

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** **Badenoch and Strathspey Area**

**Date:** **13 February 2018**

**Report Title:** **A9 Dualling: Dalraddy to Slochd**

**Report By:** **Director of Development and Infrastructure**

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of Transport Scotland's proposals for Dualling the section of A9 between Dalraddy and Slochd. A liaison meeting with Transport Scotland scheduled for 17 January 2018 has now been rescheduled to 30 January 2018. A verbal update of the outcomes of that meeting will be provided to Committee.
- 1.2 The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report, provide any comments, and endorse the proposed response.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- note the contents of the report;
  - note the verbal update, to be provided from the liaison meeting with Transport Scotland and the Designer scheduled to take place on 30 January 2018; and
  - consider the proposed response, provide any additional comments and delegate the response to be submitted by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

### 3 Roles of the Different Authorities

- 3.1 The remits of Highland Council and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) cover different functions and expertise. Transport Scotland has engaged with officers from both authorities.
- 3.2 It is noted from various reports presented to the CNPA Planning Committee that their responses to Transport Scotland have focussed on issues relating closely to the remit and expertise of CNPA including the following specific topics:
- outdoor access (CNPA is the Access Authority)
  - landscape
  - ecology (non-designated sites only)
  - community and private assets
- 3.3 The Highland Council is the Local Road Authority. A number of duties relevant to the A9 Dualling Project include:
- maintaining the local road network
  - road safety
  - review of local road speed limits
- 3.4 In certain circumstances, the Council will be expected to add modified local roads and new side roads, arising from the A9 Dualling Project, to the list of public roads maintained by the Council.

### 4. Summary of Project 11 Dalraddy to Slochd

- 4.1 This Project involves a 25 kilometre section of the A9 road being upgraded to dual carriageway as part of a wider programme to improve the A9 between Perth and Inverness. Public drop-in events took place in Aviemore and Carrbridge (30 November 2017 and 1 December 2017). The latest information is available on the Transport Scotland web site:  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/public-drop-in-materials-november-2017-dalraddy-to-slochd-a9-dualling/>
- 4.2 Transport Scotland notified a deadline for responses to this latest consultation by 12 January 2018. Agreement has been received from Transport Scotland to allow a response from Highland Council following the Area Committee meeting. In addition an additional liaison meeting is being held with Transport Scotland and their Designer on 30 January 2018 to discuss a range of specific topics. A verbal update on the key outcomes from the meeting will be provided at the Committee meeting.
- 4.3 Since the previous public exhibition in March 2017, the Designer has developed a number of variations. These include:
- Non Motorised Users (NMU)
    - Development of proposals to cater for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians;
  - Grade Separated Junctions
    - Development of compact grade-separated junctions at Aviemore South, Granish and Black Mount to reduce the footprint and overall impact of the junctions
    - Development of proposals for the grade-separated junction tie-ins to local roads

B9152 at Aviemore South, A95 / B9152 at Granish; and

- **Other Design Matters**

- Development of proposals for the Slochd junction (U2400), Lynwilg Road (U3050) and private access
- Optimisation of the main dual carriageway alignment with a view to reducing impacts
- Development of new and upgraded structures
- Development of the Sustainable Drainage System
- Consideration of geotechnical and environmental options at Slochd
- Development of lay-by provision to provide six new 'Type A' lay-bys in the northbound direction and five in the southbound direction.

## **5 Non-Motorised Users**

5.1 A number of grade-separated crossing points are proposed for NMUs to improve safety and connectivity. In addition opportunities for new NMU connections have been identified. A series of NMU drawings have been prepared:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/40841/a9-dualling-dalraddy-to-slochd-public-drop-in-november-2017-non-motorised-user-drawings.pdf>

5.2 As the Access Authority, Cairngorms National Park Authority, provides comments on the potential impacts on Core Paths, Rights of Way, and National Cycle Route (NCR) 7.

5.3 The Committee is asked to support the general principles that have already been raised by CNPA for NMU matters along the overall A9 Dualling Project:

- all opportunity is taken to enhance (or replace with appropriate alternatives) existing features which support NMU access;
- avoid detrimental impacts on NCR 7 and its users;
- seek overall improvement to the existing standard of NCR 7;
- all viable options should be considered to allow existing crossing points to continue after the A9 Dualling is operational;
- all viable options should be considered to retain non-designated local paths; and
- where a permanent severance of a path becomes necessary, it should be supported by an assessment and rationale.

## **6 Junctions**

6.1 There are three grade separated junctions: Aviemore South; Granish; and Black Mount. A series of drawings have been prepared:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/40825/a9-dualling-dalraddy-to-slochd-dmr-b-stage-3-grade-separated-junctions.pdf>

6.2 All of the grade separated junctions are half cloverleaf layout which enables a reduction in footprint/land take and lessens impact on environmental constraints. In addition other benefits arising from this junction type selection include:

- reduced length of span for bridge over the A9;
- improved connection to Non-Motorised User (NMU) routes, side roads and to private accesses;
- avoids direct impact with watercourse and flood zone;
- reduces woodland fragmentation;
- smaller length of underpass below the A9;
- avoids areas of difficult ground conditions (peat); and

- reduced visual impact with below ground underpass.

6.3 The three grade separated junctions connect with local roads: B9152/U3050 at Aviemore South; B9152 at Granish; and A938/U2400 at Black Mount. The preferred junction arrangements with the local roads are as follows:

- Aviemore South

Ghost Island Priority junction based on the following reasons: accommodates all traffic turning movements (B9152 and U3500); reduced land take compared to other options; and less environmental impacts (woodland and ecology) compared to other options;

- Granish junction

A new roundabout based on the following reasons: provides equal priority for traffic movements from both the A95 to A9 and A95 to B9152 which addresses the traffic balance and improves the connection for HGVs between the A95 and A9; provides a defined segregation between local and trunk roads; reduced land take (woodland and ecology) compared to other options; and

- Blackmount

A variation of the cloverleaf junction previously shown as an option for this location, the layout of the junction has been tailored to the local constraints, the traffic flow pattern in the area, and compressed to provide a smaller footprint. The majority of the traffic movements in/out of the junction are towards Inverness with few movements out of the junction in the direction of Perth. The alignment and the provision of an underbridge below the A9 ties in before the railway underbridge on the A938. The connection with the U2400 is retained and this allows for all vehicle movements.

6.4 Slochd Junction

Transport Scotland indicates that it has considered three options for the Slochd junction (U2400). Option 1 is the preferred junction arrangement and consists of a Left-in/Left-out junction.

## 7 Local Roads and Delivery Aspects

7.1 Like the other A9 Dualling Projects, there is dialogue with officers about the new and modified side roads that will be added to the List of Public Roads for the Council. The discussions are typically about the extent of the roads, design aspects and operational aspects. These discussions continue through the various DMRB stages.

7.2 The plan for the Granish grade separated junction shows the new roundabout that will be constructed and a short section of the B9152 that will be modified/upgraded as part of the A9 dualling scheme. There is new infrastructure (drainage) to be constructed between the A9 and the B9152. The future access to this infrastructure will be taken from the B9152. It is recommended that the extent of modification works on the B9152 will require to be extended to a point approximately 200 metres south of this access (towards Aviemore) to ensure safe and efficient operations after the A9 Dualling scheme is completed.

7.3 The grade separated Junction at Blackmount caters for all movements on and off the A9 Trunk Road connecting to the A938 and U2400. The tie in with the A938 before the railway underbridge clearly influences the junction layout. Transport Scotland has confirmed that the details of the Trunk Road/ Local Road interface and extents have still to be settled. The combination of the grade separated junction at Blackmount and the preferred Option 1 (left-in / left-out) junction arrangement at Slochd (U2400) means there are two aspects of the future operation of the local road (U2400) that need further clarification: a) turning infrastructure in the vicinity of Slochd junction; and b) there is an expected increase in timber related traffic on the U2400 which is a notable change from the current situation. It is necessary to seek clarification on the details of the Trunk Road/

Local Road interface at Blackmount and also the implications for the future operation/role of the U2400.

- 7.4 At this stage indications are that Project 11 will be awarded as a single contract and potentially involve construction works along the full 25 kilometres of the A9. It is anticipated that there will be appropriate traffic management for the Project and this will typically involve average speed cameras enforcing the relevant speed limit(s).
- 7.5 It is recommended that, as a part of the A9 Dualling Project mitigation for impact on the neighbouring communities and local road users, a similar traffic management (speed) scheme is introduced on the B9152 between the Aviemore South and Granish junctions. It is considered necessary to introduce a traffic management (speed) scheme prior to the Dalraddy to Slochd Project starting. Such a scheme should be included in the delivery of the A9 Dualling Project 11.
- 7.6 The Government's Programme for Scotland states: "we will work with each of our delivery partners to create Scotland's first 'electric highway' on the A9, including charging points along the route, demonstrating that electric vehicles offer important advantages to motorists in rural, as well as urban, Scotland." There is an opportunity to use infrastructure in Aviemore and other communities along the A9 to support the above programme objective. Ideally the installation of new charging points will take place early allowing an increase in the number of electric vehicles operating in the Badenoch and Strathspey area and beyond. It is considered appropriate to seek clarification on the programme for A9 'electric highway' along the Dalraddy to Slochd section.
- 7.7 A preliminary response is attached at **Appendix A**. The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the proposed response.

## **8 Implications**

- 8.1 Resource  
Various Council officers engage with Transport Scotland in respect of the Local Authority interests. This is undertaken as part of their duties.
- 8.2 Legal  
None
- 8.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)  
To address the impact on the Aviemore community during the delivery of Project 11 it is necessary to seek a traffic management (speed) scheme on the section of the B9152 between the A9 junctions.
- 8.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever  
New electric vehicle infrastructure will go some way to mitigate against the impact of the construction of the A9 Dualling.
- 8.5 Risk  
The A9 Dualling Project must deal with all implications arising from the Project, including impacts on the community and the local road network, otherwise there is a potential that the Council will end up having to fund any mitigation that arises.
- 8.6 Gaelic  
The signing strategy will include Gaelic.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 21 January 2018

Author: Richard Gerring Transport Planning Manager

Background Papers: Transport Scotland A9 Dualling: Dalraddy to Slochd  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/public-drop-in-materials-november-2017-dalraddy-to-slochd-a9-dualling/>

## APPENDIX A: DRAFT RESPONSE

Mr Robin Smith  
A9 Dualling Project Team Stakeholder Manager  
Atkins Mouchel Joint Venture  
WSP  
Lanark Court  
Ellismuir Way  
Tannochside Park  
Uddingston  
Glasgow G71 5PW

Dear Sir

A9 Dualling: DMRB Stage 3 Dalraddy to Slochd – Highland Council Response

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This response follows a report to the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee on 13 February 2018.
- 1.2. The Council welcomes the publication of the details of the proposals for Project 11 of the A9 Dualling scheme. This marks a significant milestone for the overall A9 route.

### 2. Non-Motorised Users (NMU)

- 2.1. The Committee has endorsed the important aspects for NMU along the A9 that the Cairngorms National Park Authority previously submitted to Transport Scotland. These are repeated below:
  - all opportunity is taken to enhance (or replace with appropriate alternatives) existing features which support NMU access;
  - avoid detrimental impacts on NCR 7 and its users;
  - seek overall improvement to the existing standard of NCR 7;
  - all viable options should be considered to allow existing crossing points to continue after the A9 Dualling is operational; and
  - all viable options should be considered to retain non-designated local paths; where a permanent severance of a path becomes necessary it should be supported by an assessment and rationale

### 3. Junctions and Local Roads

- 3.1. The Committee notes that there is to be new infrastructure (drainage) to be constructed between the A9 and the B9152. The future access to this infrastructure will be taken from the B9152. The extent of modification works on the B9152 will require to be extended to a point approximately 200 metres south of this access (towards Aviemore).
- 3.2. Clarification is sought on the details of the Trunk Road/Local Road interface at Aviemore South and Blackmount junctions. In the implications for the future operation/role of the U2400, the Committee deems it necessary for the A9 Dualling scheme to implement changes to the local road network where the level of traffic is increased / altered due to the changes brought about by the A9 Dualling.

3.3. It is noted that the construction is likely to be implemented in a single phase. The Committee is keen to avoid any detrimental impact on the community and road users along the parallel B9152 route during the construction of the Dalraddy to Slochd Project. A similar traffic management (speed) scheme as the one used on the A9 should be introduced on the B9152 between the Aviemore South and Granish junctions. Such a scheme should be included in the delivery of the A9 Dualling Project 11.

#### 4. Scheme Updates

4.1. The Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee appreciates the previous briefings provided by Transport Scotland and the Designer. The Committee requests further updates as the Project progresses.

J Stuart Black  
Director  
Development and Infrastructure