12 Visual

This chapter assesses the degree of anticipated change the proposed scheme will have upon the visual amenity along the road and predicts the likely visual impact upon local receptors, such as houses, footpaths and outdoor spaces.

Existing views of the A9 are currently limited due to intervening vegetation (such as mature woodland), rolling topography, road cuttings, or other features such as the high embankments of the railway in the vicinity of Luncarty. Elsewhere, views from visual receptors are more open due to aspects such as a more elevated position or less intervening vegetation. At the southern end of the village the Perthshire Visitor Centre and Scottish Liqueur Centre are popular visitor attractions in the area and have open views of the existing A9. To the north of Bankfoot, a series of footpaths through the forestry plantations on the Murthly Estate have some open views across the rolling farmland of the surrounding area.

The proposed scheme design includes measures such as false cuttings and planting to minimise adverse visual impact where possible. To represent the expected change to views over time, impacts are assessed for both the winter year of opening (when all mitigation will be in place but the immature planting will not be fully effective) and during the summer 15 years after opening (when mitigation planting has become established and contributes to screening).

Impacts on receptors would result from the proposed scheme including associated structures, traffic and moving headlights. As a result of the proposed scheme three receptors would experience significant impacts during the winter year of opening, but the establishment of the mitigation planting would reduce these to non-significant over time. No other significant impacts are predicted.

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 This chapter presents the assessment of the proposed scheme in terms of impacts on the visual amenity and character of views from buildings, viewpoints and footpaths (collectively referred to as receptors). The chapter is supported by Appendix A12.1 (Built and Outdoor Receptor Assessment Table), which is cross-referenced in the text where relevant.

12.1.2 The assessment methodology is explained, baseline conditions are described and an assessment is made of the impacts on views that would result from the proposed scheme (taking account of incorporated mitigation, as explained in Section 11.2: Approach and Methods).

12.1.3 Further considerations related to visual assessment are addressed separately as follows:

- Chapter 11 (Landscape): impacts on the character, quality and physical fabric of the landscape;
- Chapter 13 (Cultural Heritage): impacts on setting of historic buildings and heritage sites; and
- Chapter 16 (Effects on All Travellers): assessment of the views from the proposed scheme, as they would be experienced by vehicle travellers.

12.2 Approach and Methods

Study Area

12.2.1 The indicative study area for the visual assessment was informed by desk and site study. This indicative study area was then checked on site to confirm with more accuracy which receptors occurring within an approximately 1km distance of the route (considered to be the approximate distance when elements of the proposed scheme could have a discernible visual impact on a receptor) which would be likely to have views of the proposed scheme, subject to the surrounding topography, buildings and woodland.

Guidance and Approach

12.2.2 The visual assessment was undertaken in accordance with DMRB Volume 11, Section 3, Part 5 Landscape Effects, including Section 7, Variation for Widening Schemes (Highways Agency et al., 1993) and Interim Advice Note (IAN) 135/10 (Highways Agency et al., 2010). In accordance with

IAN125/09 (Highways Agency et al., 2009) the assessment of views from the road is reported in Chapter 16 (Effects on All Travellers).

12.2.3 The A9 is of recognised importance as a tourist route, so consideration has also been given to the A9 Dualling Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (Transport Scotland, 2013) in this assessment and in the design of mitigation proposals. Details of how the assessment takes account of the SEA Landscape and Access Environmental Design Principles are included in Appendix A11.2 (Review of SEA Landscape and Access Environmental Design Principles).

12.2.4 The visual assessment was also undertaken in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2002; GLVIA2). GLVIA2 guidance was the guidance current at the time. Subsequent to this, revised guidance (GVLIA3) was published in April 2013. The Landscape Institute released the following guidance for this situation:

> *"In general terms the approach and methodologies in the new edition are the same. The main difference is that GLVIA3 places greater emphasis on professional judgement and less emphasis on a formulaic approach. Members have asked for clarification on the status of projects developed under GLVIA2, but reviewed or implemented after publication of the third edition.*
>
> *An assessment started using GLVIA2 should be completed using that edition. However, if in the view of the professional a comparison should be undertaken with GLVIA3, and subsequently if necessary a re-assessment undertaken according to GLVIA3, then this should be discussed and agreed with the client in the first instance."*

12.2.5 A review of the most recent guidance confirmed that the methodology and approach used for the assessment of the proposed scheme meets the criteria of GLVIA3; the approach taken goes beyond that of GVLIA2 and is therefore well aligned with the more recent guidance. No re-assessment was therefore required.

12.2.6 During the design of the landscape mitigation, reference was also made to 'Cost Effective Landscapes: Learning from Nature' (CEL:LfN) (Scottish Office, 1998) and 'Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment' (Scottish Government, 2013).

Baseline Conditions

12.2.7 The assessment was carried out through:

- a review of the design at various stages of its development to ascertain the likely visually intrusive elements of the proposed scheme;
- a review of the outputs of the landscape assessment as described in Chapter 11 (Landscape);
- consultations with statutory and other bodies, as discussed in Chapter 6 (Consultation and Scoping), to supplement the desk study data collection; and
- field studies to assess the likely impact of the proposed scheme on receptors.

<u>Sensitivity of Receptors</u>

12.2.8 The assessment considers both built and outdoor receptors. Built receptors are identified as dwellings, historic buildings, workplaces and recreational buildings. Outdoor receptors are identified as major and well-used minor roads, railways, outdoor recreational spaces, rights of way (ROW), footpaths (in accordance with the Scottish Paths Record and the core paths network as identified by Perth & Kinross Council), cycleways and equestrian routes.

12.2.9 Built and outdoor receptors identified within the study area, which would gain views of the proposed scheme, were assessed by teams of two or more landscape architects in the field using a standard checklist. The surveys were undertaken on 07 March 2013. Potential heritage effects on listed buildings and other sites of archaeological value are addressed in Chapter 13 (Cultural Heritage).

12.2.10 The sensitivity of visual receptors to changes in their views was evaluated in accordance with the criteria provided in Table 12.1 based on the following factors:

- nature and context of the viewpoint;
- expectations of users/receptors; and
- importance and value of the view to the receptor.

12.2.11 Where appropriate, intermediate categories of sensitivity were also used in the assessment (i.e. 'low to medium' or 'medium to high').

Table 12.1: Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Receptors where the changed view is of high value and importance and/or where the receptor would notice any change to visual amenity by reason of the nature of use and their expectations, (particularly remote dwellings situated to take advantage of panoramic scenic views or outdoor receptors where the view is important to users will be considered to be of high sensitivity).
Medium	Receptors where the changed view is incidental but not critical to amenity and/or the nature of the view is not a primary consideration of the users (the majority of dwellings have been assessed as being of medium sensitivity, as well as outdoor receptors where users are likely to spend time outside of participation in their activity looking at the view and industrial receptors that have offices with windows that take advantage of views).
Low	Receptors where the changed view is unimportant/irrelevant and/or users are not sensitive to change (the majority of industrial receptors are considered to be of low sensitivity unless they have a significant number of windows, which may raise their sensitivity to low/medium; outdoor receptors where users are unlikely to consider the views an important element of their usage of the site will generally be assessed to be of low sensitivity).

12.2.12 The significance of visual impacts was determined through consideration of both the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the predicted magnitude of change as a result of the proposed scheme.

Impact Assessment

12.2.13 As explained in Chapter 11 (Landscape), mitigation of landscape and visual change is predominantly incorporated into the design through alignment, earthworks, and landscaping, which is incorporated into the design as assessed and reported in this ES. It is therefore not practicable to undertake an assessment of the potential visual impacts of the operational scheme in the absence of mitigation. Section 12.4 (Potential Impacts) therefore provides a brief summary of the types of visual effects that can occur during operation, and also sets out potential temporary impacts during construction.

12.2.14 It should be noted, however, that as planting mitigation proposals are generally not fully effective during winter year of opening, this period can be considered similar to a scenario without mitigation planting. Residual impacts at both winter year of opening and summer 15 years later (when mitigation planting is fully effective) are reported in Section 12.6 (Residual Impacts).

Magnitude of Visual Change

12.2.15 Evaluation of the magnitude of visual change affecting receptors was carried out by considering the scale of change in the view due to the addition or loss of features, change in character and the amount/extent of the view affected. The main elements taken into account in the evaluation of magnitude of change included:

- the extent of the receptor's available view affected by the development (including the distance from the proposed scheme);
- the angle of view relative to the main activity of the receptor; and
- the level of integration or contrast created by the crossing or road and their associated elements within the view.

12.2.16 The criteria used to determine the magnitude of visual change are shown in Table 12.2. Where appropriate the intermediate magnitude categories were also used in the assessment (i.e. 'low to medium' or 'medium to high').

Table 12.2: Magnitude of Visual Change

Magnitude	Criteria
High	Where the proposed scheme or elements of it would dominate the view and fundamentally change its character and components.
Medium	Where the proposed scheme or elements of it would be noticeable in the view, affecting its character and altering some of its components and features.
Low	Where the proposed scheme or elements of it would be only a minor element of the overall view that are likely to be missed by the casual observer and/or scarcely appreciated.

Impact Significance

12.2.17 A scale ranging from Negligible to Severe significance of impact was used in the assessment. An initial indication of impact significance was obtained by combining the sensitivity to change and magnitude of change assessments using the framework shown below in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3: Visual Impact Significance

Magnitude / Sensitivity	Low	Medium	High
High	Moderate	Substantial	Severe
Medium	Slight	Moderate	Substantial
Low	Negligible	Slight	Moderate

12.2.18 It should be noted that the matrix provided in Table 12.3 represents thresholds on a continuum. It provides an initial guide but significance assigned may be adjusted using professional judgement.

12.2.19 Impacts assessed as being of Moderate or greater significance were considered to represent clearly perceptible changes to views, and mitigation would generally be required to reduce these impacts where practicable.

Limitations to Assessment

12.2.20 This assessment has been undertaken on the proposed scheme design of October 2013. For the purposes of considering the potential impact of the proposed scheme in accordance with DMRB, no limitations to this assessment have been identified.

12.2.21 During the course of this assessment revised professional guidance on landscape and visual assessment was published on 13 April 2013. As explained in paragraph 12.2.3 and 12.2.4, a review of the updated guidance indicates that the assessment meets the requirements of the later guidance, and this therefore does not represent a limitation to the assessment.

12.3 Baseline Conditions

A9 Dualling: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

12.3.1 As noted in Chapter 11 (Landscape), the A9 Dualling Programme SEA Environmental Report, published for consultation by Transport Scotland in June 2013, includes a series of Strategic Considerations and Key Design Implications, which have been reviewed and taken into account, within the landscape and visual assessment, outline landscape design proposals, and mitigation.

13.1.1 Section 11.3 (Baseline Conditions) of Chapter 11 (Landscape) summarises specific Strategic Considerations and Key Design Implications, taken into account in the visual assessment.

Study Area Baseline

12.3.2 The 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2002), states that '*landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. The landscape baseline, its analysis, and the assessment of landscape effects all contribute to the baseline for visual assessment studies*'. The visual context and baseline description of the study area is therefore incorporated to a considerable extent in Chapter 11 (Landscape) and supporting Appendix A11.1 (Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs)).

12.3.3 The study area (Figure 11.1) was initially defined as an approximate 1km distance from the proposed scheme, as this was considered likely to be the maximum distance from which elements of the proposed scheme may have a significant impact on visual amenity, due to the surrounding topography and vegetation and the presence of the existing A9. This was subsequently confirmed during the site assessment.

12.3.4 Baseline visual conditions around the area are summarised below. Sensitivity is described generally in this section for areas and for key features to provide an overview of baseline visual sensitivity.

12.3.5 Luncarty is a small village that is located at the southern end of the study area. The majority of receptors in Luncarty are considered to be of low to medium sensitivity, with the occasional dwelling that is of medium sensitivity. Views from many of the properties in the village are limited by mature shelterbelt woodland at the edge of the village, and the rolling topography and high embankments for the railway line at the western edge of the settlement, which obstruct the majority of views of the surrounding landscape. A number of properties at the western edge of the village on the B9099 and Kirkhill Drive gain more open views to the west due to their elevated position on a small rise. Their views are adversely affected by the prominence of the existing A9 and the railway line in the foreground, although the existing cuttings for the road and mature trees along the road corridor help to limit visibility of the road. At the northern end of the village a small cemetery located on the high ground gains views to the west towards the rising hills; however, the prominence of the railway and existing A9 in the foreground of the views limits the sensitivity of the cemetery to low.

12.3.6 To the south-west of the village, a farm and a small group of houses at the edge of the Battleby House estate gain limited views across the surrounding area. The existing A9 is largely screened by mature trees around the properties and along the road corridor, and by the rolling topography in the foreground. The properties are generally considered to be of low/medium to medium sensitivity due to their limited views.

12.3.7 The village of Bankfoot is a small settlement situated approximately five miles to the north of Perth. The majority of dwellings in the village are considered to be of medium sensitivity due to the attractive views available across the rolling farmland of the surrounding area. The existing A9 is screened from the majority of the village by a small hill at the eastern edge of the settlement and a deep cutting. Although some properties at the southern end of the village gain views of the road as it emerges from the cutting, these properties are considered to be of low to medium sensitivity due to the prominence of the existing road within their views. At the southern end of the village the Perthshire Visitor Centre and Scottish Liqueur Centre are popular visitor attractions in the area. These receptors are considered to be of low sensitivity as the existing A9 is a prominent feature in views from both buildings and their car parks.

12.3.8 To the north of Luncarty there are several scattered properties and farms situated along the route of the existing A9. The existing road is a notable feature in views from many of the properties, although the mature woodland along the road corridor and around some of the dwellings helps to provide some screening. The majority of the properties, such as Atholl Cottage, Newmill Cottages, Newmill Farm, East Mains, Westwood, Loak and Ardonachie, are generally considered to be of low/medium or medium sensitivity due to their limited views of the prominence of the road within views. Marlehall Farm and the adjacent properties of Rosevale House and Beech Lea House are situated in close proximity to the A9 at the end of the existing road into the northern end of Luncarty. However, the existing road is partially screened by a belt of mature scrub woodland, with

attractive open views to the west available towards the rising hills that mark the Highland Fault Line. The hills are sporadically visible to the north and west of the proposed scheme, marking the boundary between the Lowlands and Highlands and a distinct change in landscape character. As a result, the properties are considered to be of medium/high sensitivity. Several other properties, such as Tophead, Woodside House, House of Naime and Over Benchil Farm, are set further back from the road and experience more attractive views across the area with the existing road less notable within views; as a result these are considered to be of medium/high sensitivity.

12.3.9 To the north of Bankfoot, a series of footpaths run through the forestry plantations on the Murthly estate. While the dense forestry limits views from the majority of the paths, several sections of the paths gain more open views across the rolling farmland of the surrounding area. The existing A9 is a notable feature in many of these views, although the local topography and intervening woodland helps to limit visibility to short sections of the road. As the available views are limited, the paths are generally considered to be of low/medium sensitivity.

12.3.10 A number of hill top locations along the Highland fault line and to the south east of the Luncarty will gain views towards the proposed scheme. However, the distance of these views (approximately 3km to the closest location), and screening from earthworks, vegetation and topography will result in there being no significant change between views of the proposed scheme and the current view. There will be no additional impact on these views as a result of the proposed design.

12.4 Potential Impacts

Construction Phase

12.4.1 The construction activities associated with road schemes cause generally temporary adverse visual impacts, typically resulting from:

- vehicles moving machinery and materials to and from the site;
- machinery potentially including heavy excavators, earth moving plant, concrete batching plant, pile drivers, cranes etc;
- exposed bare earth over the extent of the proposed works;
- structures, earthworks, road surfacing and ancillary works during construction;
- temporary site compound areas including site accommodation and parking;
- temporary soil storage heaps and construction materials stockpiles;
- lighting associated with night-time working and site accommodation;
- traffic congestion and queuing during work to tie new road with existing road;
- demolition operations; and
- temporary works associated with bridge construction operations.

12.4.2 The significance of impacts depends on the scale and duration of construction activities and their location in relation to sensitive receptors. The most significant impacts would therefore be likely to occur where major earthworks or structural works are being carried out. Visual intrusion from construction activities can impact on views and also reduce the enjoyment of the landscape. The locations where these impacts are likely to occur are as follows (from south to north):

- Pitlandie Overbridge (construction of overbridge and associated earthworks);
- Tullybelton/Stanley Junction (construction of earthworks, and new junction);
- Hunters Lodge Overbridge (construction of earthworks, two SUDS ponds and new junction);
- Coltranie Overbridge (construction of overbridge and associated earthworks); and
- Gelly Overbridge (construction of overbridge and associated earthworks).

12.4.3 Temporary visual impacts can also occur due to temporary construction compounds. As explained in Chapter 4 (The Proposed Scheme), the location of construction compounds is not known at this stage, as these will be determined by the appointed Contractor depending on phasing and execution of the works. Mitigation is set out in Chapter 12 (Landscape) to guide the location of construction compounds, and this would also mitigate potential visual impacts.

Operational Phase

12.4.4 The proposed scheme online widening of the existing A9 alignment has less potential for causing visual impacts than an offline alignment would have. Utilising the existing road corridor limits the potential for impacts on important views and receptors in the area. No new road lighting is proposed on the route. Potential visual impacts arising from the elements of the proposed scheme and the changes that may affect the visual amenity of receptors within the study area, from winter in the year of opening onwards, are identified as follows:

- Alteration of views and visual distraction from the landmarks of the area due to the introduction of new elements, including road surface, bunds, minor overbridges, culverts, signage, and the increased presence and movement of vehicles, into an essentially rural landscape;
- Changed appearance of landform due to new soft cuttings and embankments adjacent to the road and bridges; and
- Alteration to vegetation patterns and field patterns by tree loss and stripping of groundcover vegetation and topsoil, followed by reinstatement and new planting.

12.4.5 Visual impacts taking mitigation into account are set out in Section 12.6 (Residual Impacts).

12.5 Mitigation

General

12.5.1 As mitigation of adverse landscape and visual impacts are closely related and inter-dependent, mitigation of visual impacts will be incorporated in the specific landscape mitigation measures (**Mitigation Item V1**), which have been developed in consultation with other disciplines as part of the iterative approach to the design of the proposed scheme.

12.5.2 All proposed landscape mitigation measures are described and assigned a mitigation item number in Chapter 11 (Landscape), and are illustrated on Figure 11.2. As explained in Chapter 11 (Landscape), the outcomes and guidance of the SEA have also been taken into account in the design and mitigation for the proposed scheme, with further details of this process provided in Appendix A11.2 (Review of SEA Landscape and Access Environmental Design Principles).

12.5.3 All identified mitigation measures, designed to moderate the nature and extent of impacts where practicable, are taken into account in the assessment of residual visual impacts (note that implementation of all landscape mitigation are assigned mitigation numbers in Chapter 20: Schedule of Environmental Commitments). Mitigation measures have been designed to retain and enhance views where possible, whilst giving due consideration to the need to mitigate landscape, visual and ecological impacts.

12.5.4 Landscape mitigation proposals that reduce visual impacts are summarised below, with their application as specific mitigation measures for individual receptors provided in the tables in Appendix A12.1:

- planting to screen views and reflect and reinforce existing landscape character, including individual trees, tree lines, and woodland areas (e.g. scrub, riparian, broadleaved, mixed);
- earthworks, including provision of false cuttings to screen or restrict views of the road; and
- sensitive grading of all disturbed areas including embankments to improve integration with the surrounding landform and to allow the potential to return some areas of land to agriculture.

12.5.5 Mitigation measures are taken into account for winter year of scheme opening, when false cuttings and other built screening elements, such as noise barriers, are in place, but before new planting has become established. The proposed scheme impacts are also assessed for the summer, 15 years after the proposed scheme opening when mitigation planting will be established. The former is intended to represent the 'worst-case scenario' and the latter the 'best-case scenario' for permanent impacts.

Lighting

12.5.6 The introduction of artificial lighting from road lighting and other fixtures can create or contribute to light pollution in the form of sky glow, glare and/or light trespass/spill. It is beneficial to minimise these potential adverse impacts on landscape character and protect views of dark skies in rural areas. Lighting is not currently anticipated on the mainline A9 or at junctions. Consideration has been given to meeting light mitigation requirements by installing passive lighting in the form of reflective road markings and signage.

12.5.7 If and where temporary lighting is essential during construction or operational maintenance, all reasonable precautions will be undertaken to reduce energy consumption and avoid/reduce the amount of light pollution of the night sky and rural landscape where this can be achieved safely and effectively (**Mitigation Item V2**).

Structures

12.5.8 The design of structures, such as bridges along the length of the route and aspects of the landscape design, has been informed by specialist aesthetic advice and design meetings.

12.6 Residual Impacts

12.6.1 As noted in Section 12.2 (Approach and Methods), visual impacts reported in this chapter are considered adverse unless otherwise stated.

12.6.2 Receptors likely to be affected by the proposed scheme are identified on Figure 12.1.

General

12.6.3 The gently rolling topography and scattered mature woodland of the study area would limit visual impacts of the proposed scheme. Impacts would be further limited by the alignment of the route on the line of the existing A9. The deep cuttings on sections of the existing road and the high embankments for the railway would help to limit the visual impacts of the proposed scheme at both Luncarty and Bankfoot. At the northern end of the proposed scheme, dense forestry plantations of the Muir of Thorn/ Gelly Wood would help to prevent views from the wider area. Some or all of the woodland may be felled by the landowner in the future as part of ongoing forestry operations with or without the proposed scheme, which would reduce the screening of views. Proposed new mixed woodland planting on the Gelly overbridge embankments would assist in softening any potential future impacts resulting from opening up views from surrounding areas as a result of future felling operations.

12.6.4 While no lighting is required as part of the proposed scheme, the dualling of the carriageway would potentially result in an increased volume of traffic on the road, and therefore increased light levels from headlights during the hours of darkness. This impact is likely to be very limited due to the existing visibility of headlights and the anticipated improvements to traffic flow.

12.6.5 When assessing magnitude and sensitivity, the impact of headlights were taken into account so that the level of impact determined for each of the receptors affected encompasses all elements of the proposed scheme.

12.6.6 The visual impact assessment for each built receptor or cluster of receptors and each outdoor receptor is presented together with details of proposed mitigation measures as tables in Appendix

12.1 (Built and Outdoor Receptor Assessment Table) for outdoor and built receptor sites. This information is summarised in Table 12.4 to show the total number of receptors affected to different degrees in the winter year of scheme opening and residual impact by summer 15 years later.

12.6.7 The results of the visual impact assessment are summarised below and illustrated on Figure 12.1. The summaries include reference to landscape types/areas shown on Figure 11.1 where appropriate to the context of the visual impact assessment.

Built Receptors

12.6.8 Within Luncarty, views of the proposed scheme would be limited to receptors on the higher ground at the western edge of the village (Receptors 1, 2 and 3). While the proposed scheme would widen the existing road in close proximity to the receptors, the on-line alignment and the deep cuttings for the road would help to limit visibility, with the most notable change to views arising from the loss of mature trees and scrub along the road corridor due to construction. Residual visual impacts for the properties would range from Slight (Receptor 3) to Negligible (Receptor 1) significance during the winter year of opening, which would reduce to Slight/Negligible (Receptor 3) or Negligible (Receptor 1 and 2) significance by the summer 15 years after opening as mitigation planting begins to mature. The lower position of the rest of the village and the screening by the high embankments of the railway would help to prevent views from other properties within the settlement.

12.6.9 At the northern end of the village, a cluster of dwellings around Ordie House (Receptor 5) would be likely to be effected as a result of introduction of the new overbridge across the A9 adjacent to the properties. The earthworks associated with the new bridge would result in the partial loss of mature woodland around the receptor group as well as changes to the local landform, which would have a Slight/ Moderate impacts during the winter year of opening. By the summer 15 years after opening, the proposed mitigation planting would help to reduce visual impacts to Slight/ Negligible significance. Residual impacts on Northleys (Receptor 24), Atholl Cottage (Receptor 6) and the properties around Kirkhill House (Receptor 4) would be limited due to the screening by the cutting of the road, the mature trees around the properties and the retained vegetation along the road corridor, with initial residual impacts ranging from Slight (Receptor 24) to Negligible (Receptor 4) significance, which would have all reduced to Slight/ Negligible (Receptor 24) or Negligible (Receptor 4 and 6) significance over time as the mitigation planting becomes established.

12.6.10 To the north of Luncarty, Marlehall Farm (Receptor 7), Newmill Cottages (Receptor 21), Newmill Farm (Receptor 23) and Tophead (Receptor 22) would be affected by visual impacts. The revised Tullybelton/ Stanley Junction would result in the loss of mature deciduous trees, particularly to the east of the junction, and the new link road, earthworks, and overbridge would be visible from the surrounding properties. Receptors 7, 21 and 23 would experience Moderate significance impacts during the winter year opening. Residual impacts for all three receptors would reduce to Slight significance, once mitigation planting has become established in summer after 15 years. Over Benchill (Receptor 20) to the east of the new junction would be affected by Slight to Moderate impact in winter year of opening, largely as a result of the side road earthworks, reducing to Negligible once mitigation planting has become established. Impacts on Tophead and Woodside House (Receptor 22) would be Slight/ Moderate significance during the winter year of opening as a result of the earthworks for the new overbridge and the associated loss of mature woodland, which would reduce to Slight significance by the summer 15 years after opening as the mitigation planting becomes established. Impacts on properties nearer the road including East Mains (Receptor 8), Westwood (Receptor 9), Loak (Receptor 10), Loakmill (Receptor 11) and Den Cottage (Receptor 19) would range from Slight/Moderate to Negligible significance as the upgraded road would not represent a notable change to their views, with the proposed mitigation planting ensuring residual impacts for the receptors would range from Slight (Receptors 8 and 9) to Negligible (Receptors 10, 11 and 19) significance.

12.6.11 At Bankfoot, impacts would generally be limited to the properties at the southern end of the settlement, as the rising topography at the eastern edge of the village would screen the road from the majority of the houses. Several properties on Perth Road (Receptor 14) and Innewan Gardens (Receptor 15), as well as the Perthshire Visitor Centre and Scottish Liqueur Centre (Receptor 12)

and industrial units (Receptor 13) would gain views of the proposed scheme, but impacts would only be Slight significance at worst (Receptor 13). The main impacts on the receptors would be as a result of the loss of existing vegetation along the road, which would be reinstated over time as the proposed mitigation planting matures, ensuring residual impacts for all receptors would be Slight/Negligible or Negligible significance.

12.6.12 To the east of Bankfoot, Ardonachie (Receptor 18) and North Barns (Receptor 17) would gain glimpses of the upgraded road, although the rolling topography of the intervening landform would limit the visibility of the road and associated cutting, with impacts considered to be Slight and Slight/ Negligible significance respectively, which would be unlikely to reduce over time. At the northern edge of Bankfoot, Coltrannie (Receptor 16) would experience Slight significance impacts during both the winter year of opening and summer after 15 years due to the loss of established trees along the road and the introduction of the new overbridge to the east, although the rolling topography would limit visibility of the road. Existing mature mixed woodland on the existing A9 cutting slope that currently helps screen views towards the A9 from Broompark (Receptor 25) would be lost as a result of the scheme. Although views towards the proposed scheme will be opened up, the road itself is unlikely to be visible due to the existing topography. Impacts would be Slight during winter year of opening, reducing to Slight/ Negligible significance by summer after 15 years as new proposed woodland planting becomes established, restricting wider side views to the north and south.

12.6.13 Elements of the proposed scheme would potentially be visible from properties further to the west of Bankfoot on the rising landform around Formal Hill and Berryhill. However, as the proposed scheme would follow the alignment of the existing road, there would not be any discernible change to views so impacts have not been further assessed.

Outdoor Receptors

12.6.14 The proposed scheme would be visible from the small cemetery at the northern end of Luncarty (Receptor O1), with the elevated position of the cemetery affording the receptor views of the scheme. However, impacts would not be significant as the road would not appear discernibly different in views, with the high stone boundary wall limiting views from the lower-lying sections of the receptor. Impacts during both the winter year of opening and summer after 15 years would be of Negligible significance.

12.6.15 To the north of Bankfoot, a footpath runs from Coltrannie Farm into the Gelly Wood. While much of the path is screened from the road by the mature woodland, sections of the path (Receptors O2 and O3) currently gain views of the A9 to the east. The proposed scheme would not represent a significant change to views from the path, with the majority of impacts arising from the loss of existing trees along the road corridor, although impacts would not be significant. The introduction of the new pedestrian footbridge near Gelly and the potential 'brown edge' resulting from the removal of the wind firm edge of plantation woodland east of the A9 would result in a Slight/Negligible significance impact on the northern section of the path (Receptor O3), but the proposed mitigation planting along the road corridor to reinstate the woodland edge would help to ensure residual impacts for both receptors would be of Negligible significance.

12.6.16 Core Paths LUNC/122, LUNC/123, and AGVN/115 (Receptors O4 and O5) would experience Negligible/Slight and Slight significance impacts in winter year of opening from the proposed alignment in close proximity. Receptor O4 would be realigned with a new overbridge provided across the A9. Receptor O5, which currently runs parallel to the A9, would slightly closer to the new road alignment. In summer 15 years after opening, after establishment of mitigation planting, impacts at both receptors would be of Negligible/Slight significance.

12.6.17 Users of Core Path AGVN/110 (Receptor O6) would gain views of the proposed scheme from its southern and northern stretches, with the central section screened by existing landform. Views from the southern stretch would be limited due to the valley topography and visual impact would differ little from that of the existing A9. From the northern part of the path, views of the proposed scheme would be limited by cutting slopes. Impact in winter, year of opening would be of Slight

significance reducing to Negligible significance in summer after 15 years, when proposed mitigation planting would screen the route and help integrate the nearby SUDS basin and slip road into the landscape.

12.6.18 Core Path AGVN/117 (Receptor O7), which would be vertically realigned onto an overbridge across the A9, would experience a Slight significance impact during winter year of opening, due to being raised onto embankment and an overbridge. In summer, 15 years after opening, proposed woodland and scrub planting would help integrate the proposed scheme with surrounding woodland while hedge and tree planting would provide additional screening, reducing the impact to of Negligible/Slight significance.

Table 12.4: Residual Visual Impacts

Total Built Receptors (as individual properties) = 25
Total Outdoor Receptors = 7
A single built receptor may comprise multiple properties.
No receptors affected by greater than moderate impact.

Receptor Type	Moderate/Substantial		Moderate		Slight/Moderate	
	Winter Yr of Opening	Summer 15 Yrs after Opening	Winter Yr of Opening	Summer 15 Yrs after Opening	Winter Yr of Opening	Summer 15 Yrs after Opening
Built	0	0	3	0	5	3
Outdoor	0	0	0	0	0	0

Receptor Type	Slight		Slight/Negligible		Negligible	
	Winter Yr of Opening	Summer 15 Yrs after Opening	Winter Yr of Opening	Summer 15 Yrs after Opening	Winter Yr of Opening	Summer 15 Yrs after Opening
Built	7	5	7	6	3	11
Outdoor	3	0	2	3	2	4

Summary of Residual Impacts

12.6.19 As the proposed scheme would involve a generally online alignment following the route of the existing road, there would be limited visual impacts on nearby receptors. A total of 25 built receptor groups and 7 outdoor receptors have been assessed.

12.6.20 Overall the visual impact on the receptors identified in the study area would be relatively insignificant. Only three (12%) built receptors would be affected by residual impacts of Moderate significance, while seven (28%) receptors would be affected by residual impacts of Slight significance in the winter year of proposed scheme opening. By the summer, 15 years after proposed scheme opening, mitigation in the form of sensitive grading, false cuttings, and mixed and native woodland would ensure no built or outdoor receptors would experience significant residual impacts, with eleven(44%) built receptors and four (57%) of outdoor receptors assessed experiencing Negligible significance impacts.

12.7 References

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