

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This report presents the findings of a combined Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA) of the proposed dualling of the A9 between the Pass of Birnam and Tay Crossing, hereafter referred to as ‘the proposed scheme’. The proposed scheme is a project within the A9 Dualling programme of works between Perth and Inverness. Further information on the A9 Dualling Programme is available on the official [Transport Scotland](#) website (Transport Scotland, 2025a) and the [A9 Dualling](#) website (Transport Scotland 2025b).
- 1.1.2 The proposed scheme as reported in this assessment has been developed to Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) ‘Stage 3’ level of design and is accompanied by various social and environmental impact assessments, including this EqIA and FSDA, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Assessments undertaken prior to Stage 3 for the proposed scheme include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Habitats Regulation Appraisal and a Wellbeing Assessment (as part of the Stage 2 Environmental Assessment).
- 1.1.3 The following appendices support this report and are cross referenced where relevant:
- Appendix A (Screening)
 - Appendix B (Forum Members)

1.2 Background and Need for the Proposed Scheme

- 1.2.1 The A9 Dualling programme was founded in the Scottish Government’s Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) in December 2011 (Scottish Government, 2011) which included the commitment to upgrade the A9 trunk road to dual carriageway between Perth and Inverness. The [Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) (STPR) (Transport Scotland, 2008) identified specific trunk road interventions, including upgrading the A9 between Dunblane and Inverness (Intervention 16) as a targeted infrastructure improvement, and, in particular, a requirement to dual the 129km stretch of the A9 between Perth and Inverness. The Scottish Government’s investment plans have continued to evolve since the IIP in December 2011, alongside which has been the on-going commitment to deliver the A9 dualling programme, with a revised [delivery plan](#) laid out by the Scottish Government in December 2023 (Transport Scotland, 2023).
- 1.2.2 The A9 trunk road forms a strategic link on Scotland’s transport network, between central Scotland and the north of Scotland. The A9 trunk road commences at Keir Roundabout, near Dunblane and stretches 399km to the north coast of Scotland at Thurso. From where the A9 meets the M9 at Dunblane to the Pass of Birnam, the A9 is currently dual carriageway, following the completion of the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section of the A9 Dualling programme in 2021. From the Pass of Birnam onwards, the road changes to predominantly single carriageway, interspersed with sections of dual carriageway and wide single 2+1 carriageway (sections of two lanes of travel in one direction and a single lane of traffic in the opposite direction).

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- 1.2.3 The existing A9 is a vital link used by local and long-distance traffic. It is a major bus route and is used by freight traffic supporting key industries, such as food and drink, oil, energy, waste and construction. The route is also used by tourists as a means of reaching locations in Perthshire and the Highlands, which during the summer months and holiday periods when traffic volumes tend to be higher, has led to an increase in driver stress. The non-dualled sections of the A9 present a lack of safe overtaking opportunities, which has led to a number of serious accidents, including some fatalities. Additionally, when accidents do occur, there is a lack of alternative diversion routes which causes severe delays. It is considered that the dualling upgrade of the A9 would help assist economic growth in the north of Scotland (particularly for food and drink, tourism, energy, life sciences and forestry industries), improve journey times, reduce driver stress and increase safety (Transport Scotland, 2016a).
- 1.2.4 The objectives of 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 by:
 - reducing accident severity; and
 - reducing driver stress.
 - To facilitate active travel within the corridor.
 - To improve integration with Public Transport Facilities.

1.3 Proposed Scheme Description

- 1.3.1 The proposed scheme comprises dualling of approximately 8.4 km of the A9, tying into the existing dual carriageway to the south (the previously completed Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section of the A9 Dualling programme) and the Tay Crossing to Ballinluig section to the north. The dualling of this section of the A9 will be achieved through a combination of widening and upgrades to the existing A9 carriageway and incorporates the following features:
- one grade separated junction with full movements at Dalguise;
 - one grade separated junction with restricted movements at Birnam;
 - one at-grade roundabout at Dunkeld;
 - three left-in left-out junctions providing maintenance access for Dunkeld & Birnam Station and Network Rail assets, access to The Hermitage, and access to Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) features and farmland at Dalguise;
 - one pedestrian underpass connecting Dunkeld & Birnam Station to the replacement car park in Birnam;

- revisions to local access; and
- upgrade to existing road drainage and treatment.

1.4 Purpose and Structure of this EqIA and FSDA Report

- 1.4.1 This report has been prepared to identify and address the proposed scheme's potential impacts on different groups, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (see Section 2). It has also actively considered how to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage to demonstrate Transport Scotland's due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD) (information regarding the legislation and policy underpinning the PSED and FSD is provided below in Section 2)
- 1.4.2 The sections within this report include:
- Section 1: summarises the various impact assessments undertaken and background to the A9 Dualling Programme and A9 Dualling: Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing. Provides a description of the proposed scheme. Sets out the purpose and structure of this report.
 - Section 2: provides detail on the legislative context for this EqIA and FSDA.
 - Section 3: presents a baseline summary identifying the study area and the socio-economic background and protected characteristics groups that are present and relevant to the proposed scheme.
 - Section 4: describes the stakeholder engagement and consultation approach undertaken.
 - Section 5: describes the approach to this assessment.
 - Section 6: assesses the potential impacts identified for the proposed scheme.
 - Section 7: provides a conclusion summary and any action plan.
 - Section 8: provides references.
- 1.4.3 Appendix A in this report provides the Equality Impact and FSD screening undertaken prior to the assessment to establish which groups are relevant and which impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed scheme.

2. Legal Context

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 As a public body, Transport Scotland has a legal responsibility when creating new plans and policies to pay due regard to the PSED (Government Equalities Office et al, 2023), included within the Equality Act 2010. Transport Scotland also has a legal responsibility to consider the supplementary legislation of The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 as amended, and to pay due regard to the FSD (Scottish Government, 2022a).

2.2 Equality Act 2010

2.2.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people, in the workplace and wider society, from direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Act sets out protections for people with the following nine 'protected characteristics':

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

Public Sector Equality Duty

2.2.2 Section 149 of the Act sets out the PSED aims, which requires public bodies, such as Transport Scotland to have due regard to three specific needs:

'- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the Act

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic' (Government Equalities Office et al, 2023)

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2.2.3 The three aims of the duty apply to all the above protected characteristics, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership because the parts of the Act covering services and public functions, premises and education do not apply to that protected characteristic. Therefore, the marriage and civil partnership protected characteristic is not considered as part of this assessment.

Scottish Specific Duties

2.2.4 In addition, Scotland has introduced specific duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, commonly referred to as the 'Scottish Specific Duties'. These provide a framework to enable public authorities to better perform their PSED, through enhanced data collection and evaluation, and greater transparency and accountability.

Fairer Scotland Duty

2.2.5 Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the FSD which came into force in April 2018. The FSD aims to reduce inequalities of outcomes caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions or developing policy. The FSD looks at socio-economic disadvantage, which can broadly be defined as:

“living on a low income compared to others in Scotland, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Socioeconomic disadvantage can be experienced in both places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion.” (Scottish Government, 2022a)

2.2.6 This differs from the PSED which considers only reducing inequalities of opportunity. The FSD identifies a need to consider both 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest' in terms of people who share an experience and are particularly impacted by socio-economic disadvantage (Scottish Government, 2022a). 'Communities of place' refers to people bound together because of where they reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a continuous amount of time. 'Communities of interest' are groups of people who share an experience. For example, demographic groups who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 can be considered 'communities of interest'. Those who share particular protected characteristics are often at higher risk of socio-economic disadvantage, meaning there is a direct link between the FSD and the PSED.

3. Approach to the EqIA and FSDA

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 This assessment covers the following stages:

- Screening– identifying where policy or practice may result in impacts (see Appendix A).
- Assessment and Evidence – data gathering and assessment to understand and address potential impacts.
- Action Plan – setting out identified actions and recommendations to implement to reduce potential impacts and improve outcomes.

3.2 Screening

3.2.1 Appendix A: Screening has used a series of questions to guide the assessment and ensure all disproportionate or different impacts as a result of the proposed scheme on protected characteristic groups and socio-economically disadvantaged people are considered. The screening is also used as a tool to screen out certain groups and impacts that are not relevant to the proposed scheme to ensure that the assessment remains proportionate.

3.3 Assessment of Impacts

3.3.1 This report assesses the potential impacts on protected characteristic groups and socio-economically disadvantaged people for the proposed scheme so as to meet the requirements of the PSED and the FSD.

3.3.2 The assessment has been conducted using information gathered from a literature review, desk-based analysis, and consultation and stakeholder engagement. Using professional judgement, this information has been used to identify and provide evidence of potential disproportionate and/or differential impacts on protected characteristic groups and socio-economically disadvantaged people. Disproportionate and differential impacts are defined as follows:

- Disproportionate impact: Where there is likely to be a proportionately greater impact on protected characteristic or socio-economically disadvantaged groups than on the general population.
- Differential impact: Where members of a protected characteristic or socio-economically disadvantaged group are likely to be affected differently because of specific needs or a recognised vulnerability.

3.3.3 The following questions have been used to guide the assessment and determine whether the proposed scheme meets the requirements, based on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Assessing impact and the equality duty'](#) guidance:

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- Would the proposed scheme result in disproportionate or differential impacts for particular groups?
- Would the proposed scheme remove or minimise disadvantage for, or encourage increased participation of, particular groups?
- Would the proposed scheme impact relations between different groups?
- Does the proposed scheme build in reasonable adjustments where these may be needed?

3.4 Action Plan

- 3.4.1 The action plan has identified actions and recommendations that are proposed to mitigate differential and/or disproportionate impacts to the identified groups. Recommendations may include adjusting aspects of the proposed scheme or its methods.
- 3.4.2 The action plan also provides details of monitoring activities to ensure recommendations are implemented effectively. If recommendations are found to be ineffective, they should be revisited and revised accordingly.

4. Baseline Summary

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The baseline for this assessment includes evidence on groups living, working, visiting or travelling through the area. Evidence from research, information gathered during consultation, and a range of relevant desk-based study data gathered from the Scotland's 2022 Census, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and other referenced sources related to protected characteristics and socio-economically disadvantaged groups covered by this assessment has been used to identify the key issues.
- 4.1.2 Appendix A (Screening) provides a high-level summary that identifies the likely impacts, and relevant protected characteristics and vulnerable groups, associated with the design and development of the proposed scheme. This exercise has allowed impacts related to the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race and religion to be screened out from the assessment.
- 4.1.3 The following are considered within the baseline summary:
- Existing transport network.
 - Age.
 - Disability.
 - Pregnancy and maternity.
 - Sex.
 - Socio-economic disadvantage (FSD).
- 4.1.4 It is important to note that the pregnancy and maternity and sex protected characteristic groups are both covered within Section 4.6 due to the crossover in their baseline to avoid duplication of text. In addition, socio-economic disadvantage is discussed within each of the protected group characteristic sections (4.4 – 4.6) as a result of its interconnected nature. Evidence used under each of the protected group characteristic sections regarding socio-economic disadvantage will not be repeated in Section 4.7 to avoid duplication.

4.2 Study Area

- 4.2.1 The proposed scheme lies within the Perth and Kinross local authority. For analysis, a 'study area' has been used with a particular focus on the following communities which coincide with a 500m buffer of the proposed scheme: Birnam, Little Dunkeld, Dunkeld and Inver. The study area covers the Luncarty & Dunkeld Intermediate Zone which is comprised of the 2011 data zones of S01012007 and S01012008 (see Image 4.1). Data zones are composed of Census Output Areas large enough to present statistics accurately without fear of disclosure and small enough that they can be used to represent communities. The intermediate zone and the 2011 data zones were

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selected to ensure consistency and comparability of data with the SIMD which also uses the 2011 Data Zones.

- 4.2.2 Visitors and those travelling through the area, such as people from smaller settlements in the wider area e.g. Dalmarnock and Dalguise who may access facilities within Dunkeld, Little Dunkeld, Birnam and Inver, and tourists are considered in the assessment.

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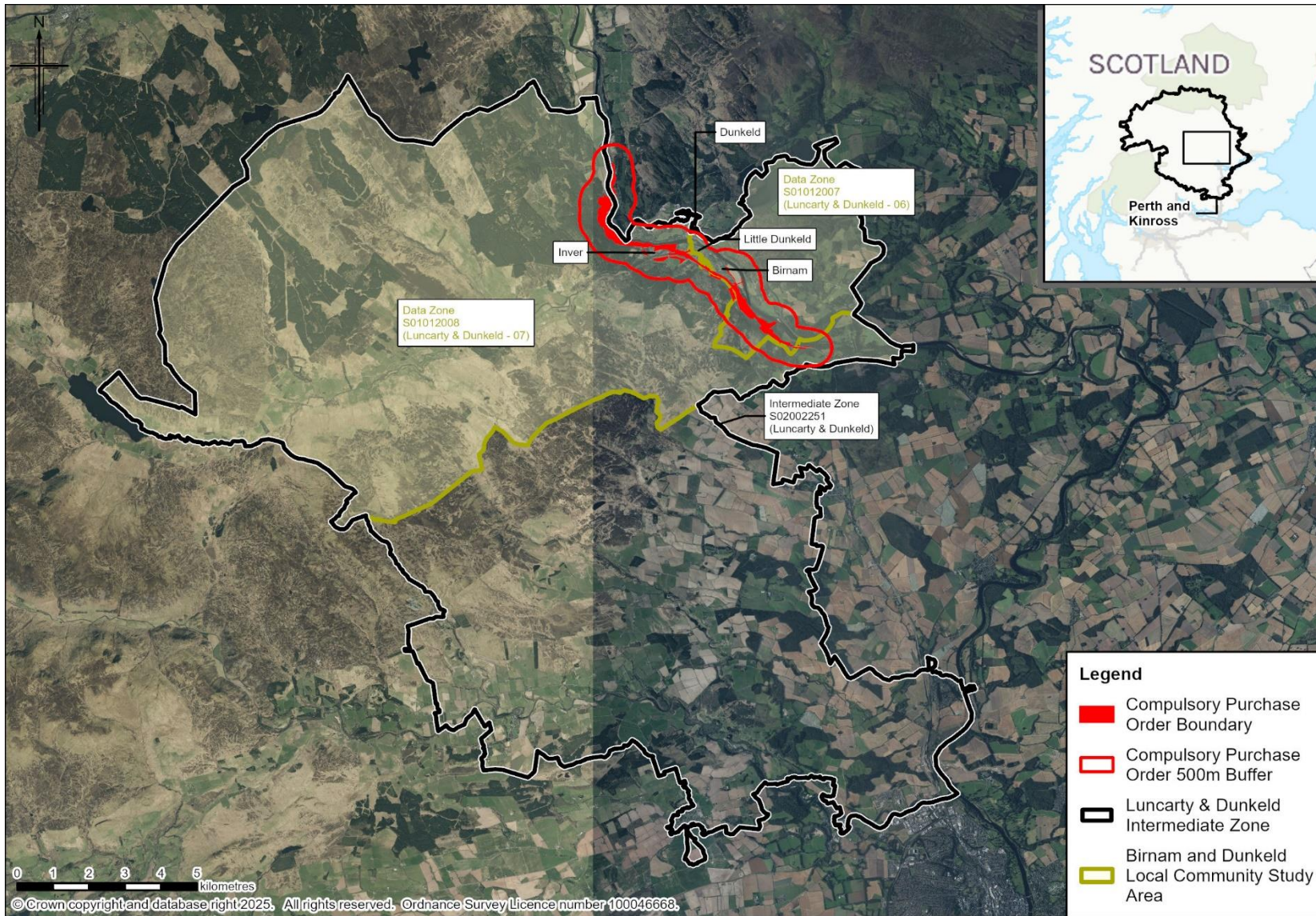


Image 4.1: Study Area and Compulsory Purchase Order Boundary of the Proposed Scheme

4.3 Existing Transport Network

- 4.3.1 There are 33 paths designated as core paths (Perth and Kinross Council, 2017), eight paths designated as Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (Scotways, 2024), and a designated National Cycle Route (NCR77) and Regional Cycle Route (RCR83) (Sustrans, 2025). There are also 20 undesignated local paths, and 170 mountain biking trails (Trailforks, 2021), with a high concentration of these trails around The Hermitage, Tay Forest Park and Inver. Traffic-free parts of the routes exist in small sections but for longer travel between settlements and towns, it is necessary to travel on-road.
- 4.3.2 Dunkeld and Birnam are well connected to Perth, Pitlochry, Edinburgh and Inverness by bus and train. [Traveline Scotland](#) (2024) shows that local bus services operate Monday to Sunday (approximately every hour to two hours) between Perth and Aberfeldy, with other services to Blairgowrie running four times daily (Monday to Friday). There are also two Megabus routes, one that operates one service toward Inverness and one service toward Perth/Glasgow/Edinburgh daily and the other that operates one service toward Inverness and one service toward Perth/Edinburgh daily. There are also other long distance coach services operated by Fishers Tours running on a fortnightly basis during the tourist season (March to October).
- 4.3.3 The platforms at Dunkeld & Birnam Station were too low for the on train ramp and sat at a very steep angle which made it unsuitable for any mobility impaired passengers. This meant that passengers needed to be assisted off the train at Perth, if heading north, and Pitlochry, if heading south, and then get a taxi to Dunkeld. Network Rail undertook improvements at Dunkeld & Birnam Station include raising sections of Platform 1 and Platform 2 to provide step free train to platform access. These improvements commenced in January 2025 and were completed in May 2025. Network Rail are also developing associated proposals to provide step free access between Platform 1 and Platform 2 via ramps and footways linking to Birnam Glen Road.
- 4.3.4 Existing Scotrail services run hourly up until 10pm Monday to Saturday with irregular services on Sundays, with the latest service to Perth at 7pm (ScotRail, 2025).
- 4.3.5 [Community transport services](#) are operated in the area, such as the Craigvinean Surgery Hospital Cars service which offers transport to and from medical appointments at nominal cost for patients who cannot supply their own and are not easily able to use public transport (Perth and Kinross Council, 2025). However, coverage by community transport services is limited, with membership often required.

4.4 Age

- 4.4.1 According to the [2022 Scottish Census](#), the population of the study area (2011 data zones of S01012007 and S01012008) was 1,773 (Scotland's Census, 2022a). The overall population of the study area is older than average for Scotland, with 27% of the population aged over 65 years, compared to the national average of 20%. The percentage of children under 16 years old is also lower than average for Scotland, with 14.3% of the population in the study area aged under 16 compared with the national average of 16.4%.

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- 4.4.2 Older and younger people are often more dependent on public transport (Government Office for Science, 2019), particularly in rural areas and for those without access to a car, to access education, jobs, essential services, and social networks. Accessibility is particularly important for older people to access essential services such as medical appointments and social activities. Accessibility for children and young people and can also help improve educational outcomes and future prospects.
- 4.4.3 Lack of transport can reduce opportunities for independence and the ability to access social networks. Social isolation is linked to negative health outcomes, such as depression and other mental health issues. Graham et al (2018) highlight the necessity of older people in rural areas being able to travel – whether by car, public transport or on foot – and the impacts this can have on their quality of life
- 4.4.4 Affordable transport is essential for young people and older people (Shergold and Parkhurst, 2012; Government Office for Science, 2019) to be able to access transport. This is particularly important for those from low-income families or those on fixed incomes. Better affordability and accessibility of transport can help make opportunities more equitable regardless of someone’s socio-economic status.
- 4.4.5 According to the [Scottish Public Health Observatory’s \(ScotPHO\) Profiles Tool](#) (2025), for most of the health and socio-economic indicator scores within the children and young people profile for the study area, the scores are not statistically different to the national average. Additionally, in 2023, there were no young people (aged 0-25 years) living in the most income deprived quintile in the Luncarty and Dunkeld intermediate zone. This aligns with the SIMD data for the study area indicating that the percentage of the general population in the study area who are income deprived is also lower than the national average (Scottish Government, 2020).
- 4.4.6 However, there is one indicator within the children and young people profile for the study area which scores worse than the national average, this being the proportion of young people (aged 0-25) years living in the most access deprived quintile (ScotPHO, 2025). This also aligns with the geographic access domain SIMD data for the study area, which shows that the S01012007 data zone scores within the most deprived 10% and S01012008 scores within the most deprived 20% within Scotland overall (Scottish Government, 2020). The average drive time to a secondary school in minutes is the worst ranked indicator within the geographic access domain for both data zones. It should however be noted that the data zone covered for S01012008 covers an expansive area and contains small, isolated communities that are located some distance from Inver and Little Dunkeld and the location of the proposed scheme (see Image 4.1).
- 4.4.7 During consultation August to September 2024 with the Royal School of Dunkeld, Pitlochry High School and Breadalbane Academy it was identified that students use the A9 daily/frequently via bus, car, cycling or walking to visit friends and family, access the railway station, school, shops, clubs, after school activities and entertainment facilities (particularly in Perth at the weekend). However, students also voiced safety concerns around crossing the A9 due to witnessing accidents and concerns of dangerous driving. Safety is a key issue for children with regards to transport. In Scotland, children accounted for 10% of all road casualties overall and 28% of all pedestrian casualties in 2023 (Transport Scotland, 2024). Older people can also experience higher safety risks, with most pedestrians killed in Scotland in 2023 aged 60 or over.

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4.4.8 Environmental impacts, particularly road noise and air quality impacts can disproportionately affect children and older people due to children's developing systems and the higher likelihood of older adults having pre-existing health conditions. Traffic-related noise is associated with adverse health outcomes, including cardiovascular and mental health issues (World Health Organization (WHO), 2024). There is strong evidence that long-term exposure to outdoor air pollution suppresses normal lung function growth in children (The Royal College of Physicians, 2016) and highly suggestive evidence that exposure to air pollution early in life might contribute to the development of asthma throughout childhood and adolescence (Gehring et al, 2015). Research has also shown that there is an association between nitrogen dioxide exposure and cognitive function which suggests that traffic-related air pollution may have an adverse effect on neurodevelopment, particularly when exposed early in life (Freire et al, 2010). There is also some evidence to suggest that noise exposure can be associated with behavioural problems in children (Hahad et al, 2025). Older people are more vulnerable to the effects of noise and air pollution compared to the overall population. Evidence suggests that increased air pollution exposure in older people is associated with increased mortality for cardio-pulmonary or respiratory causes and higher incidence of respiratory diseases (Simoni et al, 2015). Research also suggests that there is a strong association between daytime road traffic noise and an increased risk of stroke in older people (Halonen et al, 2015).

4.5 Disability

4.5.1 According to the 2022 Scottish Census, the proportion of people who have a long-term illness, disease or condition in the study area (2011 data zones of S01012007 and S01012008) was 21.2% (Scotland's Census, 2022c). This proportion is around the average for Scotland (21.4%) overall. Looking at the breakdown of conditions the study area has a higher proportion of people who are deaf or partially hearing impaired (8.7%) and blind or partially vision impaired (3.1%) when compared to the national average of 7.1% and 2.5% respectively. This is not unexpected since age is a risk factor for these conditions and there is a higher proportion of older people in the study area (Fuller-Thomson et al, 2022).

4.5.2 The proportion of people within the study area who have their day-to-day activities limited in some capacity by a disability (24.0%) is around the average for Scotland (24.1%) (Scotland's Census, 2022b). Although the proportion of people whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot (9.9%) is lower than the national average (10.8%), the proportion of people whose day-to-day activities are limited a little (14.2%) is higher than Scotland's average (13.3%).

4.5.3 Disabled people are more likely to rely on public transport to access education, jobs, essential services, and social networks (International Transport Forum, 2017). Currently, road access to the Dunkeld & Birnam Station is directly off the A9 and a car park (30 spaces – no blue badge spaces) are available. Pedestrian access is via Birnam Glen, which is part of National Cycle Network Route (NCR) 77. This route crosses the A9 via an underpass and access from Birnam Glen to the station itself involves steps and is not suitable for users of wheelchairs or some people with mobility impairment. During consultation, there were several comments regarding disabled accessibility to and around the station. In addition, the station had low platforms, making it unsuitable for any mobility impaired passengers, as the platforms were too low for the on train ramp and sits at a

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very steep angle. As a result, passengers needed to be assisted off the train at Perth and/or Pitlochry and get a taxi to Dunkeld. This has been addressed through platform raising works undertaken by Network Rail and completed in May 2025.

- 4.5.4 Individuals who live in households with a disabled person are more likely to experience income poverty than those without (Department for Work and Pensions, 2025) and face a higher risk of poverty, related with increased costs associated with disability and barriers to travel, work and education (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2025). Although the study area is not considered to be income deprived, it is considered to be access deprived (how well individuals in an area can access essential services, including but not limited to, healthcare, education, and transportation) (Scottish Government, 2020) (see Section 4.7) which can disproportionately affect disabled people due to them already facing barriers to travel. This is particularly relevant to rural areas which tend to have reduced public transport availability and reliability and disabled people who are less likely to live in a household with a car available for private use (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). Additionally, people who have disabilities are more likely to experience road traffic injuries (WHO, 2022).
- 4.5.5 Environmental impacts, particularly road noise and air quality impacts can disproportionately affect disabled people. Traffic-related noise is associated with adverse health outcomes, including cardiovascular and mental health issues (WHO, 2024). Research shows that individuals with pre-existing cardiovascular and respiratory conditions are at increased risk of some cardiovascular diseases after exposure to air pollution (Public Health England, 2018). There is also evidence that both noise annoyance and noise levels are associated with exacerbation of asthma in adults (Eze et al, 2018).

4.6 Pregnancy and Maternity and Sex

- 4.6.1 According to the 2022 Scottish Census, 53.0% of the population in the study area is female and 46.9% is male. Compared to the national average (51.4% female) there is a slightly higher proportion of females in the study area.
- 4.6.2 Women typically experience a disproportionate burden of care work and lower incomes and employment opportunities (Transform Scotland, 2024). As a result, women are more likely to rely on walking and buses. However, for many women in Scotland, particularly in rural areas, car travel is viewed as the only viable option due to lack of public transport, lower reliability and increased time required to travel by public transport, work patterns and multiple stops between work and/or caring responsibilities, or public transport costing more than driving (Scottish Women's Budget Group, 2023). Currently, pedestrian access to Dunkeld & Birnam Station involves steps and is not suitable for people using pushchairs which presents access issues.
- 4.6.3 Access issues and other barriers such as safety concerns around inadequate infrastructure (Sustrans, 2018) i.e. lack of separation between paths/cycleways and roads, and fear of violence or harassment with public transport can impact the way in which, and ability of, women to travel (Scottish Women's Budget Group, 2023). Safety concerns can also impact uptake of active travel, with women and people travelling with young children or whilst pregnant more vulnerable to road accidents (Transport Scotland, 2024).

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4.6.4 Environmental impacts, particularly road noise and air quality impacts can disproportionately affect people who are pregnant. Research suggests that exposure to both air pollution and noise may affect birth weight (Gehring et al, 2014; Nyadanu et al, 2022). There is also research that suggests that exposure to higher levels of ozone and primary traffic non-exhaust related particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or smaller (PM_{2.5}) could increase the risk of preterm birth and stillbirth. The research also suggests a possible relationship between long-term traffic noise and increased risk of preterm birth (Smith et al, 2020).

4.7 Socio-economic Disadvantage

4.7.1 Socio-economic disadvantage may be observed in groups of people who share a common experience, known as communities of interest, including those with protected characteristics as described in Section 4.4 - 4.6.

4.7.2 Regarding communities of place, the study area is not considered to be income deprived, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones ranking within the 40% and 30% least income deprived in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020). However, it is important to recognise that there could still be some deprived people living in the least income deprived areas.

4.7.3 Although the area is not considered income deprived, wealth inequality is known to be more severe than income inequality. However, statistics show that people who are nearing retirement, retired and/or are highly qualified are more likely to be the wealthiest (Scottish Government, 2022b). These considerations make low wealth an unlikely issue for the majority of people in the study area. However, as with low income, it is important to recognise that there could still be some wealth deprived people living in the area.

4.7.4 The study area is considered to be access deprived according to the SIMD ranking, which considers factors like distance to essential services (e.g. healthcare, shopping, public transport) and the availability of those services. The S01012007 and S01012008 data zones rank within the 40% and 20% most access deprived in Scotland respectively. Reduced access to opportunities for employment, training or education may inhibit more deprived households from improving their situation.

4.7.5 According to '[Transport's Role in Creating a Fairer, Healthier Country](#)' (Marmot et al, 2024) and '[Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System](#)' (Lucas et al, 2019), there are key challenges associated with transport and inequality. This is particularly important for more vulnerable groups.

- Accessibility – For those without access to a car, particularly for vulnerable groups and for those in rural areas, an accessible transport network is essential to access education, jobs, essential services, and social networks. Where there is poor transport accessibility, people can be prevented from accessing employment and education opportunities, which can negatively impact their quality of life. Lack of accessible transport options can also prevent people accessing essential services, which can lead to reduced quality of life and negative health outcomes.

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- Social isolation – lack of transport options can reduce opportunities for independence and the ability to access social networks. Social isolation is linked to negative health outcomes, such as depression and other mental health issues.
- Air and noise pollution – Air and noise pollution is linked to negative health outcomes, such as increased risk of heart disease, stroke, and respiratory problems (European Environment Agency, 2018), and increased health inequalities in more deprived areas.
- Active travel – increased active travel opportunities can have positive physical and mental health outcomes and offer more affordable alternatives to other forms of transport.
- Affordability – affordable transport is essential for people to be able to access transport for the reasons outlined above. This is particularly important for those from low-income families or those on fixed incomes. Better affordability and accessibility of transport can help make opportunities more equitable regardless of someone’s socio-economic status.

4.7.6 According to the 2022 census, of those who work, most people work from home (41.1%), with the second most common method of travel to work being driving a car or van (40.4%), followed by travelling on foot (10%) (Scotland’s census, 2022h). In rural areas, car travel is often viewed as the most viable option due to lack of public transport, lower reliability and increased time required to travel by public transport, or public transport costing more than driving. This can result in ‘forced car ownership’, resulting in some households stretching their budgets to retain a car (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). This can also disproportionately impact those who face barriers to car access, such as disabled people, women, people who are pregnant or have just given birth, older people and those who are unemployed.

5. Stakeholder Engagement

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 There has been extensive stakeholder engagement throughout the design process for the proposed scheme in order to provide early opportunities for opinions to inform the proposed scheme as it has developed.
- 5.1.2 Consultation for the proposed scheme has been undertaken in line with Transport Scotland's guide: '[A9 Dualling Programme Engaging with Communities](#)' (Transport Scotland, 2013 and 2016 update), and guidance provided in [Revision 1 of Planning Advice Note \(PAN\) 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment](#) (Scottish Government, 2017).
- 5.1.3 [Consultation reports and materials](#) can be found on the Transport Scotland website.
- 5.1.4 An important central resource for the public, media and all stakeholders to access up to date information is the A9 dualling website (Transport Scotland, 2025b). The website provides up to date information for all sections of the A9 Dualling Project and provides opportunity to use online feedback mechanisms, including an email enquiry and response service.

5.2 Stakeholder Forums

- 5.2.1 A number of stakeholder forums were set up to bring together groups of similar interest and to facilitate two-way flow of information for the A9 Dualling Project (details of forum members are included in Appendix B: Forum Membership). These forums were as follows:
- Environmental Steering Group and the Environmental Forum, which allowed environmental issues associated with the dualling programme to be fully considered and agreed through the design process.
 - A forum which allowed direct engagement to gather views of walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding stakeholders on specific matters relating to the development of the design of the each of the A9 dualling projects. This was previously called the Non-Motorised User (NMU) Forum but is now being referred to as the Walker, Wheeler, Cyclist and Horse-rider (WCH) Forum to reflect the change of terminology now applied by the DMRB.
 - An Accessibility Forum was set up to establish a collaborative and inclusive approach in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the A9 dualling proposals, aiming to create environments that can be used by everyone, regardless of age or disability, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2.2 Some meetings were convened jointly with the WCH and Accessibility Forums due to the overlapping interests of the groups.

5.3 Consultation Activities

- 5.3.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), published in 2013, involved extensive consultation, the output from which has been reviewed and taken into account in the design of the proposed scheme.
- 5.3.2 In December 2012, community consultation was undertaken through a series of exhibitions on the A9 Dualling between Perth and Inverness to inform a Preliminary Engineering Services (PES) study. Further public exhibitions were held in June 2013 to provide an update on the A9 PES and SEA Commissions and the progress of the A9 Dualling projects between Perth and Inverness.
- 5.3.3 Following initial identification of route options to be considered at DMRB Stage 2, in Autumn 2016 Transport Scotland undertook an A9 Co-Creative Process with the local community. The process was open to the general public, with the key contributors forming part of the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group, which was involved in each stage of the Co-Creative process. This commenced in January 2018 and concluded in July 2018 with the identification of the Community's Preferred Route Option.
- 5.3.4 Community engagement events were then held on 26 and 27 March 2019 in the Birnam Arts Centre, to let local communities and road users see the work that had taken place since the co-creative process identified the Community's Preferred Route Option. As part of that work, the various elements of the community option had been examined in consultation with local residents living close to the A9 and key stakeholders.
- 5.3.5 From an accessibility and walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riders (WCH) perspective, the stakeholders invited to the March 2019 events included, in alphabetical order, The British Horse Society, ByCycle – The Perth and Kinross Cycle Campaign, Cycling Scotland, The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, John Muir Trust, Living Streets Scotland, Mobility and Access Committee Scotland, People Friendly Design, Perth and Kinross Outdoor Access Forum, Perth and Kinross Council Community Greenspace, Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, Scottish Disability Equality Forum, Scotways (The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society) and Sustrans.
- 5.3.6 Further community drop in events were held on 16 and 17 May 2019 in the Birnam Arts Centre, providing local communities and road users with an update on the design process, showing a number of whole route options which were developed using the options shown in March 2019.
- 5.3.7 Alongside the stakeholders invited in March 2019, additional accessibility-related invitees to the May 2019 events included, in alphabetical order, the Cyclists' Touring Club (now known as Cycling UK), the Forestry Commission (now Forestry and Land Scotland and Scottish Forestry), the Forestry Commission (Perth and Argyll Conservancy), the Highland Cycle Campaign, Highland Perthshire Cycling, Living Streets Scotland, Paths for All, Ramblers Scotland, Rambling Scotland, Scottish Orienteering Association, Scottish Outdoor Access Network, The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, and Sustrans Perth and Inverness Volunteer Group.

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- 5.3.8 An announcement of the Preferred Route Option was made on 20 December 2023, and public exhibitions were held at Birnam Arts and Conference Centre, Station Road, PH8 0DS between 11am and 8pm on Monday 29 January 2024 and between 10am and 6pm on Tuesday 30 January 2024. An online exhibition, which included information on the preferred route option and how it was chosen, was available from 20 December 2023 to 17 March 2024, and invited the public and stakeholders to leave feedback. The event was hosted by Transport Scotland and Jacobs and attended by around 200 people, with around 2,000 visits to the online exhibition. Following the conclusion on the in-person public exhibition, a feedback box remained in Birnam Arts until the formal closing of the consultation period on Sunday 17 March 2024. Feedback forms were also left next to this box and were continuously replenished. People also had opportunity to provide feedback by email or via forms on-line. The virtual exhibition also remained live until Sunday 17 March 2024.
- 5.3.9 On 23 April 2024, a combined WCH and Accessibility Forum meeting was organised between Transport Scotland and the Perth and Kinross Outdoor Access Forum, attended by Disability Beyond Borders and representatives of Perth and Kinross Council/ Sustrans, Perth and Kinross Council Community Greenspace, Perth and Kinross Council Roads, Ramblers Scotland, the British Horse Society and ByCycle.
- 5.3.10 Further in-person community engagement events for the proposed scheme were held in the Birnam Arts and Conference Centre between 11am and 8pm on Wednesday 21 and between 10am and 6pm on Thursday 22 August 2024. These events were hosted by Transport Scotland and Jacobs and were attended by around 200 people. An accompanying virtual exhibition, with the same information as shown at the community engagement events, was available from 21 August to 6 October 2024, and was viewed by around 2,000 people. These events let local communities and road users see the work that had taken place since the preferred route option for the scheme was announced in December 2023. This work included details on access and side road arrangements, facilities for walkers, wheelers, cyclists and horse-riders, drainage design, and access and car park proposals at Dunkeld and Birnam Railway Station.
- 5.3.11 Engagement centred on children and young people was also conducted on Tuesday 27 August and Tuesday 3 September 2024. Three schools were chosen to take part in this engagement based on their proximity to the scheme and their prior engagement with the Academy9 programme.
- 5.3.12 On 14 February 2025, a further combined WCH and Accessibility Forum meeting was organised between Transport Scotland, Perth and Kinross Council and the Perth and Kinross Outdoor Access Forum, attended by a councillor and representatives from Perth and Kinross Council, Strathearn Rural & Riders Access Group/the British Horse Society, and the Chairman of the local branch of the Royal Highland Education Trust.

5.4 Accessibility

- 5.4.1 Promotion of the most recent consultation in 2024 was done through multiple avenues to ensure as many people as possible were informed of and able to access the consultation. These included:

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- Emails to businesses and community stakeholders who previously requested to be kept informed of the project's progress.
- The A9 Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing Story Map (a webpage that provides an overview of the Preferred Route selection process) includes a latest news page, which continues to be updated, and directed site visitors to the online feedback form, the Virtual Exhibition and provided the details for the in-person events.
- Transport Scotland issued a press release to national and local media. This was also hosted on Transport Scotland's website and was shared across Transport Scotland's social media channels.
- Transport Scotland's designated A9 Dualling website hosts updates to the whole programme via the A9 Dualling Engage page.
- Physical advertising materials were distributed around Dunkeld, Birnam and Perth, including the Community Engagement Event Brochure which contained information presented at the virtual exhibition and in-person events, a leaflet providing a QR code to the virtual exhibition and information on the in person events, and a larger poster sharing the same information as the leaflet.

5.4.2 An inclusive approach was undertaken to consultation activities including:

- Providing information in plain English and available in a variety of formats.
- Ensuring the consultation venue (Birnam Arts and Conference Centre) was accessible.
- Stakeholders were able to provide feedback through three different channels, including using the online feedback form, submitting a physical feedback form, or emailing a copy to a dedicated A9 Dualling inbox.
- Stakeholders could choose to attend multiple different types of consultation event, both in-person and virtually. In person events were attended by Transport Scotland and Jacobs staff who were available to discuss the design and answer any questions.
- A dedicated webpage for the consultation events was made available to further increase accessibility. Consultation materials and published documents are also published on the Transport Scotland webpage.

6. Equality Impacts

6.1 Would the proposed scheme result in disproportionate or differential impacts for particular groups?

- 6.1.1 The feedback and findings from the consultation and stakeholder engagement activities have helped to inform the development of the design and mitigation for the proposed scheme to avoid or reduce potential impacts on local communities. Additionally, this engagement has provided evidence of the key concerns of the local community surrounding the proposed scheme which has informed the EqIA.
- 6.1.2 A number of impacts have been identified in the EIAR which have the potential for disproportionate or differential impacts on particular groups. Most of the impacts would be temporary and related to the construction stage, although some permanent, operational impacts have been identified. This section considers the potential impacts associated with the proposed scheme before mitigation. The embedded and specific mitigation measures put in place to mitigate and adjust for each of these impacts is discussed in Section 6.4. Standard good practice mitigation is not discussed in Section 6.4 as it has not been considered as an adjustment.
- 6.1.3 The proposed scheme has the potential to result in temporary negligible or low risk dust impacts for human health during construction and an increase of pollutants during operation for a minority of the population. On the basis of the findings in Chapter 18: Human Health of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) it can be assumed that, for the vulnerable group population who are more susceptible to changes in air quality, such as children, older people, disabled people and/or people who are pregnant, there is the potential for a low magnitude of change. This could result in a minor negative impact on the basis that they are more susceptible to minor changes. Although there are no significant effects anticipated, project-specific mitigation for air quality has still been identified to further limit human exposure to dust and construction air pollution (see Section 6.4).
- 6.1.4 The proposed scheme could result in temporary adverse health outcomes for vulnerable groups as a result of adverse impacts associated with construction noise (Chapter 18: Human Health and Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration of the EIAR). Specifically, older people, children, disabled people and people who are pregnant, as these groups are more vulnerable to changes in the noise environment and level of exposure that can be associated with different and/or disproportionate negative health impacts (see Sections 4.4 – 4.6 for associated health impacts). The increases in daytime noise may also disproportionately impact people who are more likely to be home during the day, such as people with children, who are unemployed or work shifts, disabled people, and older people.
- 6.1.5 Section 6.4 refers to the embedded and specific mitigation that have been identified to reduce the potential noise impact and it is anticipated that, with mitigation, significant construction noise effects will be minimised as far as practicable, reducing the risk of disproportionate negative

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impacts (further details are available in Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration of the EIAR). The inclusion of new low noise road surfacing in the design, as discussed below in Section 6.2, has potential to disproportionately benefit some groups as discussed below in Section 6.2.

- 6.1.6 According to Chapter 18: Human Health and Chapter 17: Population – Accessibility of the EIAR, the proposed scheme could result in a temporary higher risk of collisions for WCH during the construction phase. Temporary diversions of WCH and busier crossing points as a result of construction traffic on local roads may increase the likelihood of collisions with traffic if not appropriately managed. Older people, children, and those with disabilities are more likely to be involved in road traffic accidents and are therefore at higher risk of collisions than the general population. The presence of construction works could disrupt or deter WCH from using paths and accessing local facilities through a reduction in perceived safety. This could adversely affect social and physical wellbeing by discouraging people from participating in active travel and/or accessing local facilities. Impacts may disproportionately on older people, children, disabled people and women who may have a higher perception of risk than the general population.
- 6.1.7 Section 6.4 refers to the embedded and specific mitigation measures that have been identified to reduce the risk of collisions for WCH. It is anticipated that, with mitigation, the likelihood of a collision during construction would be very low and the measures would also help to improve perceived safety.
- 6.1.8 The construction of the proposed scheme could result in disruption of WCH using paths within the immediate vicinity (Chapter 17: Population – Accessibility of the EIAR). Potential impacts include temporary severance and diversions which may increase journey times the during construction phase. Severance and diversions could disproportionately or differentially impact older people, people who are pregnant or using prams, and disabled people due to mobility issues and the increased journey length, uncertainty around accessibility of a new route, and safety concerns, particularly when it is dark. Section 6.4 refers to the embedded and specific mitigation identified to reduce potential disruption to WCH. The construction programme would also limit the length of closures or restrictions of access for WCH as far as reasonably practicable.
- 6.1.9 During operation, the removal of existing at-grade crossing points to improve safety in some locations will result in a permanent increase in journey lengths for WCH on some routes during operation. Again, this may disproportionately affect older people, people who are pregnant and disabled people, but these same groups would likely disproportionately benefit from the safety improvements brought by not needing to cross the A9 at-grade (see Section 6.2).
- 6.1.10 The construction of the proposed scheme would require the temporary overnight closure of Birnam Glen Road during construction of the Birnam Glen and Inchewan Burn Bridge. This could disproportionately impact those who may already have limited access to transport options through further limiting access, including older people, disabled people, people who are pregnant, young people and socio-economically disadvantaged people. Design and scheduling adjustments to reduce impacts are discussed in Section 6.4.
- 6.1.11 During construction, there is the potential for indirect negative socio-economic impacts in the event that some businesses in the local area are unable to adapt to the disturbance during

construction (noise and vibration, air quality emissions, landscape and visual) and/or are unable to take advantage of the increased employment and additional spend in the local area by workers and construction supply chains. This could impact those who are more socio-economically deprived as they may be unable to absorb the impact of a potential temporary reduction in income, particularly if they are self-employed.

6.2 Would the proposed scheme remove or minimise disadvantage for, or encourage increased participation of, particular groups?

- 6.2.1 According to Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration of the EIAR, the operation of the proposed scheme could result in significant beneficial impacts associated with reductions in road traffic noise. Older people, children, those with disabilities and people who are pregnant, are more vulnerable to increases in noise exposure, therefore, avoidance of adverse noise impacts and reductions in noise exposure can avoid the associated negative impacts discussed in Section 6.1.
- 6.2.2 The proposed scheme would provide safer access (road and WCH) to/from the proposed scheme, local businesses and community land and assets through road and path infrastructure improvements, including the removal of at-grade crossings and provision of new grade separated crossing points of the A9, path widening and improved WCH segregation. For older people, children, and disabled people, who are more likely to be involved in road traffic accidents, improved safety is likely to have a larger beneficial impact for these groups. This could also encourage access to local facilities and reduce social isolation for these vulnerable groups. Improvements in the perception of safety could also encourage more children, disabled people and older people as well as women to participate in active travel. Children could particularly benefit from this as safety of the A9 was raised as a key concern shared across the schools from the students who participated in the consultation activities.
- 6.2.3 In the long term, improved safety could encourage more travellers to visit amenities and businesses within the communities and provide a boost for the economy which could help reduce socio-economic disadvantage for the local area. Improved connectivity to public transport links (particularly Dunkeld & Birnam Station) would also provide better accessibility and may further enhance the local economy. In addition, during construction, some businesses would be able to adapt their business and customer profile to take advantage of increased demand from construction workers for catering and accommodation in the area.
- 6.2.4 The proposed scheme would provide more reliable journey times to/from the proposed scheme, local businesses and community land and assets (Chapter 16: Population – Land Use of the EIAR) both for private vehicle use and public transport. Improved reliability for journey times could benefit those reliant on private vehicle use and public transport to access key services and encourage more participation in the community. This could particularly benefit those who are more likely to rely on public transport to access education, jobs, essential services, and social networks, such as disabled people, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, older people and young people. However, in rural areas, car travel is often viewed as the most viable option and women living in rural areas typically have higher car dependence, due to them often making complex and multi-stop journeys. The improvements to travel times could allow women more time

for self-care and rest and/or allow them to better access key services such as employment, education, and healthcare.

- 6.2.5 The proposed scheme would improve access and reduce severance for Dunkeld & Birnam Station. The proposed scheme would provide a replacement car park with better facilities, including designated disabled parking, and a fully accessible underpass which would include stairs and lifts for WCH to Platforms 1 and 2. The proposed scheme would also provide the potential for improved public transport connectivity through the provision of infrastructure that allows for bus turning and bus stop facilities at the replacement Dunkeld & Birnam Station car park. These improvements of access would enable those who are currently excluded, including older people, disabled people and people who are pregnant or using prams to access more transport options. This in turn could encourage community participation and reduce social exclusion.

6.3 Would the proposed scheme impact relations between different groups?

- 6.3.1 There should be no negative effect on relations between different groups or communities. Good relations can be fostered as a result of protected groups being encouraged to participate in the community as outlined in Section 6.2.

6.4 Does the proposed scheme build in reasonable adjustments where these may be needed?

- 6.4.1 Mitigation measures have been identified for the proposed scheme, which reflect the reasonable adjustments made to accommodate the needs of some groups in the community, as well as to reduce impacts for the environment and general population.
- 6.4.2 Both statutory and non-statutory consultees, including feedback received from public exhibitions, have helped to inform the development of the design and mitigation for the proposed scheme to avoid or reduce potential impacts. Specific mitigation measures are available to view in Chapter 22: Schedule of Environmental Commitments of the EIAR. Embedded mitigation measures are discussed in the associated EIAR chapters.
- 6.4.3 The potential for air quality impacts for human health are minor and there are no significant effects anticipated during construction and operation. Standard and project-specific mitigation for air quality has been identified to further limit human exposure to dust and construction air pollution. For example, through the provision and use of a stakeholder communication plan and the implementation of mitigation measures for a high-risk site at the Central, Dunkeld & Birnam Station and South Zones to ensure dust emissions are minimised and the controls implemented are managed (see Chapter 8: Air Quality for further information).
- 6.4.4 Noise was identified as a particular concern for the proposed scheme. Consequently, the following embedded mitigation adjustment and specific mitigation measures were identified:
- all mainline and slip roads will be surfaced with a low noise road surfacing material; and

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- a reflective noise barrier 100m in length and 2.0m in height along the northbound side of the proposed scheme adjacent to Ringwood Cottage, Rowan Cottage, Willow Tree Cottage and Oak Tree Cottage.
- 6.4.5 It should be noted that the construction noise assessment is indicative only as it is based upon assumed plant/equipment, construction programme and working methods. Once appointed, the Contractor would be required to update the assessment, once working methods, working times, the plant and equipment to be used and the construction programme have been finalised.
- 6.4.6 Construction impacts associated with the disruption of WCH and vehicular access and a higher risk of collisions for WCH was identified. Therefore, a traffic management plan will be implemented by the Contractor. Road diversions will be clearly indicated and notified in advance, and access for WCH will be maintained and improved in accordance with the following principles:
- The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and '[Roads for All: Good Practice Guides for Roads](#)' (Transport Scotland, 2013) shall be incorporated into the proposed scheme wherever practicable, e.g. any bridges, ramps or footpaths will not present potential barriers to disabled people such as the gradient or surfacing.
 - WCH access shall be provided in accordance with the objectives set out in the '[A9 Dualling Non-Motorised User Access Strategy](#)' (Transport Scotland, 2016b).
 - Surfacing of any new paths including alongside roads will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as safety, the type of user and should comply with current standards.
 - Safety of paths will be considered in accordance with the outcome of the Road Restraints Risk Assessment Process and may require provision of barriers.
 - New cycleways/footpaths will use non-frost susceptible materials to reduce risk of degradation.
- 6.4.7 Permanent diversions of paths are included as part of the proposed scheme, resulting in significant journey length increases. However, this has been done to improve amenity and/or safety for WCH through the provision of improved visual amenity, grade separated junctions, and underpasses and crossings for the sole use of WCH. This aligns with the '[Traffic Signs Manual](#)' (Department of Transport, 2022) which emphasises that better crossing facilities are an essential part of '*encouraging walking and cycling, improving accessibility, and creating streets with a better sense of 'place' that encourages footfall.*' The potential impact of change being disorientating for some groups and the inclusion of accessibility features has been considered, and local accessibility groups have been involved from early in the process to ensure this.
- 6.4.8 The construction of the proposed scheme would require the temporary closure of Birnam Glen Road during some periods of construction of the Birnam Glen and Inchewan Burn Bridge. Therefore, the design of Inchewan Burn and Birnam Glen Bridge was adjusted to limit the requirement for closure of Birnam Glen Road during construction. Where temporary closures are

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necessary, these would be scheduled as temporary overnight closures to avoid the potential for greater impacts for access during the day. The appointed contractor will ensure that when temporary closure is required, appropriate notification will be given to affected residents. Where practicable, temporary closures will happen on single nights rather than consecutively and liaison with emergency services will be conducted to agree appropriate access arrangements.

- 6.4.9 Although socioeconomic impacts would be beneficial overall, there is still the potential for indirect negative socio-economic impacts, as a result of disturbance through noise and vibration, air quality and landscape and visual impacts, during construction of the proposed scheme. To minimise and avoid these as far as practicable, standard and specific mitigations have been identified within the associated chapters in the EIAR.

7. Conclusions and Action Plan

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 This assessment demonstrates Transport Scotland's due regard to the PSED and FSD throughout the design process of the proposed scheme. The assessment has identified where the proposed scheme has the potential to result in disproportionate or differential impacts for particular groups (including socio-economic disadvantage) and what adjustments have been made for these, where opportunities to advance equality of opportunity have been taken and how the proposed scheme can foster good relations between people. This demonstrates that the proposed scheme meets the requirements of the PSED and FSD
- 7.1.2 The Action Plan will provide monitoring of the potential effects. Overall, there is likely to be a positive impact on protected characteristic groups and socio-economically disadvantaged people with the proposed scheme by improving accessibility via a range of transport options.

7.2 Action Plan

- 7.2.1 The Action Plan (Table 7.1) identifies actions and recommendations to mitigate against equality impacts. It is recommended to monitor the impact of these actions to ensure they are implemented effectively. If actions are not effective, they should be revisited and revised accordingly. The Action Plan should be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness. Where applicable the EIAR mitigation item reference has been included for cross-reference with Chapter 22: Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

Table 7.1: Action Plan

Impact	Action	Relevant EIAR Mitigation Item Reference	Timeframe	Owner
General	<p>Purpose To ensure that members of the public are kept informed on the progress of the proposed scheme and to efficiently address any queries or concerns raised.</p> <p>Description Throughout the construction period the Contractor will, as required, contribute towards the overall communications strategy for the A9 Dualling Programme. As part of this the Contractor will appoint a Community Liaison Officer supported by a liaison team as necessary who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ liaise with the following: relevant local authorities; other statutory bodies and regulatory authorities; community councils and relevant community groups; and businesses and residents in local communities affected by the construction works; ▪ notify occupiers of nearby properties a minimum of two weeks in advance of the nature and anticipated duration of planned construction works that may affect them; ▪ support the production of project communications such as the project website and newsletters; and ▪ establish a dedicated Freephone telephone helpline together with a dedicated email address and postal address for enquiries and complaints during the construction phase. The relevant contact numbers, email and postal addresses will as a minimum be displayed on signs around the construction site and will be published on the project website. Enquiries and complaints will be logged in a register and appropriate action will be taken in response to any complaints. 	SMC-S3	Pre-construction and ongoing during construction	Contractor
Noise disturbance	<p>A scheme of noise and vibration monitoring will be agreed with the Environmental Health Officer of Perth and Kinross Council, and noise and vibration limits will be contained within the Construction Environmental Management Plan. The Contractor will be required to develop and implement a Noise and Vibration Management Plan to meet these requirements.</p>	SMC-NV1 to NV2 P02-NV03	Construction	Contractor

Impact	Action	Relevant EIA Mitigation Item Reference	Timeframe	Owner
	<p>Best Practicable Means will be used to limit the level of noise to which operators and others in the vicinity of site operations would be exposed. Additionally, Perth and Kinross Council will be consulted regarding any proposed working outside of normal working hours.</p> <p>To reduce the noise levels at Ringwood Cottage, Rowan Cottage, Willow Tree Cottage and Oak Tree Cottage, a 2.0m high, 100m long reflective barrier will be erected along the northbound side of the proposed scheme.</p> <p>Where, following application of proposed mitigation and any Section 61 consents under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, noise levels are expected to still exceed the trigger levels defined in Annex E.4 of BS 5228-1 and any Section 61 consents under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, a scheme for the installation of noise insulation or the reasonable costs thereof, or a scheme to facilitate temporary rehousing of occupants, as appropriate, shall be implemented.</p>			
Road safety during construction	<p>Road works may impair the safety and free movement of vehicles and WCH (particularly vulnerable users). All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the effects of the works are reduced to a minimum and the Contractor will produce a traffic management plan that will include measures to avoid or reduce disruption to the road traffic in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the length of diversion routes should be reviewed and advance signing of diversion routes provided; ▪ consideration of the safety implications of temporary surfaces, obstructions, ramps, diversions etc.; ▪ standard of surface/gradients/lighting; ▪ adequacy of lane widths; ▪ adequacy of crossing facilities for pedestrians; ▪ the needs of children, particularly if schools or play areas etc. are nearby; ▪ the impact on bus stop locations and access to bus stops; ▪ closing off of unsafe access across works; and ▪ arrangements for those with restricted mobility and other special needs. 	SMC-AT2 SMC-AT4 SMC-AT6	Pre-construction and ongoing during construction	Contractor

Impact	Action	Relevant EIA Mitigation Item Reference	Timeframe	Owner
	<p>The plan will include consideration of the timing of works and the location of haul roads to reduce site traffic on the public roads.</p> <p>Road diversions will be clearly indicated with road markings and signage as appropriate. The Contractor will also be responsible for identifying any notable changes in patterns of road network use during construction, where such changes may cause significant disruption elsewhere (such as drivers re-routing away from the A9), and will review and update traffic management provisions as appropriate in discussion with Transport Scotland.</p>			
<p>WCH disruption – Severance and diversions during construction</p>	<p>The construction programme will minimise the length of closures or restrictions of access for WCH as far as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Where practicable, temporary diversion routes and/or assisted crossings will be provided to maintain safe access for WCH throughout the construction works. Any closure or re-routing of routes used by WCH would take cognisance of the 'Roads for All: Good Practice Guides for Roads' (Transport Scotland, 2013). These will be agreed in advance with the relevant local authorities and will be clearly indicated with signage as appropriate.</p> <p>In consultation with the relevant Roads Authority and public transport provider, bus stops affected by the works will be relocated safely with a safe access route provided for WCH.</p> <p>Access for WCH will be maintained and improved in accordance with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and 'Roads for All: Good Practice Guides for Roads' (Transport Scotland, 2013) shall be incorporated into the proposed scheme wherever practicable, e.g. any bridges, ramps or footpaths will not present potential barriers to disabled people such as the gradient or surfacing. ▪ WCH access shall be provided in accordance with the objectives set out in the A9 Dualling WCH Access Strategy (Transport Scotland, 2016b). ▪ Surfacing of any new paths including alongside roads will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as safety, the type of user and should comply with current standards. 	<p>SMC-AT1 SMC-AT2 SMC-AT3 SMC-AT8</p>	<p>Ongoing during construction</p>	<p>Contractor</p>

Impact	Action	Relevant EIAR Mitigation Item Reference	Timeframe	Owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety of paths will be considered in accordance with the outcome of the Road Restraints Risk Assessment Process and may require provision of barriers. New cycleways/footpaths will use non-frost susceptible materials to reduce risk of degradation. 			
Overnight closure of Birnam Glen Road during construction	The appointed contractor will develop proposals to ensure access to properties at Birnam Glen is provided during construction of Birnam Glen and Inchewan Burn Bridge. Where temporary overnight closures are required to facilitate removal of existing structures and installation of new structures appropriate notification will be given to affected residents. Where practicable, temporary closures will happen on single nights rather than consecutively. During temporary overnight closures the appointed contractor will liaise with emergency services and agree appropriate access arrangements to Birnam Glen for emergency services.	P02-LU19	Ongoing during construction	Contractor
Disturbance of local businesses during construction	Use of best practice standard and specific mitigation measures, such as those outlined in Chapter 8: Air Quality, Chapter 10: Landscape, Chapter 11: Visual, Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration, Chapter 16: Population – Land Use and Chapter 17: Population – Accessibility of the EIAR.	SMC-S1 to S4 SMC-AQ1 to AQ2 P02-AQ1 to AQ11 SMC-LV1 to LV4 and SMC-LV6 to LV7 SMC-NV1 to NV2 P02-NV01 to NV02 SMC-LU1 to LU4 SMC-AT1 to AT8 P02-AT9 to AT14	Ongoing during construction	Contractor

8. References

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APPENDIX A Screening

A.1.1 The screening table below identifies the likely impacts, and relevant protected characteristics and vulnerable groups, associated with the design and development of the proposed scheme. Evidence to support the screening decisions is also provided.

Questions to establish potential impacts of the proposed scheme	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Evidence
Age: Is it likely to affect people on the grounds of their age?	Yes	Yes	N/A	The overall population of the study area is older than average for Scotland, with 27% of the population aged over 65 years, compared to the national average of 20% (Scotland's Census, 2022a).
Disability: Is it likely to affect disabled people?	Yes	Yes	N/A	The construction of the proposed scheme could have an impact on drivers, local communities and those accessing facilities through changes in accessibility or severance for those accessing education, jobs, essential services, and social networks (Marmot et al, 2024). Those who are more vulnerable to changes in access – such as children, older people, disabled people, or people travelling with young children or whilst pregnant, are more likely to be affected by the changes in access presented during construction of the proposed scheme.
Pregnancy and maternity: Is it likely to impact people on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity?	Yes	Yes	N/A	The construction and operation of the proposed scheme could have an impact on noise and air quality. Vulnerable groups are more sensitive to such changes, specifically older people, children, disabled people and those with health conditions. The EIAR assessed potential adverse and beneficial changes to noise levels, accessibility and health as a result of the construction and/or operation of the proposed scheme (WHO, 2024). These potential impacts may have disproportionate or differential effects on equality groups including children, older people, disabled people, and people who are pregnant, especially on those living in deprived areas. During operation, the proposed scheme would provide new grade separated crossing points of the A9 for WCH which would improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly for those most vulnerable to road accidents (Transport Scotland, 2024) – such as children, older people, disabled people, people who are pregnant, or people travelling with young children In addition, the proposed scheme will provide a new pedestrian underpass to access Dunkeld & Birnam Station which would include stairs and lifts and be fully accessible for walkers,

Questions to establish potential impacts of the proposed scheme	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Evidence
				wheelers and cyclists. Currently, the access from Birnam Glen to the station itself involves steps and is not suitable for users of wheelchairs and would be inconvenient or more difficult for pushchair users and people with mobility issues though Network Rail are progressing proposals for step free access to both platforms of the station.
<p>Sexual orientation: Is it likely to impact on people on the grounds of their sexual orientation?</p>	N/A	N/A	Yes	<p>The majority of people in the intermediate zone of Luncarty and Dunkeld are reported to be heterosexual (88.9%). The other categories were 'not answered' (8.6%), gay or lesbian (1.0%), bisexual (1.0%) and 'other sexual orientation' (0.3%) (Scotland's Census, 2022f).</p> <p>The consultation aimed to engage as wide a cross section of people as possible, reaching out to a range of different stakeholders (see Section 5).</p> <p>The area is considered relatively safe, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones crime ranking within the 40% and 10% lowest in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020) and the Perth and Kinross local authority area having a hate crime rate (8 per 10,000) that is lower than the national average (11 per 10,000) (Scottish Government, 2024). However, consideration should still be given to how fears of violence associated with public transport can affect people because of their sexual orientation. Based on the evidence above, the proposed scheme is unlikely to result in disproportionate or differential issues for this protected characteristic group.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment: Is it likely to affect people who have undergone, intend to undergo or are currently undergoing gender reassignment, or those who do not intend to undergo medical treatment but wish to live in a different gender from their gender at birth, differently or disproportionately?</p>	N/A	N/A	Yes	<p>According to the 2022 census, the majority of people in the intermediate zone of Luncarty and Dunkeld are self-categorised as 'Not trans and does not have a trans history' (93.2%), 'Not answered' (6.6%) and 'Trans or has a trans history' (0.2%) (Scotland's Census, 2022g).</p> <p>The consultation aimed to engage as wide a cross section of people as possible, reaching out to a range of different stakeholders (see Section 5).</p> <p>The area is considered relatively safe, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones crime ranking within the 40% and 10% lowest in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020) and the Perth and Kinross local authority area having a hate crime rate (8 per 10,000) that is lower than the national average (11 per 10,000) (Scottish Government, 2024). However, consideration should still be given to how fears of violence associated with public transport can affect people because of their gender identity. Based on the evidence above, the proposed scheme is unlikely to result in disproportionate or differential issues for this protected characteristic group.</p>

Questions to establish potential impacts of the proposed scheme	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Evidence
<p>Race:</p> <p>Is it likely to affect people on the grounds of their race?</p>	N/A	N/A	Yes	<p>According to the 2022 census, the majority of people in the study area are white (97.0%). The second highest category is Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British (1.5%), with the third highest category is Mixed or multiple ethnic group (1.0%) (Scotland's Census, 2022f).</p> <p>During construction, consideration of how temporary disruption that could result in severance can disproportionately impact ethnic minorities should be given (Jones et al, 2015). According to Chapter 16 – Land use of the EIAR, there are no anticipated severance effects associated with community assets.</p> <p>The consultation aimed to engage as wide a cross section of people as possible, reaching out to a range of different stakeholders (see Section 5).</p> <p>The area is considered relatively safe, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones crime ranking within the 40% and 10% lowest in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020) and the Perth and Kinross local authority area having a hate crime rate (8 per 10,000) that is lower than the national average (11 per 10,000) (Scottish Government, 2024). However, consideration should still be given to how fears of violence associated with public transport can affect people because of their race or ethnicity. Based on the evidence above, the proposed scheme is unlikely to result in disproportionate or differential issues for this protected characteristic group.</p>
<p>Religion:</p> <p>Is it likely to affect people on the grounds of their religion or belief?</p>	N/A	N/A	Yes	<p>According to the 2022 census, the majority of people in the study area are not religious (54.3%). The second highest category is Christian (36.1%), with the third highest category 'religion not stated' (7.8%) (Scotland's Census, 2022e).</p> <p>The consultation aimed to engage as wide a cross section of people as possible, reaching out to a range of different stakeholders (see Section 5).</p> <p>The Birchwood House Roman Catholic Church, St Mary's Episcopal Church, Little Dunkeld Church and Dunkeld Cathedral places of worship lie within the study area, however, there are no anticipated impacts regarding access of these facilities according to Chapter 16 – Land use of the EIAR.</p> <p>The area is considered relatively safe, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones crime ranking within the 40% and 10% lowest in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020) and the Perth and Kinross local authority area having a hate crime rate (8 per 10,000) that is lower than the national average (11 per 10,000) (Scottish Government, 2024).</p>

Questions to establish potential impacts of the proposed scheme	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Evidence
				However, consideration should still be given to how fears of violence associated with public transport can affect people because of their religion or religious beliefs. Based on the evidence above, the proposed scheme is unlikely to result in disproportionate or differential issues for this protected characteristic group.
Sex: Consider whether it is likely to impact on men and women in different ways?	Yes	No	N/A	<p>It is widely recognised that women are often constrained by barriers that impact the way they travel, such as caring responsibilities, safety concerns around inadequate infrastructure i.e. lack of separation between paths/cycleways and roads and fear of violence or harassment with public transport (Scottish Women’s Budget Group, 2023). Although the area is considered relatively safe, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones crime ranking within the 40% and 10% lowest in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020) and the Perth and Kinross local authority area having a hate crime rate (8 per 10,000) that is lower than the national average (11 per 10,000) (Scottish Government, 2024), consideration should still be given to how fears of violence associated with public transport can affect people because of their sex.</p> <p>Women living in rural areas typically have higher car dependence due to public transport being less reliable than in cities. The A9 Dualling Programme aims to improve travel times which could allow women who are also carers more time for self-care and rest.</p> <p>The proposed scheme also aims to facilitate active travel within the corridor and improve integration with public transport facilities. The introduction of improved infrastructure, such as the provision of a new pedestrian underpass to access Dunkeld & Birnam Station with stair free access and grade separated crossings, could encourage more women to walk, cycle or wheel.</p>
Fairer Scotland Duty: Consider whether those at a socio-economic disadvantage (low income, low wealth, material deprivation and area deprivation – with socio-economic background, communities of interest and	Yes	Yes	N/A	<p>The area is not considered to be income deprived, with the S01012007 and S01012008 data zones ranking within the 40% and 30% least income deprived in Scotland respectively (Scottish Government, 2020). However, the area is considered to be access deprived according to the SIMD ranking, which considers factors like distance to essential services (e.g., healthcare, shopping, public transport) and the availability of those services. The S01012007 and S01012008 data zones rank within the 40% and 20% most access deprived in Scotland respectively. According to Chapter 16 - Land use of the EIAR, there are no anticipated severance effects associated with community assets during construction.</p>

Questions to establish potential impacts of the proposed scheme	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Evidence
<p>communities of place also considered) would be affected differently or disproportionately when compared with others.</p>				<p>However, there will be temporary disruption associated with construction of the proposed scheme.</p> <p>During construction, there is likely to be a mixed indirect socio-economic impact, with the potential impact on businesses dependant on their type, sensitivity to construction impacts and their ability to adapt their business during the construction period. For example, it is expected that some businesses would not be able to adapt and would be impacted through disturbance (noise and vibration, air quality emissions, landscape and visual). Other businesses would have the opportunity to adapt their business and customer profile to take advantage of increased demand from construction workers for catering and accommodation in the area. According to Chapter 16 – Land use of the EIAR, the impact is likely to be beneficial overall.</p> <p>In the long term, the proposed scheme would provide safer access to Dunkeld, Birnam and Inver, encouraging travellers to visit amenities and businesses within the communities. This could result in an increase in visitor numbers and a potential boost to the local economy. For example, improved connectivity of Dunkeld & Birnam Station with Station Road would provide better connection to public transport links and may further enhance the economy of the area.</p> <p>In rural areas, car travel is viewed as the most viable option due to lack of public transport, lower reliability and increased time required to travel by public transport, or public transport costing more than driving. This can result in 'forced car ownership', resulting in some households stretching their budgets to retain a car (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). This can also disproportionately impact those who face barriers to car access, such as disabled people, older people and those who are unemployed. Improved connectivity of Dunkeld & Birnam Station would provide better connection to public transport links for those who are more reliant on public transport. .</p>

APPENDIX B Forum Members

Environmental Steering Group
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Perth & Kinross Council (and Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust as their heritage advisers)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
NatureScot (previously Scottish National Heritage)
The Highland Council
Environmental Forum
All attendees from the Environmental Steering Group
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
British Deer Society
Buglife
Findhorn, Nairn, and Lossie Fisheries Board
Forestry And Land Scotland (previously Forestry Commission Scotland)
Royal Society for the Protection Of Birds
Scottish Badgers
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Spey District Fisheries Board
Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board
The Woodland Trust
WCH Forum
A9 Action Group Birnam
Association of British Riding Schools
British Horse Society
ByCycle UK
Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Cycle UK
Cycling Scotland
Highland Cycle Campaign
HITRANS
Living Streets
National Access Forum

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Paths for All
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust
Ramblers Scotland
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Outdoor Access Network
Scotways
Sustrans Cairngorms Group
Sustrans Perth And Inverness Volunteer Group
TACTRAN
The Highland Council
The Mountaineering Council of Scotland
Accessibility Forum
People Friendly Design
Mobility and Access Community for Scotland
Scottish Disability Equality Forum