Welcome

In December 2012 and June 2013 we started our programme of public engagement for the A9 Dualling Programme with a series of public exhibitions. This allowed us to share information on the design and development process and to outline the strategic principles around which we will base our design work.

Since June 2013 we have been progressing the corridor wide engineering and environmental studies, expanding our knowledge of the various challenges associated with upgrading the existing road to dual carriageway standard. We have divided the route into twelve individual projects to enable us to develop proposals for, and consult on, a range of smaller sections. At this stage we have identified indicative route options which generally fall within an indicative 200m wide corridor centred on the existing road.

These latest exhibitions mark the start of more localised engagement on those indicative route options.

Route options

No detailed assessment work has however been undertaken at this stage.

Today's exhibition displays an initial range of indicative route options to be developed further and taken forward for assessment, which have been developed by Jacobs.

The exhibition also provides details of where we believe the challenges lie, in the form of constraints information.

We are inviting your views on an initial list of indicative route options. In particular, we would like to know:

- **have we missed a possible route option within the 200m wide corridor?**
- **are you aware of any particular local features that we should know about to inform the more detailed design and assessment work?**
- **do you have any comments on the options?**

In particular, if your property is located in the vicinity of the scheme, you may wish to speak to a member of our team, to allow us to discuss how the future design process will work and how we will engage with you to seek to minimise any potential adverse impacts.

Before we can finalise the proposals for each individual project, a considerable amount of design and assessment work remains to be undertaken. By making these indicative route options available for you to view today we aim to ensure that information that should form part of the assessment work is captured at the earliest possible time.

Background

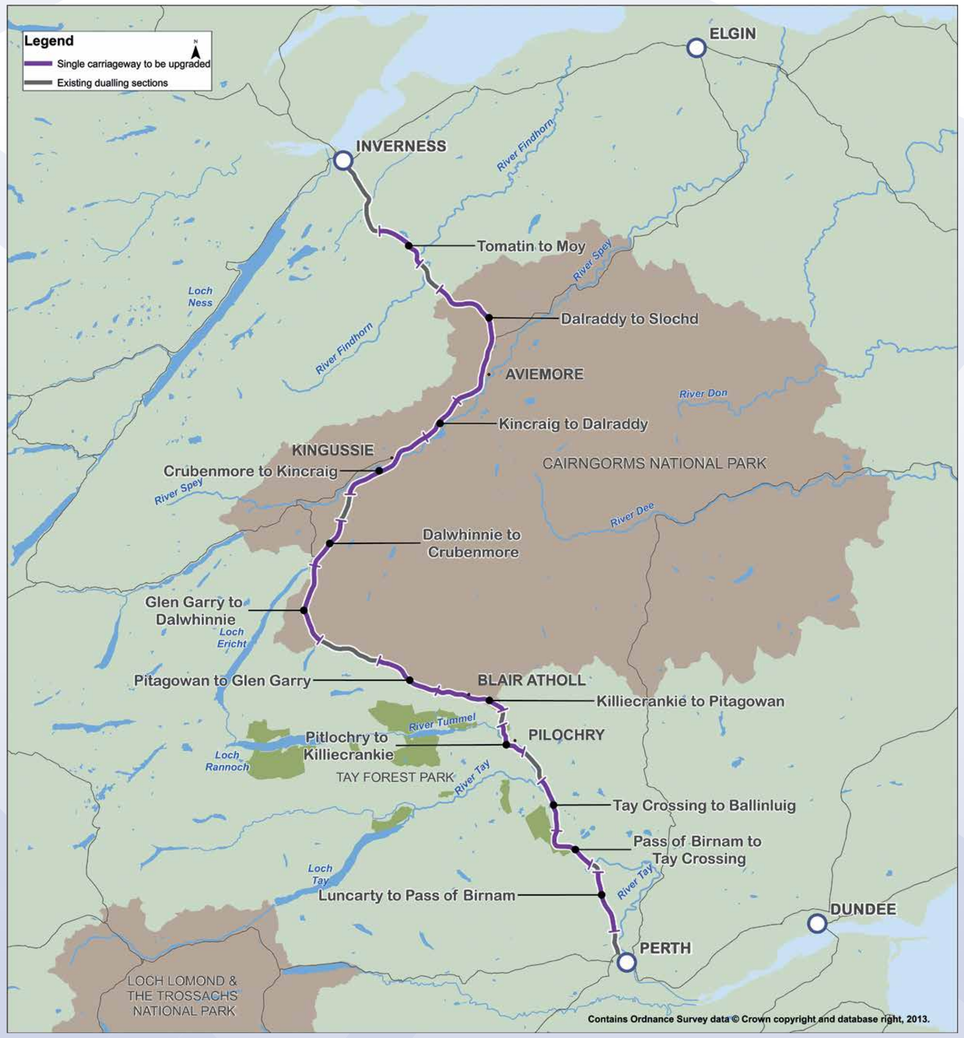
Transport Scotland is progressing the programme to upgrade the A9 between Perth and Inverness to dual carriageway standard by 2025. The route is approximately 110 miles long and around 80 miles is currently single carriageway.

Programme objectives:

1. **to improve the operational performance of the A9 by:**
   - reducing journey times
   - improving journey time reliability
2. **to improve safety for both motorised and non-motorised users (NMUs) by:**
   - reducing accident severity
   - reducing driver stress
3. **to facilitate active travel within the corridor**
4. **to improve integration with public transport facilities.**

The A9 between Perth and Inverness comprises twelve existing single carriageway sections and eight existing dual carriageway sections, as shown on this map. By splitting the road into sections (or schemes) Transport Scotland aims to optimise the programme for improving this key route.

Three sections, Luncarty to Pass of Birnam, Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing and Kincraig to Dalraddy, are currently being taken forward as individual schemes and are at more advanced stages of design. They are therefore not covered within this exhibition.



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PERTH TO INVERNESS

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Programme update – current status

On 19 March 2014 the Minister for Transport and Veterans announced some key milestones in the design and development process for the A9 Dualling Programme:

- **the main A9 dual carriageway will generally be within a 200m wide corridor along the existing route, with other off-line proposals previously being considered removed following the recommendations of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Engineering Assessment. While the main dual carriageway is likely to be within this on-line corridor, side roads, junctions and other associated works will be required beyond this zone**
- **the A9 Dualling Programme will be divided into twelve discrete schemes (including the three sections at advanced stages of design). This will keep common challenges together, supporting focus on local issues and helping to ensure the statutory process is as efficient as possible**
- **publication of an indicative programme for the design and development process for the twelve schemes (see indicative programme on the penultimate panel)**
- **a series of public exhibitions to give local communities and road users the opportunity to view indicative route options within the 200m wide corridor.**

Associated with this announcement was the publication of Transport Scotland's policy document ***'Fitting Landscapes'***, which is intended as guidance for all roads schemes but has particular importance in the context of the A9, as we will set out later.

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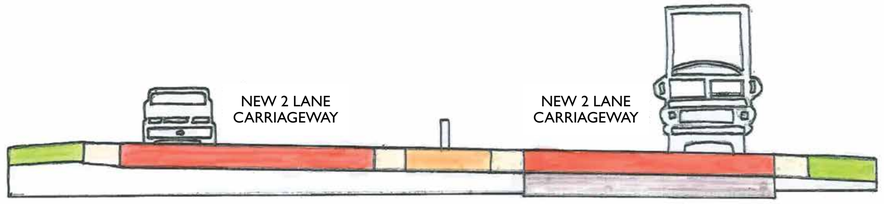
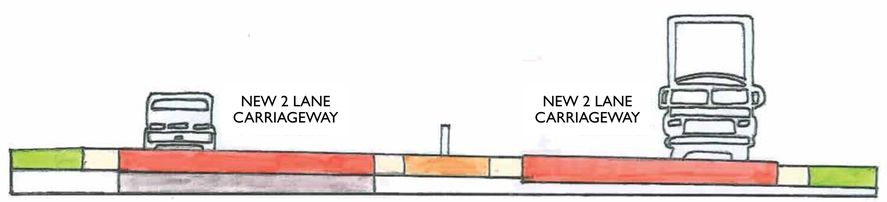
Programme update – development of indicative route options

We have been developing an initial range of indicative route options based on what we have learnt about key constraints.

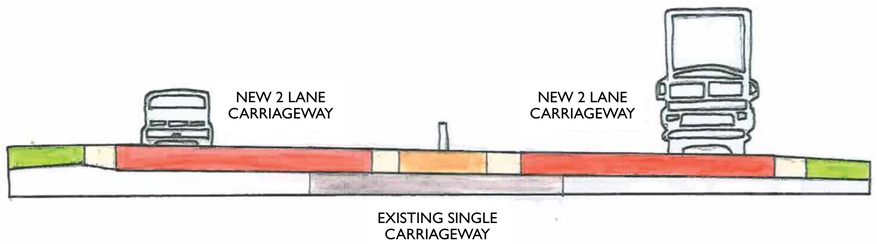
These options have been generated for each section to give an early indication of the type of options that will be considered going forward. Due to the highly constrained nature of the corridor, these initial options involve widening the existing A9 on the northbound or southbound side or through widening to both sides. Examples of these options are shown below.



WIDENING TO NORTHBOUND SIDE

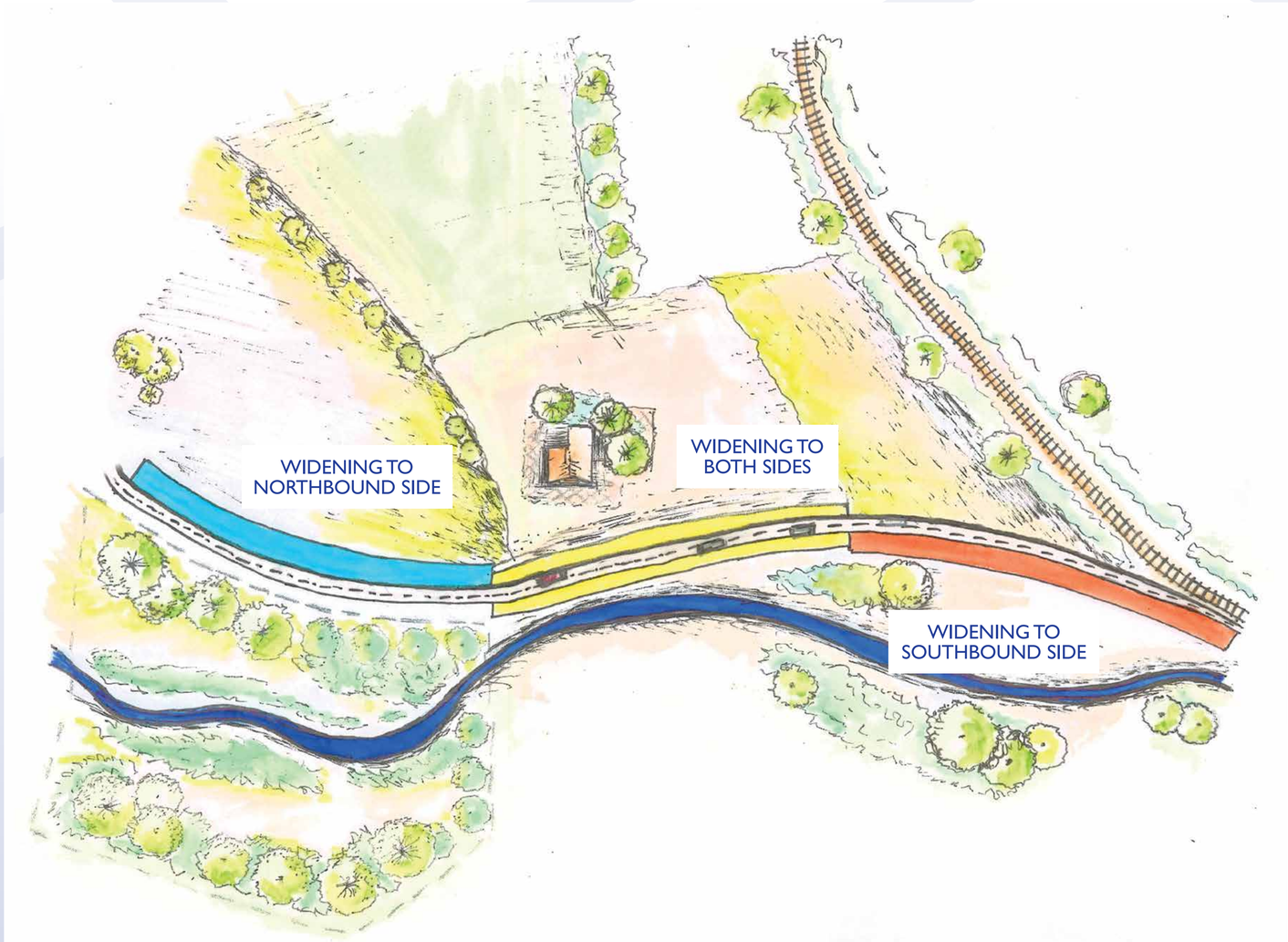


WIDENING TO SOUTHBOUND SIDE



WIDENING TO BOTH SIDES

Programme update – development of indicative route options



The method of widening that may be used within each section is likely to vary depending on factors such as the location of constraints, the surrounding topography and engineering considerations.

The eventual route is likely to be made up of elements of all of the approaches, i.e. widening to the northbound side, southbound side or both sides.

An illustration of how the method of widening may vary at different locations is shown here.

Indicative route options

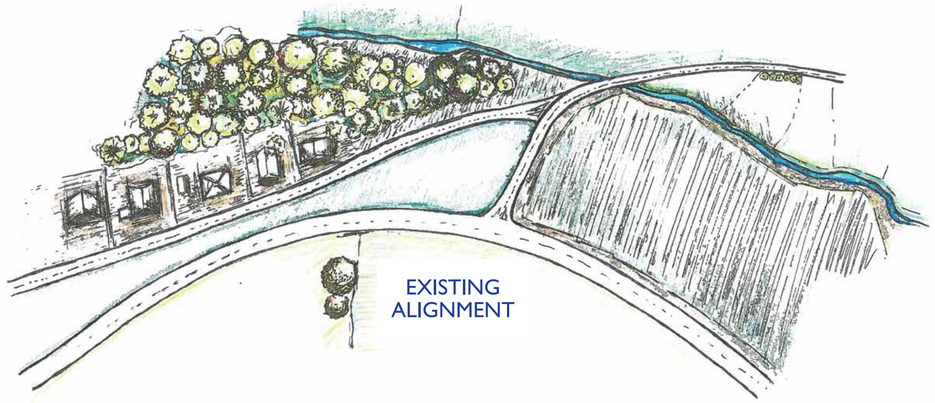
It is evident even at this early stage that there are locations where widening the existing A9 on the northbound or southbound side or to both sides may not be appropriate. Potential locations which have been identified at this stage are shown on the plans available for you to view at today's exhibition.

Broader improvements at discrete locations may be required, including:

- **localised off-line dualling – to improve the road alignment and therefore road safety (as the current road alignment is designed for a 60mph single carriageway), provide space for grade separated junctions and avoid particular constraints**
- **localised variations to improve the landscape fit of the road – this could include measures such as short off-line sections or minor amendments to on-line alignments to better respect the environment and landscape within which the road sits, or potentially involve localised split level carriageways (similar to the split level carriageways already in place at Drumochter).**

It is anticipated that going forward options will be developed in more detail for dualling the existing single carriageway sections which will consist of a mixture of dualling methods in order to avoid or reduce impacts on constraints.

The range of indicative route options outlined at today's exhibition now need to be reviewed from a local perspective. Your views will ensure that we have identified the widest range of possible routes (or part routes) to consider during future design and assessment work.



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Environmental constraints and designations

The A9 runs through areas of scenic, ecological and historic conservation importance. Dualling therefore presents a number of challenges and opportunities with respect to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects on protected sites and species.

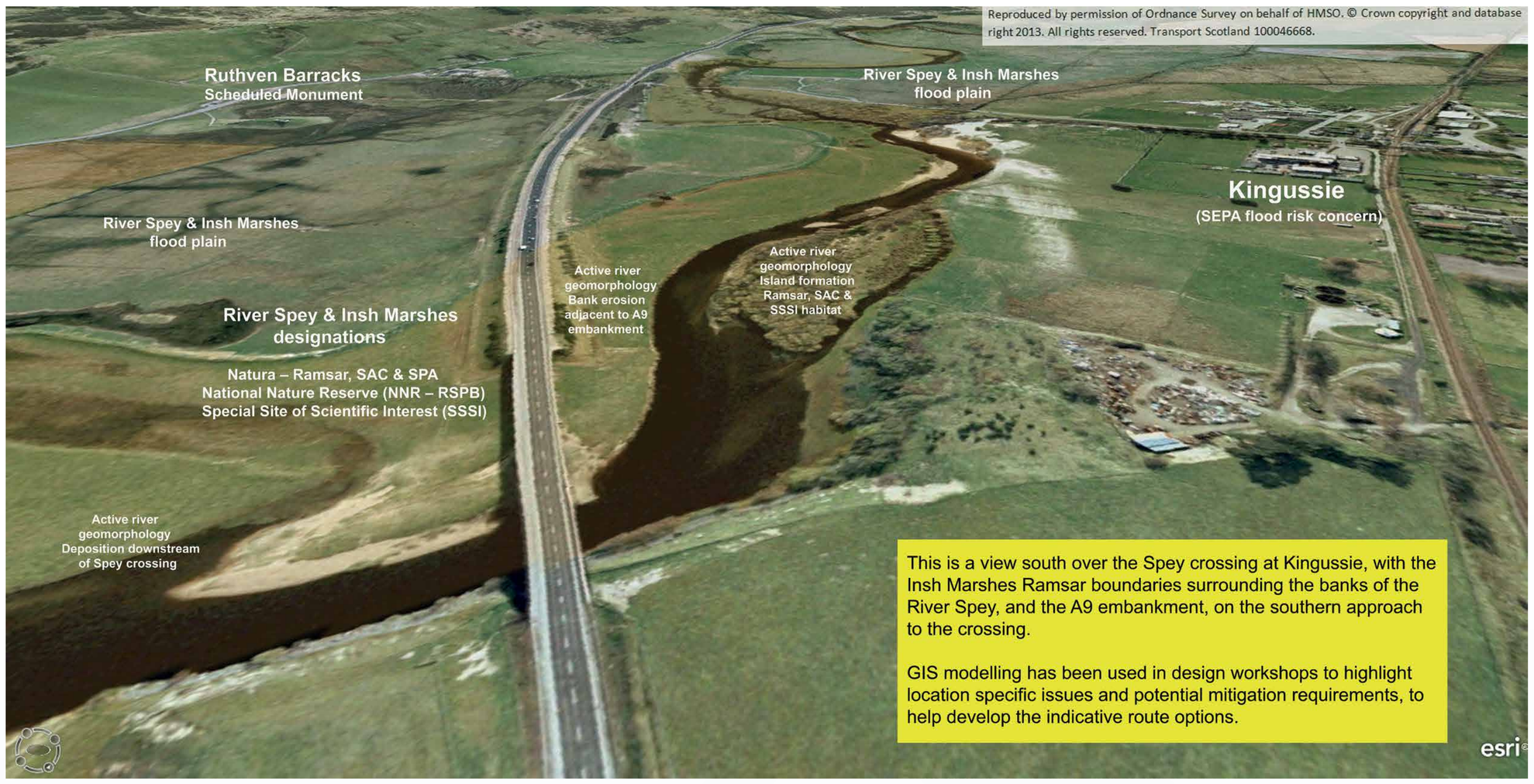
Work to date and the design of the indicative route options outlined at today's exhibition have been informed by strategic studies to identify key environmental constraints. This will ensure that they are considered from the outset to help avoid and reduce the risk of potentially significant adverse effects.

Examples of the range of constraints identified include:

- **national and internationally designated biodiversity conservation sites**
- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**
- **ancient woodlands**
- **peat and wetland habitats**
- **flood risk areas**
- **protected scenic areas**
- **scheduled monuments**
- **battlefields**
- **listed buildings (amongst others).**

At the next stage of design development the strategic studies will be supplemented with more local detailed studies and surveys to inform design and assessments of potential environmental impacts and the risks associated with route options.

This will inform the selection of a preferred option for each section and support the ongoing refinement and detailed environmental assessment of those options.



This is a view south over the Spey crossing at Kingussie, with the Insh Marshes Ramsar boundaries surrounding the banks of the River Spey, and the A9 embankment, on the southern approach to the crossing.

GIS modelling has been used in design workshops to highlight location specific issues and potential mitigation requirements, to help develop the indicative route options.

Landscape policy and design principles

The range of high quality landscapes surrounding the A9 are a prime national asset, including Scotland's largest National Park (Cairngorms National Park), three designated National Scenic Areas and a wide range of historic landscapes, including Battlefields and Designed Gardens. The scenic diversity within the A9 corridor therefore holds significant ecological, cultural and tourism value and it is vital this is supported through sensitive design from the earliest possible stages.

The existing A9 provides a generally positive landscape fit, with sweeping curves which respond to and reflect local landforms. However, the route was also designed with a number of straight sections to provide good forward visibility for overtaking. Straight sections do not always fit well with local landform and as the A9 dualling is likely to be more complex than a straightforward widening project, the surrounding landform and visual context are important design considerations, so that the dual carriageway alignments can be better appreciated within and through some of Scotland's finest scenery.

'Fitting Landscapes' aligns Transport Scotland's landscape policy with Scottish Government policies on sustainability and the environment, delivering an important commitment to quality in all aspects of landscape design and management. Initial landscape design principles being developed for the A9 Dualling Programme are listed below.

Landscape			
A9 dualling should…			
L1	Ensure that respect for the distinctive local landscape character and qualities of the A9 corridor shall inform all aspects of the dualling process	L9	Where appropriate, minimise the effect of the road on the experience of the wider landscape, including lighting and noise
L2	Ensure road alignment and design responds to the landscape qualities and key characteristics of each landscape character area through which the route passes	L10	Minimise the landscape impacts of verge and boundary treatments, within the context of safety standard requirements
L3	Whilst respecting the distinctive character and qualities of 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	L11	As far as possible, avoid, or reduce effects on, landscape features, retain and make best use of existing vegetation and re-use site won materials wherever possible
L4	Enhance the views from the road to maximise the positive traveller experience • Key views shall be agreed to inform the siting of lay-bys, around appropriate opportunities • View management plans should be developed	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
L5	Ensure both construction and long term [25 years plus] potential landscape effects inform the landscape design of the road	L14	Use locally native and characteristic plant species and species mixes
L6	Design for low maintenance and to accommodate future change	L15	Secure adequate land for integrated landscape solutions
L7	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	L16	Aim to ensure the enhanced reputation of the A9 as one of the world's great tourist routes, through landscapes of national and international importance. A series of design guide strategies (e.g. laybys and viewpoints, rock cuttings, public access and transport, etc.) should support such route wide enhancement.
L8	Protect prominent features and local landmarks and enhance their setting, where possible		

Junctions and accesses

Existing junctions and accesses have been identified along the A9 between Perth and Inverness. These junctions provide important access to adjacent roads, villages, community facilities and properties. Numerous at-grade junctions are present along the existing single carriageways, which permit right-turn manoeuvres but can lead to a greater risk of accidents.

Given the nature of the existing road alignment and high vehicle speeds, the presence and number of existing at-grade junctions and direct accesses is also a potential hazard to road users.

The upgraded A9 will be a high standard dual carriageway and only grade separated junctions will be permitted with some isolated left-in left-out junctions. Therefore, all existing at-grade junctions will be closed or upgraded.

A broad strategy has been developed for the treatment of existing junctions and accesses. Each existing and proposed junction and access will be assessed in accordance with this strategy. Left-in left-out junction arrangements will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. This strategy is included in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 Assessment Report, which is available to view on the Transport Scotland website at:
www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a9dualling

Based on the above strategy, twenty five locations have been initially identified for potential grade separated junctions. At

isolated locations, and where alternative connection to the A9 cannot be provided, left-in left-out junctions may be necessary.

A complete assessment of the existing junctions and accesses within the extents of each scheme will be undertaken during the future stages of design.

If you have any concerns regarding your future access arrangements, please speak to a member of our team or alternatively complete the feedback form and forward this to Transport Scotland. Please be assured we will work closely with you during the future stages of design to ensure any adverse impacts due to the upgrade works are kept to a minimum.

Development of typical junction and access arrangements

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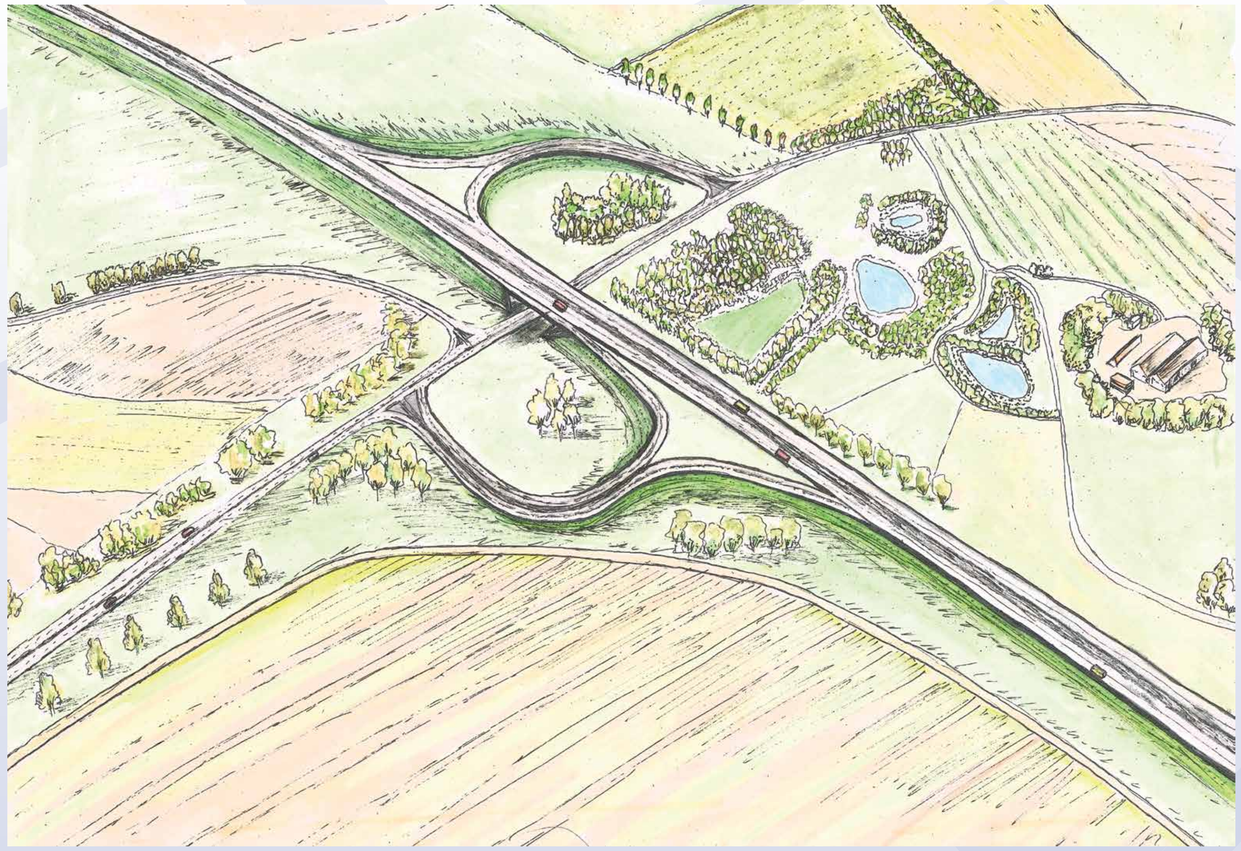
Example of indicative grade separated junction layout



Proposed junction layouts are likely to vary throughout the scheme taking account of constraints, topography, and engineering considerations. Each junction will include a bridge over or under the dual carriageway.

The adjacent graphic illustrates an indicative layout of a grade separated junction, typical of that which could form part of the upgraded road.

Grade separation will allow uninterrupted movement of vehicles joining and leaving the A9 dual carriageway by eliminating right-turn manoeuvres across the road, and providing acceleration and deceleration lanes, known as merges and diverges respectively.

The landscape and aesthetic impact of junctions will be considered when selecting the preferred junction layout. In general, the preference would be to provide bridges below the A9, as they can be less visually intrusive than bridges over the A9, although considerations such as other environmental features, buildability, topography and cost may mean that an overbridge arrangement is more appropriate at particular locations.

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Development of typical junction and access arrangements

Typical existing access arrangements

The figure illustrates typical existing access arrangements where direct access to and from the A9 is currently available. This arrangement allows right-turn manoeuvres across the existing single carriageway and does not provide acceleration and deceleration lanes for vehicles joining and departing the A9.

Typical diverted access arrangements

The figure illustrates typical access arrangements once the A9 dualling is complete. Right-turn manoeuvres across the dual carriageway will be eliminated with access to the A9 via a grade separated junction.

Access to grade separated junctions will be provided by constructing new parallel access roads or by utilising existing roads and tracks.

It may be necessary to undertake improvement works to existing roads and tracks to ensure they are suitable for the forecasted traffic flows.

The inclusion of a left-in left-out junction arrangement may be considered but only in exceptional circumstances.

Non-motorised user (NMU) facilities

NMUs include pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and may be recreational users or, near the larger communities, active travellers and daily commuters.

We are currently consulting with various bodies including The Highland Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority, The Ramblers Association, The British Horse Society, Sustrans and many others to ensure all known NMU provisions in the vicinity of the A9 have been identified. This consultation will continue throughout future design stages.

An emerging NMU strategy is being developed, to provide a consistent approach to NMU provision within the A9 corridor. The main principles of the strategy are as follows:

- **there will be no surface crossings of the dualled A9**
- **at crossings of the dualled A9, NMU routes will be combined where possible**
- **junctions and accommodation works' underpasses will be utilised where possible, to provide NMU crossing points**
- **over or under road (grade separated) crossing points solely for NMUs will be provided where site specific consideration and requirement can be demonstrated.**

An NMU network will be developed to facilitate active travel in and across the corridor and will integrate with public transport facilities where possible.

Facilities will take into account the needs of disabled people.

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The future

The strategic studies and generation of the indicative route options available to view at today's exhibition mark the end of the DMRB Stage 1 process.

The DMRB Stage 2 Assessment will commence shortly after completion of this public exhibition and will:

- **evaluate and report on the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints associated with the indicative route options illustrated at today's exhibition, and any other route options identified following these exhibitions**
- **consider wider issues such as junction locations and access arrangements along the A9**
- **conclude by recommending a preferred option for each section.**

The DMRB Stage 3 Assessment will:

- **assess and report on the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages and disadvantages of each preferred option.**

The Statutory Process will commence at the end of the DMRB Stage 3 Assessment and will involve:

- **Transport Scotland seeking planning permission for the construction of the dual carriageway and associated works. Planning permission for road schemes is obtained through the publication and approval of Roads Orders, Compulsory Purchase Orders (where necessary) and an Environmental Statement.**

Project Level programme for design and development work

KEY: DMRB STAGE 2 | DMRB STAGE 3 | STATUTORY PROCESSES

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Luncarty to Pass of Birnam	DMRB STAGE 2				CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO START 2017			
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Birnam to Tay Crossing (early implementation)	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Tay Crossing to Ballinluig	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Pitlochry to Killiecrankie	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Killiecrankie to Pitagowan	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Pitagowan to Glen Garry (early implementation)	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore (early implementation)	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Crubenmore to Kincraig	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Kincraig to Dalraddy	DMRB STAGE 2		CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO START IN 2015/16					
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Dalraddy to Slochd	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							
Tomatin to Moy (early implementation)	DMRB STAGE 2							
	DMRB STAGE 3							
	STATUTORY PROCESSES							

Your feedback

We would be pleased to receive your feedback regarding the indicative route options illustrated at today's exhibition.

In particular, we would like to know:

- **have we missed a possible route option within the 200m wide corridor?**
- **are you aware of any particular local features that we should know about to inform the more detailed design and assessment work?**
- **do you have any comments on the options?**

We invite you to provide feedback via the following means:

- **by completing the feedback forms available today**
- **by e-mail, a9dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk**
- **by telephone, 0141 272 7100**
- **by letter, addressed to:**

A9 Dualling Team
Transport Scotland
MTRIPS
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

The deadline for any feedback is **8 August 2014**.