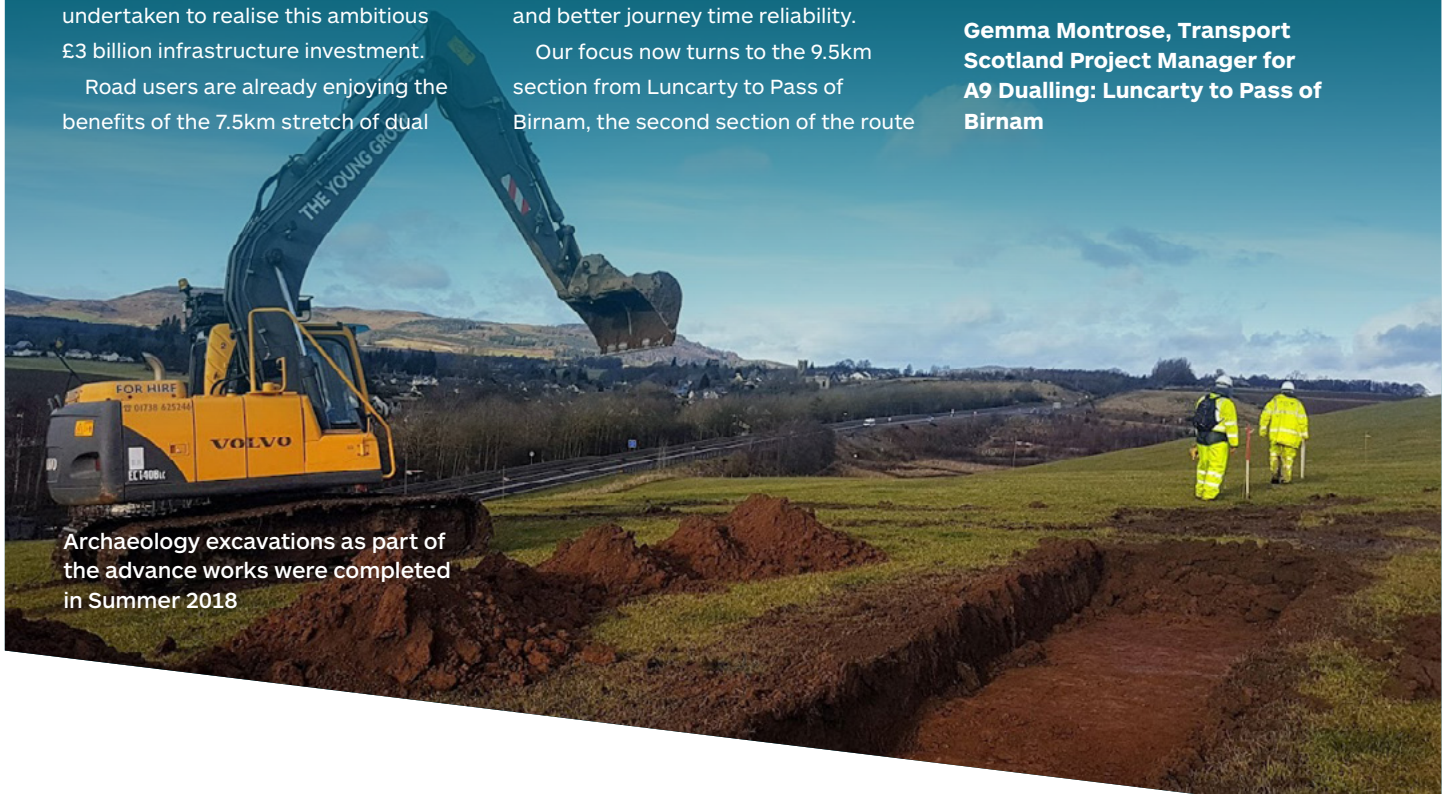
Once fully operational, the dualling of the 80 miles between Perth and Inverness will bring a number of benefits including supporting sustainable economic growth, improved road safety and better journey time reliability.

Our focus now turns to the 9.5km section from Luncarty to Pass of Birnam, the second section of the route

to be constructed, with major works scheduled to begin in Winter 2018.

We want to take this opportunity to share some of the work that has been going on behind the scenes to prepare for this major milestone and gear up for the main construction stage of dualling the carriageway between Luncarty and the Pass of Birnam.

Gemma Montrose, Transport Scotland Project Manager for A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam



Archaeology excavations as part of the advance works were completed in Summer 2018

Transport Scotland has appointed Balfour Beatty as the main works contractor to dual the second section of the £3 billion A9 Dualling Programme.

The construction contract forms part of £96 million worth of investment to dual the 9.5km of the A9 between Luncarty and Pass of Birnam.

Balfour Beatty was selected from a shortlist of four bidders, which included Dragados SA, Wills Bros. Civil Engineering and a joint venture between Farrans Construction and Roadbridge.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson, made the announcement at the end of August 2018.

Mr Matheson said: "This marks another significant milestone in the timeline of this major transport infrastructure project for Scotland which will accumulate in 80 miles of upgraded single carriageway between Perth and Inverness.

"This £3 billion investment will vastly improve connectivity between the Highland and Islands and Scotland's central belt, delivering far reaching benefits to the wider Scottish economy.

"The project will also act as a catalyst to attract significant inward investment and stimulate continued growth of our

Balfour Beatty awarded construction contract

Balfour Beatty

business communities, especially the tourism industry along this key route."

Construction is expected to create hundreds of new jobs which will leave a lasting legacy of a highly-skilled workforce to bolster Scotland's construction industry. Hector MacAulay, Balfour Beatty Managing Director for Scotland, said: "We are delighted to be part of the major programme to upgrade the A9. We look forward to delivering this important infrastructure project which will bring travel and safety improvements to all road users whilst generating significant benefit to the local community and economy."

Upon completion of the A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project, road users will benefit from 15km of continuous dualled carriageway from Inveralmond roundabout in Perth to the Pass of Birnam.

In addition to the 9.5km of new dual

carriageway, the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section will include the construction of new overbridges to maintain local access across the A9, widening of an existing underbridge and the provision of a new side road bridge. Enhancements to Non-Motorised User (NMU) facilities will assist in improving safety for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, and facilitating active travel along the corridor.

As a result, the safety of the A9 will be greatly improved for motorists and NMUs by removing junctions with conflicting traffic flows and providing safer overtaking opportunities. Together, these improvements will reduce driver stress whilst improving journey times and overall operational effectiveness of the route.

For more information on the A9 Dualling Programme, visit the Transport Scotland website: transport.gov.scot/a9dualling

Traffic management

Advanced works to prepare the area for the start of construction are currently underway.

These preparatory works include site clearance, which involves the removal of shrub, scrub and trees. To ensure the safety of road users and workers while these works are being carried out, traffic management may be required.

Transport Scotland is working closely with its contractor to minimise disruption to traffic while these works are being carried out, and as such, traffic management will be limited to off-peak hours, including overnight.

A9 road users are being advised to drive with care on approach to the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section as site clearance progresses along the route.

This traffic management may include occasional lane closures, reduced speed restrictions and the installation of traffic signals. Traffic flows will be monitored, although road users are advised to allow additional time for their journey.

Further information on traffic management is available via the Traffic Scotland website: trafficscotland.org

A Perth-based civil engineering firm is already seeing the benefits of the A9 Dualling Programme, having secured two contracts as part of advance works to prepare the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam site for the main contractor.

I & H Brown Ltd was appointed to carry out demolition works earlier this year and more recently began site clearance works along the route.

Local firm benefits from A9 dualling

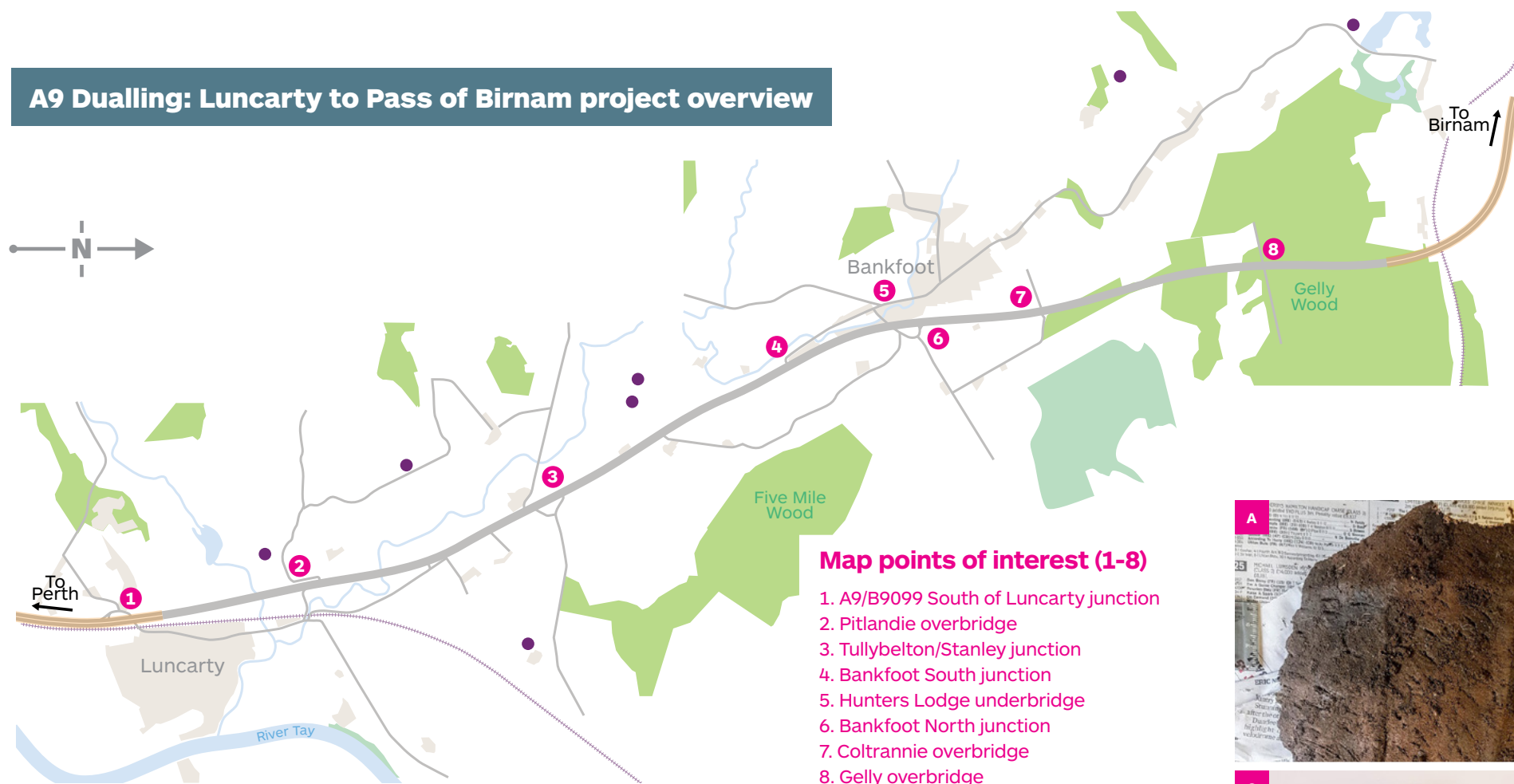
These advance works have enabled seasonal activities to be undertaken before the main construction contract is awarded to help reduce the risk of delays to the construction programme and assist the main contractor.

Transport Scotland Project Manager

Gemma Montrose said: "It's great to see a locally-based small to medium sized business (SME) securing contracts for these preliminary works on the A9 Dualling Programme.

"As the A9 Dualling Programme develops, there will be more opportunities for local, SMEs to get involved in delivering these major improvements to Scotland's road infrastructure."

A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project overview



Map points of interest (1-8)

- 1. A9/B9099 South of Luncarty junction
- 2. Pitlandie overbridge
- 3. Tullybelton/Stanley junction
- 4. Bankfoot South junction
- 5. Hunters Lodge underbridge
- 6. Bankfoot North junction
- 7. Coltrannie overbridge
- 8. Gelly overbridge

Map legend

- Roads
- Existing dual carriageway
- Railway
- Watercourse
- Woodland areas
- SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)
- Scheduled monument (standing stones, etc)



Examples of integrated naturalised tree features (INTFs) and an integrated bat box being created as part of the advance works on Luncarty to Pass of Birnam

Perthshire pupils uncover secrets of Scotland's past following A9 Iron Age discovery

Pupils from Murthly Primary School, near Luncarty in Perthshire, were transported back in time to Scotland's Iron Age during a recent archaeology workshop hosted by Transport Scotland as part of its Academy9 programme.

The class of primary six and seven pupils at Murthly was the first to benefit from the £96 million investment announced by Transport Scotland last month to dual the A9 from Luncarty to Pass of Birnam.

Based around the archaeological discoveries uncovered on site earlier this year during the advanced works, the interactive workshops were delivered by the team of archaeologists who spent six months excavating trenches along the route of the new dual carriageway.

AOC Archaeology Group, Transport Scotland's archaeology contractor, uncovered significant evidence of human settlement in prehistory including domestic structures known as roundhouses – possibly dating to the Iron Age, along with a souterrain, an underground structure used as a larder.

The excavations also recovered numerous artefacts that would have been used day to day such as Late Neolithic pottery and flint tools, as well as more decorative, personal items such as a glass bead dating from the Iron Age.

AOC Archaeology Group Community Archaeology Officer Charlotte Douglas said: "The workshops have been designed to encourage an understanding of archaeology, with particular reference to the archaeology discovered during our

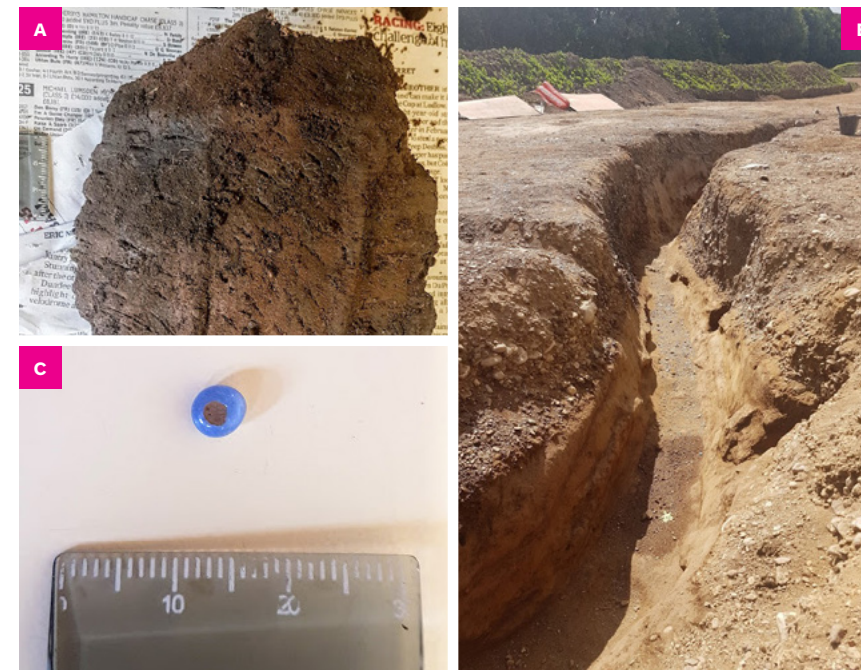


Izzy Blair (11) P7 and Kathryn Taylor (10) P6 construct the frame of their Iron Age roundhouse

excavations on the route of the A9.

"The pupils gained an understanding of timelines and chronologies and had the opportunity to handle genuine archaeological artefacts. They also explored prehistoric architecture by creating their own replica roundhouses."

Mrs Bruce, of Murthly Primary School, said: "The children really benefited from the first-hand knowledge and experience of the archaeologists who had unearthed these finds so close to our community. The workshop to build a roundhouse gave



A. A fragment of Neolithic pottery; B. A Souterrain – an underground structure used as a larder in Iron Age Scotland; C. A glass bead – an example of Iron Age jewellery

the children a real insight into how our ancestors lived during Scotland's Iron Age and brought learning about Scotland's past to life."

Transport Scotland Project Manager Gemma Montrose said: "Academy9 offers pupils and teachers along the A9 corridor a unique opportunity to tap into a wealth of teaching resources and expertise from various professions, and brings real-life examples from their surrounding environment to enhance their education.

"As we prepare to begin the construction of this latest phase of dualling the A9, we look forward to developing a close working relationship with schools and the

wider communities along the route as we deliver this major improvement to the road infrastructure."

AOC Archaeology Group is now in the process of documenting the finds to help enhance our knowledge and understanding of life during Scotland's Iron Age.

Transport Scotland appointed Balfour Beatty as its main works contractor for the A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project in September 2018, and works are scheduled to begin later this year.

For more information on the A9 Dualling Programme, visit the Transport Scotland website: transport.gov.scot/a9dualling

Protecting the A9's wildlife

It may come as a surprise to most A9 road users that, as part of the preparatory works to dual the A9, careful consideration has to be given to every species of creature that currently calls the route its home.

From the smallest insects, such as ants, to large mammals like badgers, detailed research into their habitats is required to ensure they can continue to live in their chosen environment.

Earlier this year, a team of ecologists adopted an innovative approach to bat mitigation, as part of the ecological surveys being carried out in advance of construction, due to a national shortage in the supply of suitable bat boxes in the UK.

In conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage, Transport Scotland's consultants for the A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project agreed that mitigation measures to off-set the loss of any bat roosts and roosting opportunities or habitat fragmentation during construction, could be split between traditional bat boxes and integrated naturalised tree features (INTF).

INTF are created using chainsaw cuts in the trunk of the tree to make a new habitat for the animals. This was the largest INTF project to be undertaken for Transport Scotland to date.

These new habitats will offset the loss of any bat roosts and roosting opportunities as a result of the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam construction, ensuring the bats can continue to live and breed in their familiar environment.

Bee hotels have been installed at ten locations along the verges of the A9 to help increase biodiversity on the roadside in Perthshire as part of the A9 Dualling Programme.

The innovative environmental project is being driven by Academy9 – Transport Scotland’s education initiative specifically linked to the £3 billion A9 Dualling Programme – and is a collaboration between Jacobs, Pitlochry High School and BEAR Scotland.

Pupils from Pitlochry High School made the unique environmental habitats, known as ‘bee hotels’ for solitary bees, in craft and design classes using wood donated from Glasgow Wood Recycling.

Thirty of the new hotels have been installed across ten locations on the A9 between Pass of Birnam and Glen Garry.

Pupils from the school helped install three of the hotels at one of the sites at Fonab near Pitlochry, to gain hands-on experience of the project and develop their practical skills. The remaining hotels were installed at various locations by teams from BEAR Scotland and Jacobs.

Bee hotels provide a perfect habitat for solitary bees which make up 90% of the 297 species of bee in the UK.

Solitary bees pollinate plants more efficiently than honeybees, providing an essential service, pollinating our crops and ensuring that plant communities are healthy and productive.

Jo Blewett, A9 Dualling Programme Manager for Transport Scotland, said: “The creation of bee hotels along the route of the A9 Dualling Programme is a great example of the many initiatives currently underway as part of this significant investment in Scotland’s infrastructure.

Academy9 creates a buzz



Pitlochry High School pupils create bee hotels along A9



“Dualling the A9 is not just about building a road. The A9 Dualling Programme provides us with an opportunity to educate young people in aspects of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) which are relevant to the huge infrastructure project taking place near where they live and learn.

“Getting involved in ecology and the environment is certainly part of that, and we have been delighted at the enthusiasm shown by the pupils when designing, building and erecting the bee hotels while developing their understanding of the importance of these pollinators in our everyday life.”

Eddie Ross of BEAR Scotland said: “We’re delighted to be involved in such a fantastic project which improves



Ciaran Ferns with the constructed bee hotels

biodiversity in our trunk road side verges.

“We support environmental initiatives whenever possible. It’s been great to work with the pupils from Pitlochry High School and to help spread the message about the importance of looking after our environment.”

Further plans are being looked at to install more bee hotels along the route in the coming months.

Building on the success of our Academy9 schools programme which is delivering a wide variety of events and activities for hundreds of pupils in primary and secondary schools along the A9 corridor, a major new conference being held next March in Aviemore will showcase the programme’s work.

Academy9 ‘Building a Legacy’ is being held at the Macdonald Aviemore Resort in March 2019. It will bring together teachers, policy

Academy9 Conference

makers, educational leaders and industry representatives from both design and construction companies to share knowledge and consider the future development of the Academy9 programme.

To coincide with the conference, people working on infrastructure projects across Scotland are being

encouraged to take part in a competition to highlight innovation in the projects they are working on.

In the Year of Young People, the emphasis of the competition is to identify ideas that raise awareness for pupils undertaking STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects in Scotland’s schools.

The winners will then present their papers at the conference next March.

More details of the conference will be announced later this year.

The wider A9 Dualling Programme

As construction starts on the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section, there has been no let-up in the work to design the other sections that make up the Scottish Government's ambitious A9 Dualling Programme.

We have now published draft Orders for eight of the sections to be dualled. This means that 95 per cent of the A9 Dualling Programme is at or beyond this stage.

The last six miles of the dualling, through the Dunkeld and Birnam area, is subject to a co-creative process and is in an earlier stage of development. We are aiming to identify a preferred route for this section by the end of the year.



Maintaining the A9

BEAR Scotland is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Scotland's trunk roads in the North West and North East on behalf of Transport Scotland, which includes one of the most popular tourist routes to the Scottish Highlands – the A9.

Managing and maintaining Scotland's infrastructure is a round-the-clock job, 365 days a year, and demands a wide range of services to keep Scotland moving – such as regular safety inspections, winter maintenance, pothole repair and carrying out emergency response operations.

BEAR Scotland will work closely with our contractor, Balfour Beatty, during the construction of the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project and will be consulted on all aspects affecting the operation of the



road, including traffic management.

Eddie Ross of BEAR Scotland said: "We will bring our operational experience together with the lessons learned during the dualling of the A9 between Kincaig and Dalraddy to this next section of the A9 Dualling Programme. Working closely with the contractor, it is our aim to help them keep disruption to road users to a minimum throughout the construction phase."

Should you require any further information regarding BEAR Scotland, please visit our website: bears Scot.com

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project involves several organisations working together to deliver the improved roads infrastructure. Transport Scotland is delivering the £96 million investment on behalf of the Scottish Government. Assisting Transport Scotland in the delivery of this project is engineering firm, Jacobs, who will supervise and monitor all works on site. Balfour Beatty is the main contractor responsible for designing and constructing the new infrastructure. During the construction phase, Balfour Beatty will work closely with BEAR Scotland who operate and maintain the A9 on behalf of Transport Scotland.

In brief

UTILITY WORKS

Transport Scotland has been working closely with utility providers over the course of this year to prepare for the A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project commencing on site. The upgrade and widening of the carriageway will impact on the infrastructure of various utility companies who have vital services within the extents of the project including BT, Scottish Gas Networks and Scottish Water. Early design work, temporary diversions and investigations have been undertaken and are continuing to locate services and identify suitable locations to move apparatus affected by the scheme. This will ensure services are maintained whilst the main construction works are undertaken.

FURTHER PROJECT INFORMATION

If you have any matters you wish to raise concerning the project, please contact: Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF. Email info@transport.gov.scot or telephone **0141 272 7100**.

For more information on the project please visit:

transport.gov.scot/project/a9-luncarty-pass-birnam



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