

## **Part Three**

### **3 Landscape Proposals**

#### **3/1 Introduction**

Reducing the impact of a road on the landscape is just one of the factors to be considered in route choice and design, and conflicts can exist. For example, a balance must be struck between taking land for mitigation and retaining it in its existing use. In addition to fulfilling the intended purpose, any mitigation measures must perform to an acceptable level in traffic, road safety and economic terms.

The choice of route, avoiding potential adverse impacts and with good fit in the landscape is fundamental to the reduction of impacts. Examples of mitigation techniques employed are:

- i) The design of the horizontal and vertical alignment for the main line, side roads and junctions:
  - to get the best fit with the contours;
  - to retain and make best use of existing vegetation;
  - to optimise protection for nearby houses through the use of cuttings and existing features;
  - to avoid loss or damage to landscape features such as hedges, water features or field systems; and
  - to avoid loss of or damage to sites of ecological or archaeological interest.
- ii) The use of specific landscape mitigation measures:
  - planting and seeding;
  - mounding;
  - earth shaping; and
  - restoration of hedge patterns.

The landscape mitigation measures proposed for the Eastern Link Road have been developed with reference to DMRB Volume 10, The Good Roads Guide and the Scottish Executive Development Department's Landscape Design and Management Policy document, "Cost Effective Landscape; Learning from Nature".

#### **3/2 Landscape Proposals**

The aims of the proposals are to both reduce the negative impacts of the scheme and to increase the environmental quality and diversity along the route. The proposals are described under the following headings:

- landtake;
- earthworks;
- planting; and

- seeding.

Detailed landscape mitigation measures are described below. The key landscape mitigation proposals are illustrated in [Figures 3/1 to 3/7](#).

### **3/3 Landtake**

In order to achieve adequate landscape mitigation, land will be acquired outwith the immediate area required to construct the road. Where possible land will be returned to agricultural use. It is proposed to acquire additional land to:

- modify landform for screening or to help assimilate the road into the landscape;
- modify landform to a gradient suitable for return of the land for agricultural purposes;
- create new blocks of woodland to assist in absorbing the road into the landscape pattern; and
- create or enhance habitats to help compensate for the loss of land of nature conservation value.

### **3/4 Earthworks**

The principles adopted for earthworks mitigation proposals are as follows:

- modification of the engineering slopes to create a "naturalistic" rolling effect in keeping with existing topography.
- softening changes in slope at junctions by smoothing out transitions between slopes; and
- reduction of visual impact of the road by creation of false cuttings.

### **3/5 Planting**

The planting proposals aim to:

- retain existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible, where they are in good health and tie in with new planting proposals;
- avoid planting where the route crosses naturally open tracts of land, unless such planting is required for essential screening;
- compensate for trees and hedgerows lost in road construction;
- provide ecological diversity and interest where possible;
- reinforce and link with existing hedgerows and trees for visual and ecological continuity;
- make good use of redundant field corners and landlocked areas as appropriate; and
- provide visual interest throughout the route and particularly at roundabouts and junctions.

The types of planting proposed will be predominantly native. Native species have the following benefits:

- they are more likely to be hardy and tolerant of local conditions;

- they maintain local character and nature conservation value;
- they complement other native species of flora and fauna; and
- they conform to government commitment to biological diversity.

All planting types will be chosen to conform with the National Vegetation Classification system so that they are suited to the location, enhance diversity and provide habitats for wildlife. Generally the agricultural landscape is of low nature conservation interest and the proposed planting seeks to enhance the biological diversity of the area.

#### **Proposed Woodland Planting**

Planted as a mix of transplants, whips and feathered trees, these areas will mature as multi-layered woodland.

#### **Proposed Woodland Edge**

These areas will be planted with transplants and whips.

#### **Proposed Scrub Planting**

This will comprise shrubs and trees and, where appropriate, those commonly associated with coastal areas.

#### **Proposed Hedge/Hedgerow Trees**

Generally the hedge species will match those existing and be planted in a double staggered row (6 per linear metre). Hedgerow trees will be introduced in selected locations where the prevailing microclimate and soil conditions are conducive to successful establishment.

#### **Ornamental Planting**

This is confined to the area around the junction with the A876 North Approach Road. Planting will include ornamental shrubs and Standard and Extra Heavy Standard Trees in mulched beds.

#### **Habitat creation**

An area to the north west of Kincardine sewage treatment works is low-lying and will be isolated by the new road. This area will be developed as a wetland to provide a replacement for habitat that will be lost to the new road (see [Section 2/5](#) Ecology and Nature Conservation).

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#### **Seeding**

Amenity Grass Seeding

Appropriate low maintenance seed mixes will be selected for use on road verges and to withstand local climatic and soil conditions.

### **Agricultural Seed Mixes**

Appropriate seed mixes will be selected after consultation with the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SERAD).

### **Wildflower Mixes**

Appropriate wildflower seed mixes will be selected in areas of less fertile soil and where less frequent grass cutting will be carried out.

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### **Detailed Proposals**

Landscape proposals are illustrated on Figures 3/1, 3/2 and 3/4 with cross sections on Figures 3/3 and 3/5. Photomontages of the scheme proposals with landscape mitigation proposals in place are on Figures 3/6 and 3/7.

### **Kincardine Bridge to Walker Street (Chainage 0.00 to 800.00): Figures [3/1](#), [3/4](#) and [3/5](#)**

The proposed road travels around the southern edge of Kincardine, through open land between the village and the railway embankment and shore. At chainage 150.00 the proposed road will be constructed on an eight metre high embankment, gradually lowering to run close to grade as it crosses Walker Street.

Without mitigation the proposed road will result in substantial adverse visual impacts on the adjacent properties and upon the open character of the local landscape.

Ornamental feature planting is proposed at the junction between the proposed Eastern Link Road, the existing Kincardine Bridge and the A876 North Approach Road. The proposed planting will be designed to contrast with the rural landscape and clearly define the southern boundary of the village.

Between chainage 100.00 and 300.00 the proposed road will pass close to the southern boundaries of properties on Silver Street, resulting in substantial visual impacts. The proposed landscape mitigation, as shown on Figure 3/4, includes localised reinforcing and grading of the embankment to 1:1 around the property boundary. This will prevent the proposed earthworks from disturbing the existing boundary walls and properties, thus dispensing with the need for retaining walls and possible land take. Proposed woodland, scrub and hedge planting between the road and properties is required to screen and soften the view of the embankment.

A wetland habitat is proposed to the north west of the Kincardine sewage treatment works to compensate for lost wetland habitat (see [Section 2/5](#) Ecology and Nature Conservation) and help offset the impact caused by intrusion of a high steep sided embankment.

An area of mixed woodland planting between the Kincardine sewage treatment works and the proposed road will provide further enclosure of this habitat area and will also screen traveller's views of the sewage treatment works.

Further east the proposed road runs through open fields on embankment. Additional land take to the north side of the road will allow for the regrading of the side slope to 1:6 enabling the appearance of the embankment to be softened. The shallower gradient will enable the area to be seeded and returned to agricultural land use. It should be noted that by undertaking this grading exercise, less land will be taken permanently from agricultural use than would otherwise be the case. In addition the mass impact of the embankment will be reduced when viewed from the adjoining housing areas. The embankment to the south side of the road will be at a 1:2 gradient.

New hedgerow planting with occasional tree groupings along this section of the route will reinforce the agricultural field pattern, and tie in with existing boundaries and severed hedgerows. Hedgerow planting will screen cars and partially screen lorries.

An area of mixed woodland planting will be located within a triangular landlocked area between Walker Street and the proposed alignment providing a screen to the road from the old cement works which is to be developed for housing.

**Walker Street to Roundabout (Chainage 800.00 to 1600.00): Figures [3/2](#) and [3/3](#)**

The proposed road will run close to grade at Walker Street and gradually rise on embankment to meet the roundabout approximately 9.5 metres above existing ground level. The proposed landform effectively creates a barrier cutting across the open and rural landscape.

Without mitigation, the proposed road will result in substantial adverse visual impacts on the nearby properties and on the open character of the local landscape.

Additional land take to the south side of the road will allow for the regrading of side slopes to 1:6, enabling the appearance of the embankment to be softened when viewed from the Fife Coastal Path. The shallower gradient will enable the area to be seeded and returned to agricultural land use. The embankment to the north side of the road will be at a 1:2 gradient.

New hedgerow planting with occasional tree groupings is proposed to reinforce the agricultural field pattern, and to tie in with existing boundaries and severed hedgerows. Hedgerow planting will screen cars and partially screen lorries.

Mixed woodland planting to the west of The Sycamores will assist in screening views west to the road from The Sycamores. A false cutting to the north of The Sycamores and Inch House will screen views north.

**Roundabout to A905 Chainage (1600.00 to tie in with existing roads) [Figure 3/2](#)**

The proposed roundabout will be built on a 9.5 metre high embankment. The radiating roads to the north and south will leave the junction on embankments. The road travelling east will be in a sidelong cutting to the north side up to the tie-in with the existing A985. Both roads to the north and south continue on embankment until they tie in with the existing A985 and Longanet Road respectively.

## Scottish Executive Development Department Eastern Link Road – Kincardine

Environmental Statement

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The proposed junction and adjoining earthworks will create a substantial visual impact in the surrounding landscape. However, the existing Longannet Road and portion of the A985 embankments will become redundant, and will be graded out into the existing landform with the excess material being reused in the proposed earthworks. This will help to reduce the visual impact of the embankment and integrate the road into the landscape.

Additional land take in the land adjacent to the embankments will allow for the regrading of side slopes to 1:6, enabling the appearance of the embankments to be softened. The shallower gradient will enable the areas to be seeded and returned to agricultural land uses.

Scrub and mixed woodland planting is proposed to the central area of the roundabout to assist in screening and to soften views from The Holdings. The triangle of land to the north east of the roundabout is to be returned to agricultural use and enclosed by hedgerows and hedgerow trees to reinforce the agricultural field pattern. The redundant sections of the A985 and Longannet Road to the north of the alignment will also be planted with scrub which will assist in screening views from New Row and in softening views from the surrounding areas.

Hedgerow planting to the top of the cutting will extend to tie into existing boundaries and severed hedgerows and reinforce the local rural character. Scrub planting on the north cutting will soften views to the traveller whilst the south cutting is to be graded smoothly to tie into the adjoining landscape and reflect the existing landform.