



WSP UK  
110 Queen Street  
Glasgow  
G1 3BX

**03 September 2020**

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **A9 North Kessock to Tore Study**

Transport Scotland has appointed WSP as Engineering Consultants to assess and report on the safety and operation of the A9 between North Kessock and Tore.

This study is seeking to identify existing issues or opportunities for improvement. It will review both current and future operations, taking account of potential and future developments within the surrounding area.

Whilst we are unable to predict the outcomes of the study, Transport Scotland has requested that WSP follow the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). The benefit of this approach ensures that a robust, evidence-led and transparent decision is reached. Statutory public consultation, which can attract unforeseen objections, is a key element of many infrastructure projects and the use of STAG demonstrates that where a specific outcome is recommended this can be founded on clear evidence and is robust to scrutiny.

If this process demonstrates an intervention is required on the trunk road network, before any significant alterations can be made to the road itself, a case must be presented for the justification for the investment of public funds in transport infrastructure. The process for this is guided by STAG and has 4 stages:

- Pre-Appraisal (the Case for Change)
- Part 1 Appraisal (Preliminary Appraisal)
- Part 2 Appraisal (Detailed Appraisal)
- Post Appraisal

This part of the study represents the Pre-Appraisal stage, where WSP is gathering evidence regarding actual and perceived issues and potential opportunities. This will confirm whether a Case for Change can be identified and evidenced for this section of the A9 between North Kessock and Tore.

As part of this study WSP will engage with local stakeholders and will review and analyse all the data relating to the safety, operation and suitability of this stretch of road to meet current and future demands.



## **Making the Case for Change**

It is important to recognise that this first stage of the process is focussed on establishing whether there is a Case for Change and if so, the study will then progress to consider what potential engineering interventions could be further investigated to address any issues identified.

## **Request for Stakeholder Input**

Throughout this study WSP and Transport Scotland will be engaging with local stakeholders, including community councils and elected members, to gather, listen to and understand collective views about the A9 and the junctions between North Kessock and Tore. This engagement will be initially through discussion with yourself and other stakeholders representing organisations or members.

This engagement could be by digital meetings or phone conversations, as appropriate, followed by two structured workshops. Unfortunately, our ability to meet face to-face is restricted by Covid-19 protocols and we are not currently able to hold these meetings and workshops with you in person as we would have wished. We feel it is more important to make progress now, however, than await a point in the future at which face to-face meetings would be permitted.

Through discussions with elected members and officials, we are aware of previous surveys and correspondence concerning parts of this section of the A9. We will use as much of this as possible, and our aim is to build upon this so as to further understand if there is a case for change.

Roundabout and all junctions between those locations. We are now keen to hear from our stakeholders first-hand and to have early discussions to understand each of your perspectives, feeding into a working process of identifying the key issues in the study area. Once the key issues are understood, we can establish if there are interventions that would be meaningful and improve the current and future functionality of this stretch of the A9.

## **Timeframes for Stakeholder Input**

We are hoping to begin these discussions from week commencing 31st August 2020 and aim to do so at a time that suits you. If you could email us at [A9-North-Kessock-to-Tore-Study@WSP.com](mailto:A9-North-Kessock-to-Tore-Study@WSP.com) to confirm your availability and arrange a time for us to contact you. To ensure both you and WSP can gain as much as possible from discussions, we would like your views on the following operational and safety aspects of the entire A9 between North Kessock junction and Tore Roundabout, however, the undernoted list is for guidance only and is not exhaustive in detail:

- Any anxiety or concerns for safety when driving, walking, wheeling or cycling along or across the A9, or when using any of the junctions
- The volume of traffic using the A9 and the junctions
- The speed of traffic on the A9 and surrounding roads
- Delays, congestion and queuing on the A9 and surrounding roads
- Any difficulties with visibility when using the A9 and the junctions
- The impacts of further housing development (e.g. north of Inverness) on this part of the A9
- Do you take alternative routes to avoid any part of the A9 or a particular junction?
- If you have concerns, how do you think Transport Scotland should address these?

An outline of the stretches and junctions of the A9 under review is attached in **Annex A**.



Whilst we would like to discuss these with you directly, we understand this may not suit everyone and if you would prefer to submit your views in writing, please feel free to email us at [A9-North-Kessock-to-Tore-Study@WSP.com](mailto:A9-North-Kessock-to-Tore-Study@WSP.com).

Once we have established the core issues, we will then circulate that as the basis for the first of our planned online workshops.

### **Next Steps**

Following our initial discussions, the first of our two workshops will be an opportunity to further explore any issues we have identified to take forward into our next step, which is to establish the objectives and outcomes of our initial study.

As an “online” forum will be required due to Covid-19 protocols, space will be limited in these workshops and we are therefore confirming with each stakeholder if they are keen to attend and also, where stakeholders are part of an organisation or group, that one appointee is identified and able to represent each at this event. The proposed workshops are an opportunity for us to engage in more detail with multiple stakeholders directly. Indicative dates and a proposed outline of these workshops are likely to be the following:

#### **Workshop 1: 23 September 2020**

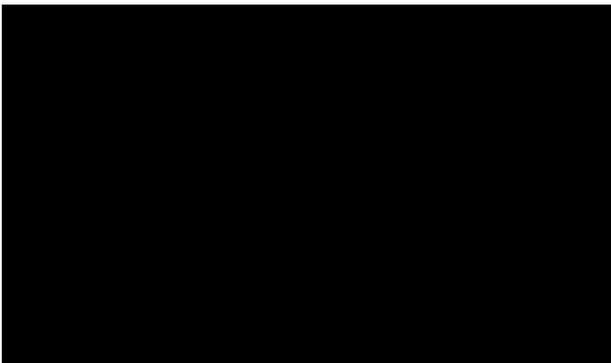
- To further explore, understand and confirm the issues and opportunities along this stretch of the A9
- To consider and collectively agree objectives for the study, based on the identified issues and opportunities

#### **Workshop 2: 8 October 2020**

- To identify potential engineering options that could achieve the identified objectives

We greatly appreciate your engagement with this process and any feedback you can assist us with. We thank you in advance for your participation and look forward to discussing this study with you directly, where possible, in the near future.

Yours Faithfully,







## Annex B – Stakeholder List