

6 Consultation and Scoping

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This chapter describes the consultation undertaken with statutory consultees, relevant bodies and organisations, and members of the public in relation to the environmental aspects of the proposed scheme. A summary of the key issues raised and how these have been considered throughout the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 3 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and design process is also provided.
- 6.1.2 The consultation described within this chapter builds upon that undertaken for the DMRB Stage 2 assessment. Further details of this consultation are provided in the DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report (Jacobs 2017). Although this chapter focuses on the consultation undertaken in relation to the environmental aspects of the proposed scheme, it should be noted that the wider project team and Transport Scotland are also undertaking additional consultation in relation to other aspects of the scheme throughout the progression of the project.
- 6.1.3 This chapter is supported by the following appendices which are cross referenced where relevant:
- Appendix A1.1 (Record of Determination); and
 - Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).

6.2 Approach and Methods

- 6.2.1 As best practice, stakeholder engagement is being encouraged and actively sought as part of the progression of the proposed scheme. Where appropriate, issues raised through the public consultation process are taken into consideration as part of the environmental assessment process. Consultation was ongoing throughout the EIA process.
- 6.2.2 The main aims of consultation undertaken during the EIA process are as follows:
- ensure that statutory consultees, other bodies with a particular interest in the environment, and members of the public are informed of the proposals and provided with an opportunity to comment;
 - collate baseline information regarding existing environmental site conditions;
 - obtain input to the identification of potential impacts and the development of appropriate mitigation;
 - inform the scope of the environmental assessment and EIA reporting; and
 - seek consultee input into the design.
- 6.2.3 Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with guidance provided in Revision 1 of PAN 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment (Scottish Government 2017). Cognisance has also been taken of PAN 3/2010: Community Engagement (Scottish Government 2010), and the National Standards for Community Engagement (Communities Scotland 2016).

Identification of Consultees

- 6.2.4 Consultees relevant to the proposed scheme were identified as follows:
- review of consultees involved on other major and recent road projects and previous studies undertaken for the proposed scheme;
 - review of the list of consultees involved in Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) (Jacobs, Faber Maunsell, Grant Thornton and Tribal Consulting 2008);
 - review of the list of consultees involved in the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report (Jacobs 2017);
 - identification by the environmental specialists on the project team of organisations and local environmental groups of importance to their area of expertise; and

- consideration of the scale, size and potential impact of the proposed scheme to identify those directly affected (e.g. landowners) and those outside the direct area (e.g. nearby communities) of influence.

6.2.5 A full list of consultees identified through this process and summary of the relevant information provided by the consultees is detailed in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).

6.2.6 The Highland Council have been consulted throughout the design process and the information provided has influenced various elements of the proposed scheme such as Non-Motorised User (NMU) routes, cross sections, and junctions.

6.2.7 Landowner consultation has been undertaken throughout the assessment process and has informed the proposed scheme design. Information gathered through landowner consultation has been utilised in the land use assessment in Chapter 15 (People and Communities - Community and Private Assets).

Key Stages of EIA Consultation

6.2.8 The key stages of consultation for the EIA undertaken as part of the DMRB Stage 3 assessment are set out below. It should be noted that consultation is an iterative and on-going feature of the project, and therefore will continue beyond that as reported in this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Request for Data and Comments

6.2.9 Following on from the consultation undertaken during the DMRB Stage 2 process, several consultation letters were issued in December 2017. The letters provided the statutory consultees (The Highland Council, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) with details of the DMRB Stage 2 preferred option and requested relevant information to be taken into account in the environmental assessment. Further consultees were sent a request for data relevant to the EIA in December 2017, as presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: List of Consultees that Received Data Request

Discipline	Consultees
Noise and Vibration	The Highland Council (Environmental Health Officer)
Ecology and Nature Conservation	Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI)
	Forestry Commission
	Raptor Study Groups
	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
	Scottish Badgers
	SEPA
	SNH
	The Highland Council
Geology, Soils, Contaminated Land and Groundwater	SEPA
	The Highland Council
Road Drainage and the Water Environment (RDWE)	The Highland Council
	Network Rail
	Scottish Water
	SEPA
	Transport Scotland
Cultural Heritage	HES
	The Highland Council (Historic Environment Team)
People and Communities: Community and Private Assets	The Highland Council
People and Communities: Effects on All Travellers	The Highland Council
	Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society
	Highland Cycle Campaign
	Cycle Touring Club Scotland (CTC)
	ScotWays
	Sustrans Scotland

Discipline	Consultees
	Stagecoach (Local Bus operator)
Materials	The Highland Council SEPA
Policies and Plans	The Highland Council

6.2.10 Further consultation letters requesting feedback on the proposed scheme and information to inform the DMRB Stage 3 assessment were issued in September 2018.

6.2.11 The responses received from the consultation letters issued are summarised in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).

Scoping Report

6.2.12 As described in Chapter 5 (Overview of the Assessment Process), a scoping exercise was undertaken to inform the approach to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The main objectives of the scoping exercise were as follows:

- to review existing scheme information and reports;
- to identify environmental constraints relevant to both the construction and/or operation of the project and which should be addressed in more detail as part of the EIAR;
- to identify where additional environmental surveys and data gathering were required; and
- to summarise the scope of the environmental assessments which should form part of the EIAR.

6.2.13 The Scoping Report (Jacobs 2018) was issued to the statutory consultees in June 2018 for review and requested feedback on the proposed approach and methodology of the assessment. The comments were taken into consideration and incorporated into the design and assessment process, where appropriate. The responses received are summarised in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).

Public Exhibitions

6.2.14 Transport Scotland holds regular engagement sessions with local communities and other stakeholders as part of the proposed scheme development, starting with the public exhibitions held in February 2012.

6.2.15 During the public exhibitions held in February 2012, Transport Scotland presented proposals for a dual carriageway trunk road between Inshes and Smithton. Following feedback from these exhibitions, further appraisal work was carried out using updated transport and land use information.

6.2.16 In 2013, Jacobs was commissioned by Transport Scotland to develop and assess a number of options against refined transport planning objectives and Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria (A9/A96 Connections Study). The Study also included a high-level environmental appraisal of the proposed route options. The results of the Study were presented at public exhibitions held in May and June 2014. Following these public exhibitions, Options C and D were announced as the options to be progressed to the next stage of design development.

6.2.17 Following the public exhibitions held in May and June 2014, Options C and D (later re-named Options 1 and 2) were further developed into three route options with A and B variants. These route options formed the basis of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment (Jacobs 2017). Public exhibitions were held in August 2016 to present the route options under consideration. These exhibitions gave members of the public the opportunity to provide comment and feedback.

6.2.18 The preferred option for the proposed scheme was announced at two public exhibitions held in Inshes Church and Smithton-Culloden Free Church, on 31 October 2017 and 1 November 2017 respectively. Members of the public were invited to view the plans for the route and provide feedback and the information panels from the exhibitions were available to view on the project website.

- 6.2.19 To coincide with the announcement of the preferred option variant, as outlined in Chapter 3 (Consideration of Alternatives), two public drop-in sessions were held on 16 May 2018 and 17 May 2018. Members of the public were able to provide comment and feedback regarding the variants and the proposed scheme generally and speak to representatives from Jacobs and Transport Scotland.

Landowner Consultation

- 6.2.20 Discussions with potentially affected landowners were also undertaken throughout the DMRB Stage 3 design development process, and where possible requirements were incorporated into the design. This included consideration of aspects such as the alignment of the proposed scheme and land-take, and revised access arrangements to land and properties. Further details of landowner consultation are provided in Chapter 15 (People and Communities - Community and Private Assets).

Additional Consultation

- 6.2.21 Throughout the DMRB process, The Highland Council has been consulted regarding future development proposals in the area, as outlined in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLPD), published in 2015. The Highland Council's vision for sustainable growth and infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed scheme has been taken into account where reasonably practicable in preparation of this EIA.
- 6.2.22 A meeting was held The Highland Council Landscape Architect, Forestry Officer and Planning Officer on 1 November 2018 to discuss the draft landscape and visual mitigation for the proposed scheme in relation to the Inverness East masterplan. A summary of the main points and outcomes of the meeting is provided in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).
- 6.2.23 The Highland Council's Flood Risk team and SEPA were provided with a draft of Appendix A13.1 (Flood Risk Assessment), Appendix A13.5 (Watercourse Crossings Report) and Appendix A13.7 (Hydraulic Modelling Report) for their information and comment on 12 April 2019. Details of the responses provided by The Highland Council and SEPA are provided in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).
- 6.2.24 SEPA, SNH, and HES were given the opportunity to provide detailed comments on relevant chapters of the draft EIA. These comments have been addressed, informed by discussions with the consultees during finalisation of this EIA.
- 6.2.25 Consultation with HES and The Highland Council's Historic Environment Team (HET) regarding methodology, impacts, and mitigation measures for the cultural heritage assessment has been ongoing throughout the EIA process. Further details regarding this consultation are presented in Chapter 14 (Cultural Heritage).
- 6.2.26 Meetings were held with Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS) and with Inverness Access Panel (IAP) in October 2018, and with Sustrans in November 2017, October 2018 and November 2018. The consultees were able to give their views and to provide information to inform the design and mitigation of the proposed scheme. Feedback from MACs and Sustrans, and details of how comments have been addressed are provided in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).

6.3 Responses to EIA Scoping Consultation

- 6.3.1 Details of the key input provided by consultees in relation to environmental issues are provided in Appendix A6.1 (Summary of Consultation Responses).

6.4 References

Reports and Documents

Communities Scotland (2016). National Standards for Community Engagement

Jacobs, Faber Maunsell, Grant Thornton and Tribal Consulting (*on behalf of Transport Scotland*) (2008). Strategic Transport Projects Review.

Jacobs (2017). (*on behalf of Transport Scotland*). A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report.

Jacobs (2018). (*on behalf of Transport Scotland*). A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton DMRB Stage 3 Scoping Report.

Scottish Government (2010). Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010: Community Engagement

Scottish Government (2017). Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment (Revision 1).

The Highland Council (2015). Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.