



A9 Dualling Programme

Non-Motorised User (NMT) Access Strategy

May 2016

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A9 Dualling - Perth to Inverness

NMU Access Strategy Transport Scotland

April 2016

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment launched an Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) on 6th December 2011, which provided an overview of the Scottish Government's plans for infrastructure investment over the future decades. Contained within the plan was a commitment to complete the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025. This commitment builds on work undertaken in the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) in 2008, which identified dualling of the A9 as a priority trunk road intervention.

The A9 corridor forms a strategic link between central Scotland and the Scottish highlands. The 177 kilometre section of the A9 between Perth and Inverness ('the scheme') is vital to the growth and development of northern Scotland's economy.

1.2 Scheme Development

In September 2012, Transport Scotland commissioned a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Preliminary Engineering Services (PES) Study for the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness. The commissions delivered a route-wide assessment, equivalent to a Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 Assessment, identifying and collating environmental and engineering constraints, issues, risks and opportunities to inform later, more detailed design.

Furthermore, the SEA and PES commissions both recommended that off-line options were significantly less advantageous than the on-line option and should not be taken forward for further consideration.

Transport Scotland has sub-divided the scheme into sections to progress through the DMRB assessment stages and Statutory Processes. The individual projects, shown in Table 1.1, are geographically split into three sections for assessment purposes.

The Southern Section is between the Pass of Birnam and Glen Garry, and includes approximately 45 kilometres of carriageway to be dualled and was awarded to Jacobs UK Ltd. (Jacobs) in August 2014.

The Central Section is between Glen Garry and Dalraddy, and includes approximately 37 kilometres of carriageway to be dualled and was awarded to a Joint Venture between CH2M HILL and Fairhurst (referred to as CFJV) in May 2014.

The Northern Section incorporates approximately 33 kilometres to be dualled between Dalraddy and Inverness and was awarded to a Joint Venture between Atkins and Mouchel (referred to as AMJV) in January 2015.

Table 1-1: A9 Scheme Sections

Section	Project	Scheme Length (km)
Southern Section: A9 Pass of Birnam to Glen Garry	02 - Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing	8.3
	03 - Tay Crossing to Ballinluig	7.7
	04 - Pitlochry to Killiecrankie	6.8
	05 - Killiecrankie to Pitagowan	11.0
	06 – Pitagowan to Glen Garry	11.4
Central Section: A9 Glen Garry to Dalraddy	07 – Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie	9.5
	08 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore	11.1
	09 – Crubenmore to Kincaig	16.7
Northern Section: A9 Dalraddy to Inverness	11 – Dalraddy to Slochd	24.1
	12 – Tomatin to Moy	9.9

Currently, each of the projects above are at DMRB Stage 2 assessment, which involves the development of route options within the indicative corridors progressed from the high level assessment at DMRB Stage 1.

Upon completion of the development of the options and their assessment and consultation with stakeholders in DMRB Stage 2, the Preferred Route Option will be selected.

During DMRB Stage 3 the Preferred Route Option and its junction options will be further developed and assessed, and the resulting impacts will be reported against criteria under the headings of environment, engineering and traffic and economics. DMRB Stage 3 also includes the preparation of an Environmental Statement and identification of land acquisition requirements.

1.3 Scheme Objectives

The scheme objectives established for the A9 Dualling Programme are as follows:

- To improve the operational performance of the A9 by:
 - Reducing journey times; and
 - Improving journey time reliability.
- To improve safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) by:
 - Reducing accident severity; and
 - Reducing driver stress.
- To facilitate active travel within the corridor; and
- To improve integration with Public Transport facilities.

1.4 Scope and Objectives

The aim of this NMU Access Strategy is to formalise Transport Scotland's position in relation to NMU access arrangements and lay out an appropriate plan of action towards securing best outcomes for NMU related interests taking account of all relevant criteria. For the purposes of this strategy NMUs are considered to be all non-motorised traffic, including pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

The strategy has collated relevant information relating to outdoor access, and considered previous studies, current legislation and policy to ensure they will be recognised and integrated in the design.

Objectives for NMU access provision have also been established, as well as risks, opportunities and the process for identifying possible mitigation measures.

2 Review of Corridor/ Study Area

2.1 General

The A9 corridor encompasses a varied topography consisting of rock formations, forestry land, open flatlands and river valleys. Generally, the A9 route is within steep terrain bound by alternating hills and valleys, following the route of the various watercourses that exist in close proximity to the road, many of which have sensitive environmental designations.

Land use varies widely along the route with settlements consisting of residential and commercial components, sparsely populated agricultural sites and uninhabited natural areas. Key settlements are identified in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Key Settlements

Section	Settlement	Population (2011 Census)
South of A9 Dualling: Perth to Pass of Birnam	Perth	46,970
	Luncarty	1,661
	Bankfoot	1,257
Southern Section: A9 Pass of Birnam to Glen Garry	Dunkeld & Birnam	1,287
	Dowally	91
	Guay & Kindallachan	91
	Ballinluig	260
	Pitlochry	2,776
	Killiecrankie	61
	Calvine	767
Central Section: A9 Glen Garry to Dalraddy	Dalwhinnie	95
	Newtonmore	1,094
	Kingussie	1,476
	Kincraig	297
Northern Section: A9 Dalraddy to Inverness	Aviemore	3,147
	Carrbridge	811
	Tomatin	528
	Moy	103
North of A9 Dualling: Inverness	Inverness	62,156

The A9 passes through areas which are outstanding in wildlife and landscape terms, including a number of nationally and internationally protected sites, including:

- Cairngorms National Park;

- The River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- Killiecrankie Battlefield site;
- Drumochter Hills SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) and mixed Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- The River Spey SAC and SSSI;
- Insh Marshes SAC and SSSI;
- The River Spey - Insh Marshes Ramsar site and SPA;
- Insh Marshes National Nature Reserve and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Reserve;
- Aldclune and Invervack Meadows SSSI;
- Tulach Hill and Glen Fender Meadows SAC and SSSI;
- Blair Atholl Gardens and Designed Landscape;
- Glen Garry SSSI;
- Three National Scenic Areas;
- The Slochd SAC;
- 14 Scheduled Monuments; and
- Craigellachie SSSI and National Nature Reserve.

The A9 corridor also provides links to nationally significant recreational resources including:

Long-distance walking and cycling routes:

- Scotland's Great Trails:
 - Rob Roy Way at Pitlochry; and
 - Speyside Way at Aviemore.
- East Highland Way.

National Walking and Cycling Network routes:

- Speyside Way cycleway (in planning); and
- National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes 1, 7 and 77.

Significant mountain destinations:

- Munros (mountains over 3,000 feet high):
 - Meall Chuaich from Cuaich;
 - Carn na Caim from north of Drumochter Pass;
 - A'Bhuidheanach Beag from north of Drumochter Pass;

- Geal-charn from Balsporran;
- A'Mharconaich from Balsporran;
- Beinn Udlamein from south of Drumochter Pass;
- Sgairneach Mhor from south of Drumochter Pass; and
- Beinn Dearg via Glen Bruar.
- Corbetts (mountains between 2,500 and 3,000 feet high):
 - Geal-charn Mor from Lynwilg;
 - The Sow of Atholl / Meall an Dobharchain from Dalnaspidal;
 - Meall na Leitreach from Dalnaspidal;
 - Beinn Mholach from Dalnaspidal;
 - An Dun from Dalnacardoch; and
 - A' Chaoirnich / Maol Creag an Loch from Dalnacardoch.

It is apparent that many NMU's access these sites from the A9, utilising existing lay-bys. It should be noted that many NMU organisations recommend the use of lay-bys. Lay-bys are important for drivers needing to stop for a short time. They may be provided for more specialised functions such as emergency lay-bys for broken down vehicles, bus lay-bys or hardstandings where maintenance vehicles may pull off the road.

The Highland Main Line railway, which facilitates passenger and freight services between Perth and Inverness, is in close proximity to and has a number of crossing points with the A9.

Domestic and commercial properties are also located close to the A9 at various locations, many of which have direct access onto the trunk road.

There are numerous NMU facilities along the A9 corridor, used by recreational users, commuters and long distance travellers. NMU routes consist of minor roads, Core Paths, Rights of Way, NCN routes and informal local routes. It should be noted that access is generally available under the terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. As a result NMU access is not limited to defined routes.

The location of NMU routes within the study area varies considerably. At some locations NMU routes are in close proximity to the A9, whereas at others they are more remote. Generally, NMU routes are more widely available in more populated areas, providing access to community and recreational facilities.

NMU routes are more limited in remote areas. Many of the NMU routes, particularly those more remote from the A9, are in a poor condition, potentially discouraging use. Poor linkage and signage may also inhibit use.

There are three NCN routes in the vicinity of the A9 between Perth and Inverness. NCN Route 1 is a long distance route connecting Dover and the Shetland Islands, passing through Inverness.

NCN Route 7 links Sunderland to Inverness (by connecting with NCN Route 1 east of Inverness near Culloden Moor) and runs generally parallel to the A9 between Ballinluig and Inverness.

NCN Route 77 runs between Dundee and Pitlochry via Perth and is generally remote from the A9 between Perth and Ballinluig.

The NCN routes comprise of on-road sections and off-road traffic free sections.

As noted above and shown in Figure 1, NCN Route 7 runs alongside the A9 for the majority of the A9 Dualling Programme extent and passes through the settlements of Pitlochry, Killiecrankie, Blair Atholl, Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, Kingussie, Aviemore, Carrbridge, Tomatin and Moy.

There are numerous NMU crossing points on the A9, as shown in **Table 2-2**.

The nature of the crossings vary, generally they provide links to communities and connect NMU routes. However, many of these crossings are at-grade, generating a road crossing safety risk.

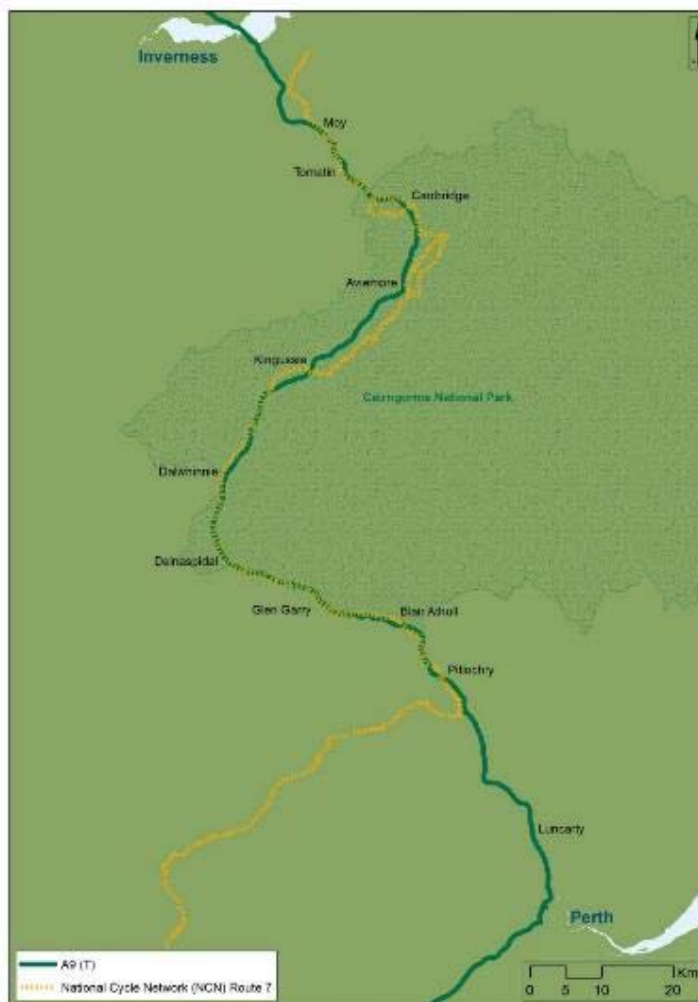


Figure 1 : NCN Route 7 between Ballinluig and Inverness

Table 2-2: Number of Known NMU Crossing Points

Section	Project	Number of known NMU crossing points of existing A9
Southern Section: A9 Pass of Birnam to Glen Garry	02 - Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing	5
	03 - Tay Crossing to Ballinluig	0
	04 - Pitlochry to Killiecrankie	7
	05 - Killiecrankie to Pitagowan	11
	06 – Pitagowan to Glen Garry	9
Central Section: A9 Glen Garry to Dalraddy	07 – Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie	6
	08 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore	5
	09 – Crubenmore to Kincaig	19
Northern Section: A9 Dalraddy to Inverness	11 – Dalraddy to Slochd	25
	12 – Tomatin to Moy	8

Specific data on NMU flows is unavailable, however, it is expected that the majority of movements are to access employment, industry, tourist attractions, facilities and services focussed close to centres of population.

However, access for a range of recreational activities such as walking, cycling, horse-riding and winter sports and access to the hills for research purposes are also likely, particularly within Cairngorms National Park.

2.2 Scheme Specific Features

2.2.1 Southern Section

The main population centres in the Southern Section are Dunkeld, Birnam, and Pitlochry, which are passed by the A9, albeit Dunkeld and Birnam are immediately adjacent.

The towns provide access to services, including shops and restaurants, schools, community assets, healthcare centres, sports and leisure facilities, and tourist attractions.

The towns are served by a railway station on the Highland Main Line railway. Smaller settlements exist at Dowally, Guay, Kindallachan, Killiecrankie, Pitagowan and Calvine, with limited services.

Within the Southern Section there are numerous NMU routes in close proximity to the A9 carriageway. The majority of routes are minor roads. Core Paths link communities with the surrounding environment, including the River Tay SAC, The Hermitage, which is a National Trust for Scotland site located near to Dunkeld and

Birnam, Faskally Wood at Pitlochry, Killiecrankie Battlefield Site, Tulach Hill and Glen Fender Meadows SAC, and House of Bruar, a retail outlet south of Calvine.

NCN Route 77 is immediately adjacent to the A9 at Dunkeld and Birnam, however it is generally remote from the A9 for the remainder of the section.

2.2.2 Central Section

The main population centres in the Central Section are Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore and Kingussie, all of which are passed by the A9 and have a railway station, linking to the Highland Main Line railway.

Newtonmore and Kingussie provide access to services, including shops and restaurants, schools, community centres, railway stations, schools, golf clubs, healthcare centres, sports and leisure facilities and tourist attractions. The smaller settlement at Dalwhinnie has limited services.

Cairngorms National Park and a number of natural sites within it are significant trip generators for the Central Section and its surrounding areas. It is known that NMU travel demands in the Central Section are mostly related to recreation and tourism activities. There are a number of hill walking routes for the Munros and Corbetts in the wider area, which act as trip generators. Additionally, the railway stations provide leisure, domestic and commuting demands for NMU facilities.

NCN Route 7 runs parallel to the A9, at varying distances from the mainline, for the majority of the Central Section. It is composed of on-road sections through the town centres of Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore and Kingussie and off-road sections between Dalnaspidal and Dalwhinnie, as well as between Crubenmore and Ralia Café near Newtonmore. Significant lengths of NCN Route 7 through the Central Section are also designated as Core Paths in both Perth and Kinross Council and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Core Path Plans. Other Core Paths are located further from the A9 in and around the larger settlements.

The existing NMU network also includes hill walking routes used to access Munros and Corbetts in the vicinity of the A9. In several places within the Central Section Munros are in close proximity to each other, these are known to attract walkers who often look to climb more than one Munro or Corbett in a day.

Community paths, Public Rights of Way, informal routes and both formal and informal parking places are also present within the section.

2.2.3 Northern Section

The Northern Section comprises of Dalraddy to Slochd and Tomatin to Moy, and the surrounding motorised and non-motorised networks.

Along this section the A9 is the main south-north road, linking with local roads that provide access to population centres at Aviemore, Carrbridge, Tomatin, Moy and the wider area. The majority of this section passes through rural agricultural land and

estates with commercial businesses such as forestry management and sporting activities.

The A9 provides access either directly, or in close proximity to a range of NMU routes. In general, NMU facilities are established at populated areas around towns and villages providing access for leisure users and commuters. The most significant settlement in terms of population and facilities is Aviemore.

Consultation suggests that NMU travel demands in the Northern Section are mostly related to recreation and tourism activities, with some routes used by commuters to and from employment in key settlements.

There is an extensive network of Core Paths in the Aviemore area, connecting to long distance walking routes. There are Core Path networks around Carrbridge and a network of un-named paths in the Tomatin and Moy areas.

NCN Route 7 crosses the A9 at two locations near Carrbridge, one to the west and another to the north on its way to Slochd Summit. NCN Route 7 also passes through Tomatin, running parallel to the west of the A9 before crossing at-grade near Dalmagarry and continuing on the eastern boundary of the road.

3 Legislation and Policy Review

The Scottish Government is committed to sustainable and active travel which is evident in Statutory Instruments, Planning Policy and decision making processes.

Key legislation and policies that relate to and influence this NMU Access Strategy are summarised below.

3.1 National Transport Strategy

The original National Transport Strategy¹ (NTS) was published in December 2006 to act as an enabler of economic growth. In April 2015, the Minister for Transport and Islands announced a refresh of the NTS.

The National Transport Strategy published in January 2016 refers to the original 2006 version, which sets the transport vision for;

“An accessible Scotland with safe, integrated and reliable transport that supports sustainable economic growth, provides opportunities for all and is easy to use; a transport system that meets everyone’s needs, respects our environment and contributes to health and wellbeing;

services recognised internationally for quality, technology and innovation, and for effective and well-maintained networks;

a culture where fewer short journeys are made by car, where we favour public transport, walking and cycling because they are safe and sustainable, where transport providers and planners respond to the changing needs of businesses, communities and users”.

The strategy also highlights the three key strategic outcomes, identified in the 2006 version, to achieve its objectives, which are as follows:

- Improve journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on the high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety;
- Reduce emissions, to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on the high level objective for protecting the environment and improving health; and
- Improve quality, accessibility and affordability, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car.

To achieve these outcomes the 2006 strategy identified five high level objectives for transport, which are given below:

- Promote economic growth by building, enhancing, managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency;

- Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network;
- Protect our environment and improve health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumption of resources and energy;
- Improve safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff; and
- Improve integration by making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connection between different forms of transport.

3.2 Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides NMUs with statutory rights to unhindered access to open countryside, encompassing most land and inland water in Scotland, providing users respect the interests of other people, care for the environment and take responsibility for their own actions.

Chapter 5 of the Act (Local Authority Functions: Access and Other Rights) details a number of points relevant to NMU access, including:

- Section 13 (Duty of local authority to uphold access rights) (1) advises that it is the duty of the local authority to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any route, waterway or other means by which access rights may reasonably be exercised;
- Section 17 (Core Paths Plan) requires local authorities to draw up a plan for a system of paths, which may include Rights of Way by foot, horseback, cycle, or any combination of those;
- Section 19 (Power to maintain Core Paths etc.) advises that ‘the local authority may do anything which they consider appropriate for the purposes of:
 - Maintaining a Core Path;
 - Keeping a Core Path free from obstruction or encroachment; and
 - Providing the public with directions to, or with an indication of the extent of, a Core Path’.
- Section 20 (Review and amendment of Core Paths Plan) provides for the removal, diversion or addition of a Core Path within the plan.

3.3 National Plans, Policies and Guidance

3.3.1 Third National Planning Framework

The Third National Planning Framework (NPF3) was published in June 2014 and sets out a vision of how Scotland should evolve over the next 20 to 30 years. NPF3 is the

spatial expression of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy with a focus on supporting sustainable economic growth and the transition to a low carbon economy. It sets out the Scottish Government's ambition for Scotland as a whole, and highlights the distinctive opportunities for sustainable growth in its cities, towns, rural areas, and coast and islands.

Planning authorities are required to take the NPF3 into account when preparing local development plans, and it is a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. The framework sets out a vision of Scotland which is:

- A successful, sustainable place;
- A low carbon place;
- A natural, resilient place; and
- A connected place.

NPF3 has a number of sections which are particularly relevant to NMU access, namely:

- Section 4 (A natural, resilient place) Paragraph 4.1, which states the Scottish Government's vision for pedestrian and cyclist friendly settlements and neighbourhoods, to be connected by a coherent national walking and cycling network, making active travel a much more attractive and practical option for both everyday use and recreation;
- Section 4 (A natural, resilient place) Paragraph 4.28, which advises that the National Walking and Cycling Network (NWCN) has been designated as a national development which will link key outdoor tourism locations across the country and will be an important tourism asset where there will be opportunities to develop shared infrastructure to further enhance the tourism offering and that added benefits for rural communities can also be secured through connections with local Core Path networks;
- Section 5 (A connected place) Paragraph 5.5, which advises that the Scottish Government wants to significantly increase levels of everyday cycling and walking within and between settlements, with Action Plans for both walking and cycling to extend throughout both urban and rural areas and that the additional funding in this area should help to ensure that the vision for 10% of journeys by bike by 2020 is realised;
- Section 5 (A connected place) Paragraph 5.33, which advises that to achieve a step change in active travel, walking and cycling networks will continue to develop through Core Path plans and local community networks, connecting where possible with the national long distance network to broaden recreational access to the countryside and bring together urban and rural Scotland; and
- Section 6 (Delivery) Strategy 8 (A National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network) states that making better links between existing routes will improve connections between urban and rural, and inland and coastal areas, will benefit tourism and active travel to contribute to health and well-being and

that development should focus on making best use of existing path networks - Scotland's Great Trails, the NCN and the Scottish Canal Network and should seek to close key gaps, upgrade connecting routes, build on local Core Path networks, and link with public transport.

As part of Section 6, NPF3 has identified 14 National Developments, one of which is the need for a National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network throughout Scotland. Within this National Development there are 14 identified routes for development, including the Speyside Way Extension to Newtonmore.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), in collaboration with Sustrans and Scottish Canals, has subsequently developed the NWCN Project Plan and have been asked by the Scottish Government to manage the implementation of the 14 identified routes for the development of a National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network.

3.3.2 Scottish Government Active Travel Vision

The long-term vision for active travel in Scotland to 2030 sets out the following objectives:

- Better health and safer travel for all;
- Reducing inequalities;
- Cutting carbon emissions and other pollution;
- Delivering liveable, more pleasant communities; and
- Supporting delivery of sustainable economic growth.

The vision set out what Scotland will look like if we achieve the active travel objectives. In terms of Infrastructure this is set out as follows:

- The built environment puts people and place before the movement of vehicles;
- Main roads into town centres all have either segregated cycling provision or high quality direct, safe and pleasant alternatives;
- Rural and suburban minor roads have low speed limits, linking nearby communities and services;
- Services and all trip attractors and generators are all accessible by foot and by bicycle;
- Lighting, active and natural surveillance of routes increases the perception of safety along pedestrian and cycle routes;
- The walking network is much improved, with better maintenance and greater provision, particularly in rural areas. A comprehensive cycling network has been created, made up of on-road segregated facilities, well signed quiet minor roads with reduced speed and off-road paths;

- Nationally, walking and cycling networks (comprising the NCN, Long Distance Routes (LDRs), regional routes, Core Paths and local cycle networks) link settlements, places of interest and public transport hubs; and
- Active travel is integrated with public transport to provide an attractive alternative to car use for longer journeys. There is easy, safer access by foot and bike to public transport stops and stations.

3.3.3 Cycling Action Plan

The main purpose of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013, published by Transport Scotland, is to support the Scottish Government's vision that by 2020, 10% of everyday journeys taken in Scotland will be by bicycle.

To achieve this vision 19 actions have been developed and are outlined within the document, including:

- Develop the strategic approach to supporting functional cycling (and active travel more broadly), mapping the appropriate infrastructure improvements required along with supporting promotional work to achieve tangible changes in travel choices;
- Continue to promote a national training programme on cycling-integration design and best practice to planners, designers and engineers, through the delivery of accredited modules such as Making Cycling Mainstream, and promote the use of planning policy - Designing Streets, Cycling by Design cycle guidance and Smarter Choices, Smarter Places good practice;
- Continue to develop and maintain community links to support active travel (routes and public realm improvements) particularly in urban areas where high levels of cycling can be achieved, along with associated infrastructure such as cycle parking facilities at key destinations including schools, bus and rail stations, shopping areas and workplaces;
- Continue to develop and maintain the NCN to provide long distance cycling routes, connecting rural communities and promoting tourism; and
- Develop better integration with public transport, through partnership working with interests such as rail and bus/coach operators and Regional Transport Partnerships.

The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland builds upon the action points developed in the Trunk Road Cycling Initiative, which was published in 1996 and is included in Annex E of the Cycling Action Plan. As such, this further supports and encourages the provision of safe cycling routes away from the trunk network, as well as promoting road safety for cyclists around the interface of the NCN with trunk roads.

The Cycling Action Plan also states that special consideration must be given to cyclists as part of all new trunk road schemes and trunk road improvements in order:

- To ensure that there are no hazards to cyclists built into schemes;

- To ensure that the opportunities for cyclists within the scheme are recognised and exploited; and
- To ensure that the opportunities for cyclists on the surrounding networks, including the NCN and superseded sections of trunk road, are recognised and exploited.

In order to consider cyclists as part of the A9 Dualling Programme, Transport Scotland has consulted with a wide range of NMU groups. The general feedback is that NMUs would like direct facilities, close to, but not on the road, and safe crossing facilities.

According to the Cycling Action Plan, the following points will also be considered throughout the scheme's development:

- The potential for enhancement and completion of the recreational network through the corridor, providing both convenience and amenity, including the construction of safe crossing facilities and the enhancement of parallel routes where possible;
- The incorporation of Perth & Kinross Council and the Highland Council Core Path networks into the scheme design where possible;
- The potential to provide segregated off-road cycleway facilities where practical, as part of the NCN;
- The potential to undertake other improvements to NCN Route 77 including localised alignment, width improvements, improved surfacing and signage; and
- The intention to involve active travel organisations in the process of trunk road improvements to the degree possible.

3.3.4 National Walking Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to realise the vision of a Scotland where places are well designed for walking, an increased number of people enjoy the outdoors and more people walk as part of their everyday journeys.

The three strategic aims of the strategy are:

- Create a culture of walking where everyone walks more often as part of their everyday travel and for recreation and well-being;
- Better quality walking environments with attractive, well designed and managed built and natural spaces; and
- Enable easy, convenient and safe independent mobility.

In terms of infrastructure the strategy aims to address issues of availability and accessibility of paths, poor quality walking surfaces and non-existent or inappropriate crossing arrangements that give little time to cross.

To translate the strategy's vision into action the Scottish Government has tasked Paths for All, the national partnership organisation that promotes walking, with establishing a new delivery forum for the National Walking Strategy.

A detailed action plan is being developed for approval by Scottish Ministers and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA).

3.3.5 Transport Scotland Roads for All: Good Practice Guide

The Equality Act (2010), which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), places a requirement on Scottish public authorities to work towards eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment, advance equal opportunities and foster good relations.

To comply with the Equality Act (2010), and to help deliver on its duty to actively promote disability equality, Transport Scotland has introduced 'Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads'.

Its production was one of the objectives of 'The Trunk Road Network, Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan'. The Action Plan sets out the following objectives:

- To make Scotland's trunk road network safer and more accessible for all users by the removal of barriers to movement along and across trunk roads;
- To develop all professional and technical staff involved in the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the trunk road network to recognise and understand the needs of disabled people;
- To ensure the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the trunk road network meets the needs of disabled people through the involvement of disabled people in the development of good practice guidance;
- To make facilities and services more accessible from the trunk road network;
- To make journeys secure and comfortable for all by working with other service providers and utilising appropriate technology; and
- To promote journeys by public transport by working with Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and operators to improve access, facilities and information at bus stops, etc. directly accessed from trunk roads.

3.3.6 Transport Scotland - Cycling by Design

Cycling by Design was published by Transport Scotland to draw together and rationalise existing international cycle design guidelines into a single comprehensive guidance document.

Subsequently, the primary focus of the document is the provision of consistent and appropriate design standards for cyclists that must be followed by consultants and contractors working on trunk road projects.

The current version (Rev 1, June 2011) incorporates legislative requirements relating to inclusive design.

3.3.7 British Horse Society Scotland Guidance

The British Horse Society (BHS) Scotland guidance provides advice on the provision of access for horse-riders. Paths should be fit for purpose, facilitate access for as wide a range of users as possible, adhere to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the design should be suitable for all existing and potential users.

The British Horse Society Scotland have a number of guidance documents which provide design parameters to inform designers on preferred geometry and other details to provide facilities suitable for equestrians.

3.3.8 Scottish Natural Heritage Guidance

SNH guidance provides advice on the Environmental Impact Assessment Process in Scotland and the preparation of access plans and have been referred to in the preparation of this NMU Access Strategy. These documents demonstrate good practice on the management of access during construction.

3.4 Regional Plans and Policies

3.4.1 TACTRAN Regional Transport Strategy 2008 – 2023

The Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (TACTRAN) vision for their region (Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling) is to deliver a transport system, shaped by engagement with its citizens, which helps deliver prosperity and connects communities across the region and beyond, which is socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable and which promotes the health and well-being of all.

Their strategy seeks to fulfil this vision through a balanced and integrated approach which supports their key themes of:

- Delivering economic prosperity;
- Connecting communities and being socially inclusive; and
- Delivering environmental sustainability, health and well-being.

Improving quality of life and opportunity in cities, towns and deepest rural areas, with particular emphasis on improving access to employment, health, education, and key leisure and tourism areas, lies at the heart of this strategy.

The objectives of the strategy have been developed under six broad themes:

- Economy;
- Accessibility;
- Equity and Social Inclusion;

- Environment; Health and Well-being;
- Safety and Security; and
- Integration.

Each has an overarching objective and related supporting sub-objectives with a number of these being relevant to active travel, NMU's and the objectives of the A9 Dualling Programme.

- Improving the accessibility and inclusivity of the transport system;
- Promoting a shift towards more sustainable modes;
- Promoting a culture of active and healthy travel; and
- Improving integration of all transport modes.

3.4.2 HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy (2008)

The Highlands and Islands Strategic Transport Partnership (HITRANS) aspires to provide to a mainstream passenger transport system which promotes accessibility and is, as much as possible, easy to comprehend and use. The passenger transport system in the region (Western Isles, Orkney, Highland, Moray and most of the Argyll and Bute area) currently involves a number of means of transport, which makes quality and opportunity for interchange between modes very important.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 17: Planning for Transport (2005) (which has now been repealed and replaced by SPP 2010 and latterly SPP 2014) was seen as presenting a future opportunity for the region and it gives the order of priority for personal travel: walking, then cycling, then public transport, then other motorised modes. This hierarchy should be reflected in land-use planning.

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) (2008) identifies common issues, builds consensus on the ways to tackle these issues, and sets out the priorities for future investment in the region. The RTS is therefore a framework against which policy initiatives and projects can be developed.

The development of the RTS has been steered by the overall vision of HITRANS, has followed guidance from the Scottish Government, and has been informed by a number of key plans and policies, particularly those relating to national transport objectives, and those relating to health, social inclusion, economic development, sustainable development and land use planning at the national, regional and local levels.

One of the key horizontal themes identified in the RTS relates to active travel with the aim to:

- Promote the long-term development of active travel across the region;
- Enable progress in active travel to be monitored across HITRANS;
- Promote partnership working in promotion of active travel; and

- Achieve consistency of standards in infrastructure to support active travel.

3.5 Local Plans and Policies

3.5.1 TAYplan

TAYplan is the strategic development planning authority for Dundee, Angus, Perth and North Fife. The purpose of TAYplan is to set out the overall planning vision for the entire Dundee and Perth area, including North Fife and parts of Angus and Perth and Kinross, for the next twenty year period (2016 to 2036). This is set out within the TAYplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan 2016-2036.

As part of the Shaping Better Quality Places policy, TAYplan aims to ensure that transport and land use are integrated to reduce the need to travel and improve accessibility by foot, cycle and public transport related facilities thus subsequently improving active travel potential.

As part of this objective, TAYplan aims to integrate networks to make it easy, safe and desirable to walk and cycle within and between neighbourhoods by providing or enhancing active travel routes and associated infrastructure.

As part of the Green Networks policy TAYplan intend to make improvements to green infrastructure by providing better recreational access opportunities and active travel routes. This will involve improving active travel links and connecting new links to existing routes.

3.5.2 Perth & Kinross Council Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan for Perth & Kinross Council provides guidance for the future development and land use within the council area boundary, including Highland Perthshire, Kinross-shire, Perth, Strathearn and Strathmore and the Glens.

The areas within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and the Cairngorms National Park are addressed separately within the relevant National Park Development Plans.

The Perth & Kinross Council Local Development Plan, adopted in February 2014, has a policy relating to green infrastructure. This includes the requirement for all new development to contribute to the creation, protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure by the protection, enhancement and management of open spaces and linkages for active travel.

3.5.3 Cairngorms National Park Authority Local Development Plan (CLDP)

The Cairngorms National Park Authority Local Development Plan (CLDP) was adopted in 2015 and is the land-use plan that will guide development in the area over the next 20 years.

The following policies are considered to be particularly relevant:

- Policy 2 – Supporting Economic Growth;
- Policy 3 – Sustainable Design; and
- Policy 8 – Sport and Recreation.

The policies relevant to NMU's and accessibility are focussed on protecting sustainable economic development activity and promoting sustainable transport methods. The plan requires proposed developments to maintain and maximise all opportunities for responsible outdoor access, including creating links to the existing path network which will be consistent with the Core Paths Plan.

The policies aim to ensure development which results in the reduction of facilities would only be supported where an appropriate or improved alternative access solution can be secured for public access rights, or loss of the existing path network including loss of access to inland water.

In addition to the above policies the CLDP contains development plans for communities within the National Park. The CLDP outlines the development aspirations for the park and communities located within the park extents.

It also highlights the requirements for traffic assessments to be conducted for proposed developments to examine the impact of the development on the trunk road and local road network, as well as the NMU access implications.

The aims of the CLDP are supported by the recently developed outdoor access strategy, Active Cairngorms, which outlines the Park Authority's strategy to increase accessibility, facilitate quality and usage of the park, improve the management of the park resources and more actively promote the park and the health benefits of regularly visits, all of which will help contribute to the achievement of the Local Development Plan objectives.

3.5.4 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) was adopted by The Highland Council on 5 April 2012. The plan sets out the vision on how land within the council's boundary can be used by developers for the next 20 years. This excludes the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park which is addressed within the relevant National Park Development Plan.

The HwLDP vision statement includes an aspiration that people will have better access to high quality places using a network of paths for walking and cycling, which contributes to quality of life, health and inward investment.

The plan also references more efficient forms of transport with improvements to the road network seeing an increase in the numbers of people walking and cycling as a result of the green network.

Policy 56 Travel – includes seeking to ensure that the development is well served by the most sustainable modes of travel available in the locality from the outset, providing opportunity for modal shift from private car to more sustainable transport

modes wherever possible, having regard to key travel desire lines and ensuring that opportunities for encouraging walking and cycling are maximised.

Policy 77 Public Access – includes retaining Core Paths or ensuring attractive, safe and convenient alternative access provision, which does not damage or disturb species or habitats, where routes are affected.

Policy 78 – Long Distance Routes (including the NCN and the Speyside Way) – relates to safeguarding and enhancing long distance routes and their setting with consideration being given to developing/ improving further strategic multi user routes both inland and along the coast with due regard to the impact on the Natural Heritage features along these routes.

The HwLDP is to be considered alongside three Area Local Development Plans for the region. The A9 dualling lies within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) which was adopted in July 2015.

The IMFLDP vision statement includes making it easy for people and wildlife to move about through a green network. This green network is formed by green infrastructure which consists of existing green spaces, walks, woodland, other habitats, paths and cycle routes.

4 Review of Previously Collated Information

4.1 Previous Studies

4.1.1 A9 Dualling: Preliminary Engineering Services (PES)

The DMRB Stage 1 A9 Dualling: PES Report identifies a number of existing NMU routes and recognises that provision for NMU routes within the A9 corridor currently varies considerably. The report acknowledges the importance of stakeholder engagement to assist with the development of NMU facilities to be promoted as part of the A9 dualling scheme.

The DMRB Stage 1 Report also recognises the importance of maintaining access to key NMU routes, especially within the Cairngorms National Park. It makes recommendations for providing opportunities to improve NMU access, for example, through the use of enhanced lay-bys.

An NMU Audit Objectives Setting & Context Report was produced by Jacobs in 2014 as part of the PES commission. This report is the first phase in the NMU Audit process.

The aim of the NMU Audit Objectives Setting & Context Report is to identify Accessibility and Cycle Design Objectives that ensure the current and future needs of all users, including motorised, NMUs and vulnerable users, are recognised, fully considered and developed in the design process. These Design Objectives will be used as a reference throughout the scheme design and throughout the NMU audit process, which comprises of a Cycling Audit and Accessibility Audit (see Section 7.1).

4.1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report

The SEA Report makes recommendations for the development of a range of strategic principles for later DMRB design and assessment stages, such that the development of design options embed the environmental principles of avoidance and minimisation of environmental impacts when considering the rationalisation of direct accesses and NMU routes and the related provision of alternative/ collector routes to direct users to new junctions or crossing locations.

The finding of the SEA Report suggests that the effects of rationalising NMU crossing points could present adverse effects at the local level, however, improved crossing points and lay-bys (including public transport lay-bys) should lead cumulatively to minor benefits at the route-wide scale.

The SEA Report maintains the view that, following the implementation of appropriate mitigation, the A9 dualling will present no significant adverse effects on the overall level of connectivity between NMU routes. The report also makes a number of recommendations in relation to NMU access.

4.1.3 SEA Post Adoption Statement (Strategic Design Principles)

As noted above, the SEA Report recommended the development of strategic principles for later design and assessment stages. These were presented in draft in the SEA Report and, following significant consultation with the A9 Dualling Environmental Steering Group (ESG), they were finalised for inclusion in the SEA Post Adoption Statement.

Under the SEA topic ‘Population and Human Health’, a series of seven Strategic Principles were developed that related specifically to NMU routes and another 14 Strategic Principles related specifically to cycling route provisions. These are presented in Table 4-1 and Table 4-2 below.

The principles are intended to represent the aims of the A9 Dualling Programme, with respect to the commitment to the delivery of an environmentally-led design process, to be considered on all A9 dualling projects and through all stages of the design process. They are not; however, intended as a replacement for existing requirements or standards.

Not all principles will be applicable or achievable in all situations and it is recognised that situations will arise where the aims of individual principles may conflict at the local level. It is also recognised that the principles must always be applied within the context of safety considerations and the development of design solutions which are appropriate to the full range of issues relevant to the A9 projects.

The principles will be applied within the context of the environmental impact mitigation hierarchy, with the primary approach being to use the flexibility available within early design stages to avoid an adverse impact before considering mechanisms available to reduce, offset or, as a last resort, provide compensation for adverse impacts.

It is also considered important to recognise that the Strategic Principles are not all-encompassing, and should be used as a reference point for the development of more project, or topic, specific objectives where required.

Table 4-1: Strategic Environmental Design Principles – Population and Human Health

Population and Human Health	
P1	Continue to facilitate opportunities to access visitor attractions and recreational opportunities throughout the corridor
P2	Retain, and where possible enhance, overall connectivity between NMU routes along and across the corridor
P3	Incorporate effective rationalisation between NMU routes, safe crossing points and provisions for access to public transport
P4	Ensure rationalisation of NMU routes and safe crossing points minimises the distance between crossings
P5	Design any permanent diversions in NMU routes to provide the same, or improved, standard of pathway
P6	Employ a preference for underpass crossings, where feasible, to minimise landscape and visual impacts
P7	Consider the safety and quality of experience for NMUs of local roads when vehicle access to the A9 is being rationalised (e.g. the potential for traffic increases on the cycle route network)

Table 4-2: Strategic Environmental Design Principles – Cycling Principles

Cycling Principles	
C1	No particular requirement for NCN route to run alongside the A9 mainline
C2	Cycle facilities to continue to pass through the centres of populated areas, where practical
C3	Cycle provisions, to relevant standards, to be considered in the design of grade separated junctions, side road and access diversions
C4	Extent of diversions to be minimised where cyclist crossing points are rationalised Any permanent diversions should be designed to provide the same, or improved, standard of cycle facility
C5	Cycle connections to public transport facilities to be maintained and improved, to relevant standards
C6	Provide vehicular access for maintenance of cycle facilities
C7	Consider opportunities to widen narrow sections of NCN, adjacent to the A9 mainline, in accordance with relevant standards
C8	Should A9 dualling propose local offline solutions, use of the existing A9 carriageway as a cycle route is to be assessed
C9	NCN route signage to be improved and rationalised where practical, to encourage users away from the A9, e.g. at House of Bruar and Wades Bridge, Dalwhinnie
C10	Level of usage of existing cycle facilities to be considered, in addition to desire lines
C11	Proposed NCN facilities to be assessed for their environmental, engineering and economic advantages and disadvantages
C12	Proposed NCN facilities to be assessed for their compliancy with the relevant Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) guidelines
C13	Opportunities to provide access to/ from existing cycle routes and identified viewpoint locations and lay-by(s) should be assessed
C14	Potential increases in side road traffic to be addressed in the Construction Contract Documents

4.2 Stakeholder Engagement

A key objective in the consideration of accessibility for NMUs on trunk road projects is to make the trunk road safer and more accessible by removing barriers to

movement and to ensure the current and future needs of NMUs affected by a scheme are recognised and considered in development.

Consultation with relevant stakeholders is therefore important, ensuring relevant groups are involved in the decision making process from the outset to recognise the needs of NMUs.

Stakeholder Managers have been appointed by each of the A9 dualling design consultants, whose responsibility is to provide a meaningful, transparent and inclusive communication channel for stakeholders. The appointed Stakeholder Managers for each section are listed in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3: Stakeholder Managers

A9 Section	Stakeholder Manager
Southern Section: A9 Pass of Birnam to Glen Garry	Fergus Allan
Central Section: A9 Glen Garry to Dalraddy	Carron Tobin
Northern Section: A9 Dalraddy to Inverness	Robin Smith

4.3 Key Stakeholders

4.3.1 Key Stakeholders

A large number of key stakeholders were identified as part of the A9 PES commission. The Stakeholder Managers are responsible for maintaining communication with these groups to ensure that they are kept informed as to the progress of the scheme and to establish any issues which any of the groups may have.

The groups listed have been recognised as key stakeholders to be consulted as the design develops. This group may be expanded if further stakeholder groups become apparent.

- A9 Access Group;
- Community Councils;
- Local Authority Access Officers;
- NMU Groups;
- Police Scotland / Road Operating Company;
- Public;
- Sustrans; and
- Access Panels;
- Disability Groups;
- Local Authority Safe Routes to Schools Officers;
- Other Stakeholders (CNPA, SNH, Historic Environment Scotland, etc.);
- Public Transport Operators;
- Schools;
- Transport Scotland Cycling Policy Manager.

4.3.2 Consultation Feedback

Consultation has highlighted a number of issues. These include key stakeholders indicating that consideration should be given to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 as part of the design process.

Cycling groups have highlighted issues associated with the maintenance of existing routes that many have fallen into disrepair and have inadequate signage.

They also noted their preference for bitumen surfacing on any new sections of routes, however BHS Scotland have raised concerns over this type of material as it can create safety implications for horse riders due to the increased likelihood of slippage.

BHS Scotland has also requested that routes used by horse and carriage drivers are considered as part of the design.

4.4 A9 Access Group

4.4.1 Members

The formation of the A9 Access Group is an initiative by Transport Scotland to cement a collaborative and inclusive approach in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the A9 dualling proposals.

Inclusive design is an approach aimed at creating environments that can be used by everyone regardless of age or disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Current membership of the group is listed below. The group may be expanded as further disability and mobility groups become apparent.

- AMJV;
- CFJV ;
- Jacobs;
- Mobility and Access Committee Scotland;
- People Friendly Design;
- Scottish Disability Equality Forum; and
- Transport Scotland.

4.4.2 Consultation Feedback

Members from the A9 Access Group have raised concerns relating to the impact of the A9 Dualling Programme on disabled users. They believe that the requirement for segregated routes should be assessed to consider the needs of disabled people, who may feel unsafe on unsegregated NMU facilities.

They also emphasised the importance of implementing appropriate kerbs within the design, including drop kerbs for car access and raised kerbs at bus stops.

4.5 A9 NMU Group

4.5.1 Members

An A9 NMU Group has been formed to cement a collaborative and inclusive approach for the A9 Dualling Programme to ensure the needs of NMUs are met. The group will help assure active travel and outdoor access for recreational activities are facilitated in the design, providing suitable NMU links throughout the scheme.

As there is a clear correlation between the needs of vulnerable persons and NMUs, members of the A9 Access Group will be invited to attend meetings of the NMU Group as and when required.

Current membership of the Group is listed. The group may be expanded as further NMU groups become apparent.

- AMJV;
- British Horse Society;
- Cairngorms National Park Authority;
- Carbon Clever;
- Cycling Scotland;
- Highland Cycle Campaign;
- HITRANS;
- Jacobs;
- Living Streets Scotland;
- Paths for all;
- Perth and Kinross Access Forum;
- Ramblers Scotland;
- Scottish Natural Heritage;
- Scotways;
- Sustrans;
- The Highland Council;
- Transport Scotland;
- Velocity Inverness; and
- Association of British Riding Schools;
- ByCycle;
- Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum;
- CFJV;
- Cycle Touring Club Scotland;
- Highland Perthshire Cycling;
- Inverness City Cycle Forum;
- John Muir Trust;
- National Access Forum;
- Perth & Kinross Council;
- Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust;
- Scotland Outdoor Access Network;
- Scottish Orienteering Association;
- Sustainable and Active Travel Forum;
- TACTRANS;
- The Mountaineering Council of Scotland;
- Trekking and Riding Association of Scotland;
- Visit Scotland.

4.5.2 Consultation Feedback

Feedback has highlighted concerns relating to the safety implications of diverting large volumes of vehicular traffic on to side roads during construction and the potential impact on NMUs.

Furthermore, concerns relating to current condition and dimensions of parts of NCN Route 7 have been raised. Additionally, the group has voiced concern regarding the impact on existing formal and informal parking facilities adjacent to the A9.

Feedback has also indicated that there are conflicting views on the need to provide a parallel NMU route adjacent to the A9 along the full length of the dualling. Some groups prefer a route adjacent to the A9 and others prefer a more remote facility.

An opportunity to improve the signage of NMU routes has also been highlighted, as existing signage is considered to be inadequate.

Underbridges should be designed to provide sufficient width and clearance for equestrian use, where required.

5 Objectives for Access Provision

5.1 Introduction

Building on the Strategic Environmental Design Principles, as discussed in section 4.1.3, a series of A9 Dualling Programme NMU access provision objectives, which link to the overall scheme objectives are presented below. These objectives rationalise the scheme cycle audit, accessibility audit and Strategic Environmental Design Principles into a single set of objectives for NMU provision on the A9 Dualling Programme.

5.2 Objectives

1. There will be no surface (at grade) crossings of the dualled A9;
2. The integrity and sensitivity of existing NMU routes will be taken into account to inform the design process;
3. Avoid permanent severance of Core Paths and Rights of Way, where possible;
4. Maintain existing levels of NMU route connectivity and, where possible, improve for all types of user, including vulnerable users, such as children, the elderly and the disabled;
5. Identify opportunities to integrate A9 dualling with existing NMU routes, public transport facilities and local communities within the corridor;
6. Where not required by safety standards, remove barriers that may impede or restrict movement by all NMUs within the extent of A9 projects;
7. Where achievable in line with safety standards, provide access to the NMU network from proposed enhanced lay-bys;
8. Consider NMU access to, and interaction with, local features of interest to inform locations for lay-bys and public transport provisions;
9. Where appropriate utilise redundant sections of carriageway as NMU routes and facilities;
10. At crossings of the dualled A9, NMU routes will be rationalised and combined where possible;
11. Junctions and accommodation works underpasses will be utilised, where possible, to provide safer NMU crossing points;
12. Incorporate consideration of NMU requirements and provisions into the design of side roads and access diversions;
13. Over or under road (grade separated) crossing points solely for NMUs will be provided where engineering, environmental, traffic and economic assessments, including site specific considerations, indicate this is justified; and

14. Ensure movement of NMU's and their health and safety are not adversely impacted during construction or under permanent arrangements.

6 Risks and Opportunities

6.1 Introduction

The implementation of the A9 Dualling Programme presents a number of risks and opportunities to existing NMU facilities. Measures to mitigate risks and explore opportunities to benefit NMU's will be considered throughout the design and construction processes, in consultation with stakeholders. There are also opportunities to improve and develop existing NMU facilities, which will be considered in the design.

6.2 Risks

6.2.1 Construction

The SEA states that the dualled A9 will need to adopt construction and traffic management methods which, as far as possible, maintain access to NMU routes for road users, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians and other key accesses during construction periods. During the construction period, without mitigation, NMUs have the potential to be disrupted by:

- Temporary diversions of paths, cycleways and minor roads which may increase journey times;
- Temporary severance where construction works disrupt or deter NMUs from using paths;
- Temporary severance of existing at-grade access across roads;
- Construction traffic on local roads which may create busier crossing points;
- Location of site compounds on recreation areas which would reduce accessibility, including reduced width of track;
- Impacts on the amenity value of the path and cycleway network due to noise, dust, and visual intrusion of the works;
- Impacts on the perceived amenity value of unaffected NMU routes due to construction impacts on nearby routes;
- Impacts of convoy working and potential traffic congestion on local roads which could deter NMUs from using paths; and
- Temporary impediment to the free movement of NMUs, as permitted by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, as a result of construction works near NMU facilities.

6.2.2 Operation

Without appropriate mitigation, the dualled A9 could affect NMUs using minor roads, paths and crossing points through the following adverse impacts:

- Permanent severance of existing paths or routes, including at crossing points which provide the only existing access to a rural location/hillside;
- Permanent diversions resulting in journey length increases due to a reduction in crossing points as all at-grade surface crossings will be removed;
- Permanent reduction to amenity value due to increased noise levels, reduced air quality, disrupted views or safety issues;
- Reduced accessibility due to encroachment on existing NMU routes;
- Reduced number of lay-bys, which may reduce access to NMU facilities;
- Increased safety risks on side roads due to larger volumes of vehicular traffic;
- Reduced number of junctions may result in long diversions to access the A9; and
- Permanent severance of long distance walking/cycling routes.

6.2.3 Section Specific Risks

Some of the key locations where adverse impacts are likely are outlined below. The potential impacts for NMUs using these routes will be carefully considered throughout the DMRB Assessment process. This is not an exhaustive list and additional routes may be identified. The impacts on all routes will be assessed both individually and cumulatively.

Southern Section:

- Potential removal of Core Path DUNK/57 that currently provides an at-grade crossing point of the existing A9 in Birnam;
- Potential severance of multiple Core Paths in Dunkeld that are currently located adjacent to the existing A9;
- Potential severance of NCN Route 77 adjacent to northbound carriageway of the existing A9;
- Potential severance of Regional Cycle Route 83 and multiple Core Paths linking the villages of Dowally, Guay, Kindallachan and Ballinluig;
- Potential severance of the Rob Roy Way (Core Path PLRY/6 and Right of Way TP56) that currently provides an at-grade crossing point of the existing A9 south of Pitlochry;
- Potential severance of multiple Core Paths and local paths within Faskally Wood and Tay Forest Park at Craigower;

- Potential severance of the Tulach Hill Viewpoint Walk (Core Path BAST/5 and Right of Way TP24) that currently provides an at-grade crossing point of the existing A9 south of Blair Atholl;
- Potential severance of Right of Way TP23 at Invervack Farm that currently provides an at-grade crossing point of the existing A9. Potential severance may also affect the Core Paths BAST/5 and BAST/6, which are also both Rights of Way;
- Potential severance of Core Path BAST/8 and Right of Way TP16 that currently provide at-grade crossing points of the existing A9 to the north of Calvine;
- Potential severance of at-grade crossing of local path at Clunes Lodge;
- Potential realignment/severance of NCN Route 7 adjacent to the northbound carriageway of the existing A9; and
- Potential severance of river and railway crossings afforded by utilisation of the existing A9.

Central Section:

- Potential for severance during construction with potential longer term impact due to reduced permeability of the A9 at several at-grade NMU crossings, specifically around the following locations:
 - Dalnaspidal and Dalwhinnie bus stops/ Munro track accesses;
 - Drumochter Pass lay-bys;
 - Glentruim; and
 - Inverton farm.
- Potential for severance during construction at-grade separated NMU crossings specifically around the following locations:
 - Dalwhinnie aqueduct crossing;
 - Cuaich underpass;
 - Nuide underpass;
 - Inverton underpass;
 - B970 underbridge;
 - B9152 underbridge; and
 - Highland Wildlife underbridge.
- Potential stopping-up of direct access points at Balsporran Cottages and Cuaich;

- Potential for NCN Route 7, which is parallel and in close proximity to the A9 between Balsporran and the existing Dalwhinnie A9/A889 junction, to be affected by A9 works; and
- Potential changes to existing side road and track arrangements on NCN Route 7.

Northern Section:

- Potential for NCN Route 7 in the Dalmagarry/ Invereen area and the existing NCN at-grade crossing of the A9 at Dalmagarry Burn to be affected by the works;
- Potential for the existing at-grade crossing of General Wade's Military Road/ Right of Way/ Core Path to the north of the existing Moy junction to be affected by the works;
- Potential for NCN Route 7 at Slochd and the crossing of General Wade's Military Road / Right of Way at Slochd summit to be affected by the works; and
- Potential for several routes/ crossings in the Aviemore area to be affected by the works.

6.3 Opportunities

6.3.1 General

Where mitigation is required to address significant cumulative impacts on NMU access, opportunities to make wider improvements to the NMU network will be explored. Potential improvements to NMU access may include the following:

- Grade separated crossings of the A9, and subsequently improved safety for NMUs, by utilising grade separated junctions, accommodation works underpasses and crossings for the sole use of NMUs;
- Upgrades to sections of the existing NCN Route 77 and NCN Route 7;
- Improved integration between existing NMU routes;
- Consideration of the accessibility needs of all users by incorporating the relevant guidance and standards within the design (including geometry, segregation and surfacing considerations);
- Removal of active barriers which impede or restrict the movement of NMUs;
- Improved links to transport hubs, employment and communities facilities;
- Incorporation of NMU provision into the design of side roads;
- Rest areas and enhanced lay-bys with vehicle parking facilities and picnic areas, which also provide access to NMU routes, community facilities and tourist attractions;

- Improved surfacing, signage and lighting on existing routes;
- NMU ledges in mainline culvert and river bridge structures;
- Reutilisation of sections of road, which become disused as part of the design, as NMU facilities or rest areas with parking provision; and
- Relocation of bus stops, and potential incorporation of pick-up and drop-off points within lay-bys for national bus services, so that they provide improved access to NMU facilities, including those to railway stations and settlements.

6.3.2 Section Specific Opportunities

The implementation of the NMU Access Strategy as part of the A9 Dualling Programme may provide scope for a number of opportunities to enhance NMU provision across the A9. Opportunities have been identified through early assessment work and consultation. Each will be considered through the design development process to confirm their feasibility and appropriateness as part of the overall scheme proposals. As design work progresses, further opportunities will be sought. Some opportunities may require delivery partners from other authorities or organisations. A selection of these potential opportunities is listed below.

Southern Section:

- To provide a new NMU path connection from Core Path DUNK/23 to NCN Route 77 at Dalguise grade separated junction by utilising the existing rail underpass connecting to the B898 and the proposed grade separated junction structure;
- To provide improved bus stop infrastructure and NMU connections associated with grade separated junction proposed at Dalguise;
- To adequately segregate the NCN Route 77 from the A9 across the River Tay crossing and provide a new connection with the B898; and
- To provide a dedicated NMU underpass at Blair Atholl to provide a safer means of accessing the path to the Tulach Hill viewpoint.

Central Section:

- To improve existing parking facilities at Balsporran;
- To provide a rest area with parking facilities on the de-trunked A889 between the new and proposed Dalwhinnie junction locations;
- To provide improved bus stop infrastructure and NMU connections associated with grade separated junctions proposed at Dalnaspidal and Dalwhinnie; and
- To provide a segregated cycle route to Aviemore from Kingussie as an alternative to the existing NCN Route 7 which currently follows the B970 (which the East Highland Way and Badenoch Way loosely follows the line of).

Northern Section:

- To improve NMU access to Craigellachie National Nature Reserve;
- To provide potential NMU access links to the Slochd Geological Conservation Review site;
- To improve NMU links between the A9 corridor, train station and village centre at Carrbridge;
- To provide more direct NMU routes between Aviemore and Carrbridge;
- To incorporate vehicle parking facilities at lay-bys or formal parking areas at Craigellachie National Nature Reserve;
- To provide bus stop links to Carrbridge, via Carrbridge railway station, where there is no stopping facility at present and the potential provision of a stopping place off the A9;
- To improve off-road sections and signage where on-road and off-road sections meet on the current NCN Route 7; and
- To provide links to the proposed southern extension of the Speyside Way long distance walk from Aviemore.

Careful consideration will be given to enhanced and safe access provision as part of developing design in consultation with potential user groups, SNH and other key stakeholders.

6.4 Constraints

6.4.1 General

There are number of spatial constraints to the provision of NMU facilities which are common throughout the A9 corridor, including:

- A9 Dual Carriageway;
- Side road network, including improvements from the A9 dualling within junction areas;
- Highland Main Line railway;
- Water bodies, including the River Tay, River Braan, River Garry, River Spey and Loch Faskally, in addition to smaller tributaries and associated flood plain;
- Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SuDS) features associated with the upgraded road network, including ponds and swales;
- Existing location of NMU facilities;
- Third party land and properties;
- Topographical features associated with the Grampian Mountains, particularly the Cairngorms and many of the hills which traverse the A9; and

- Environmentally designated sites, including:
 - SSSIs;
 - SPAs;
 - SACs;
 - Ancient Woodland;
 - National Nature Reserve;
 - Listed Buildings; and
 - Scheduled Monuments.

In order to minimise adverse impacts to environmental constraints, provision of infrastructure may need to be reduced in some areas. Consideration will need to be given to such environmental features during the design development.

6.4.2 Section Specific Constraints

Southern Section:

The main spatial constraints to NMU infrastructure provision within this section include residential and commercial properties, Shierglas Quarry and the Highland Main Line railway, including the Category A Listed Building at Dunkeld & Birnam railway station.

Specific environmental constraints within the southern section comprise of the River Tay (SAC), River Tummel (SAC), Loch Faskally (SAC), the River Garry (SAC) and their tributaries. The section also traverses two National Scenic Areas for extended sections of the route at Dunkeld and Birnam and Killiecrankie. Conservation Areas are present at Dunkeld and Birnam, Pitlochry and Blair Atholl. There are a number of gardens and designed landscapes, including Murthly Estates, The Hermitage, Blair Castle and Hercules Gardens and the Falls of Bruar. Two known battlefield locations are also present at Dunkeld and Killiecrankie.

Central Section:

The main spatial constraints to NMU infrastructure provision within this section, in addition to the A9 itself, include the Beaully-Denny powerline and the Highland Main Line railway.

There are a number of significant environmental constraints to infrastructure provision in the Central Section, including the Drumochter Hills, which is designated as an SAC, SPA and Mixed SSSI, and the River Truim, which forms part of the River Spey SAC and runs generally to the northbound side of the A9, resulting in a narrow corridor between designated sites in places.

Northern Section:

Environmental factors that may influence the provision and location of NMU access are present within this section. These include large areas of Ancient Woodland, in particular between Dalraddy and Carrbridge. There are known flood risk areas within this section, including areas to the east of the A9 around Loch Alvie, the A9 crossing of the River Dulnain west of Carrbridge, to the west of the A9 at Slochd, the A9 crossing of the River Findhorn east of Tomatin, along the River Findhorn and tributaries north of Tomatin. The A9 also crosses the River Dulnain, to the west of Carrbridge, a tributary of the River Spey and part of the River Spey SAC. Between Dalraddy and Slochd there are multiple SAC, SPA, SSSI sites, and a National Nature Reserve, some of which are in close proximity to the A9. Topographical features, such as in the Slochd area (which also supports The Slochd Geological Conservation Review site), may also present constraints to NMU provision.

7 Assessment of Access and Development of Mitigation Measures

An integral part of the DMRB process is the assessment and reporting of the impacts on all travellers, resulting from proposed route options and designs, as can be seen in Appendix A.

The development of each route option will use an iterative process, taking into account NMU journeys and will include embedded mitigation, such as underbridges, underpasses or junctions that allow safe movement of NMUs across the dualled A9.

This process will take into consideration risks, opportunities and constraints, including those demonstrated in Chapter 6, to assess the impacts on NMU routes through the DMRB Stage 2 process. A comparative assessment of the options is performed to identify a Preferred Route Option and this option will then be developed further to mitigate the identified risks to NMU routes, manage the constraints and exploit opportunities to enhance NMU provision along the A9 corridor.

Stakeholder engagement is an important element in the design process to ensure that opinions are considered throughout the development of the scheme designs and Transport Scotland and each of the three Design Consultants will continue to work with stakeholders, on issues related to NMU access.

The SEA Report states that the main principles for mitigation related to NMU access to be considered as part of the A9 Dualling Programme are as follows:

- Continue to facilitate opportunities to access visitor attractions and recreational opportunities throughout the route;
- Retain, and where possible enhance, overall connectivity between NMU routes along and across the A9 corridor;
- Incorporate effective rationalisation between NMU routes, safe crossing points and provisions for access to public transport;
- Ensure any rationalisation of NMU routes and safe crossing points is carefully considered to minimise the distance between crossings where possible;
- Design any permanent diversions in NMU routes to provide the same, or improved, standard of pathway;
- Employ a preference for underpass crossings, where feasible, to minimise landscape and visual impacts;
- Ensure compliance with Equality Act (2010) guidance in the design of crossings, lay-bys and links to path networks;

- Consider the safety and quality of experience for NMUs of local roads when vehicle access to the A9 is being rationalised (e.g. the potential for traffic increases on the cycle route network);
- Establish community liaison group(s), throughout the construction period, in order to maintain good community relations and ensure that local populations are aware of progress as regards construction;
- Schedule and control the timing of construction activities to minimise noise impacts on sensitive receptors; and
- Adopt construction and traffic management methods which, as far as possible, maintain access for road users, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians, and access to the Cairngorms National Park during construction periods.

Subsequent work in the development of the dualling schemes will take cognisance of this strategy and the principles for mitigation as outlined in the SEA Report.

7.1 Consideration of Route Sensitivity and Mitigation Measures within Scheme Assessments

7.1.1 DMRB Stage 2

Consultation will be undertaken with landowners, agricultural landowners and tenants, estates and stakeholders with commercial interests to understand access requirements and potential impacts on business activities both during construction and operation.

Consultation will also be undertaken with NMU groups, communities, local businesses and facilities to understand key NMU routes, potential impacts on routes and where NMU provision could be enhanced.

At DMRB Stage 2 a sensitivity criteria will be developed for the assessment of the impacts on access. Typically this will be based upon the following principles:

- Low sensitivity – NMU routes which have fallen in to disuse due to previous severance, are restricted by their surface or barriers exist to their use and/or consultation with NMU stakeholders indicates limited use;
- Medium sensitivity – other NMU routes which do not have any barriers to their use and are comprised of all-weather surfaces, generally NMU routes that connect with higher sensitivity routes and/or NMU stakeholders indicates moderate use; and
- High sensitivity – Public Rights of Way, Core Paths and other NMU routes serve both recreational and commuting purposes, serve all NMUs and/or NMU stakeholders indicates popular use.

At DMRB Stage 2 options are not fully developed and therefore the assessment will only detail typical mitigation measures, which could be used to keep open and free

from obstruction or encroachment any route, waterway or other means by which access rights may reasonably be exercised during construction and operation to comply with the obligations of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

This will include identifying potential locations for grade separated crossing points, lay-bys to replace existing direct access points to NMU facilities and lay-bys with parking provision.

The mitigation from DMRB Stage 2 assessment will be further developed and detailed during the DMRB Stage 3 assessment, when the Preferred Route Option is known and developed further.

7.1.2 DMRB Stage 3

DMRB Stage 3 involves the development of the Preferred Route Option identified in DMRB Stage 2. The development of the option culminates in a refined option suitable for promotion through the statutory processes. The refined option will also have fully developed mitigation to address the impacts on NMU routes.

Further consultation will be undertaken at this stage once the Preferred Route Option is identified. This will include consultation with stakeholders to discuss potential changes to existing NMU facilities and any associated journey time differences associated with rationalising crossing points. This will include the appropriateness of the proposed diversions and new NMU connections.

Consultation will also be undertaken to gain stakeholder input to the design of new and upgraded NMU facilities including the locations of lay-bys and off-line parking provision to create links to the NMU network.

At DMRB Stage 3, the assessment of the impacts on access will consider (and develop where necessary) the sensitivity criteria, as outlined above. The magnitude of any impacts will also be considered, in order to determine the significance of impact on the routes.

Measures to reduce disruption to NMU routes and access during construction will be identified in consultation with statutory stakeholders and implemented and managed by contractors. This would typically include temporary closures and alternative diversion routes, advance notifications of closures and appropriate signage. Such measures will generally be considered at construction stage and take account of mitigation committed to at DMRB Stage 3, in the Environmental Statement.

These diversions and temporary road closures will be discussed with the relevant NMU groups to develop appropriate plans and diversion routes. However, contractors will be required to maintain access for NMUs where possible.

In addition to the assessment of impacts, a Stage 1 Preliminary Design NMU Audit will be undertaken prior to the publication of draft Orders. The purpose of the audit is to verify that the design meets the objectives identified in the Audit Context Report (See Section 4.1.1) and complies with guidance in Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads (see Section 3.3.5) and Cycling by Design (see Section

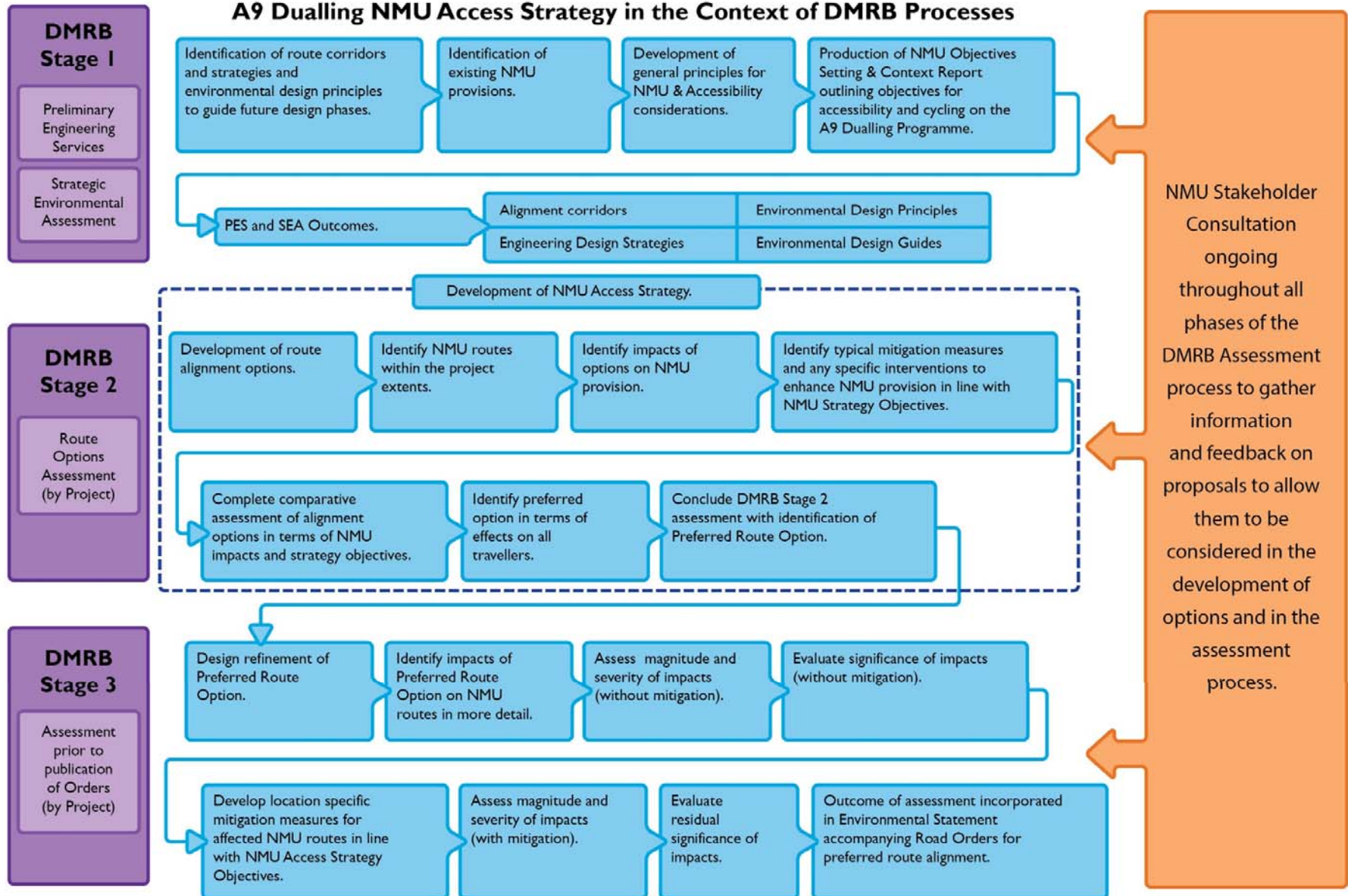
3.3.6). Where objectives have not been met the Audit Report shall document how they can be achieved or why they cannot be achieved (as a result of a constraint for example).

Each consultant is also responsible for undertaking a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit prior to the publication of draft Orders. The end of the preliminary design stage is often the last occasion at which land requirements may be changed. It is therefore essential that Stage 1 Audits considers any road safety issues which may have a bearing upon land take, licence or easement before the draft Orders are published.

Following on from DMRB Stage 3, principal constructors also have a responsibility for completing NMU and Road Safety Audits prior to construction, prior to the scheme opening and post opening.

Appendix A – A9 Dualling NMU Access Strategy in the Context of DMRB Processes

A9 Dualling NMU Access Strategy in the Context of DMRB Processes



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