

A9 Dualling – Glen Garry to Dalraddy

Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore
Preferred Route Announcement
Public Engagement Event (March 2016)

Summary Report

Transport Scotland

June 2016



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Summary Report

Transport Scotland

June 2016

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Preferred Route Announcement

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Summary Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A9 Perth to Inverness Dualling Programme

The A9 trunk road provides a strategic link between the highlands and the central belt of Scotland. In the Strategic Transport Projects Review published in 2008, the Scottish Government identified a programme of improvements for the A9 including upgrading to dual carriageway standard between Perth and Inverness, a distance of some 177 kilometres.

The Scottish Government Infrastructure and Investment Plan was launched on 6th December 2011 and makes a commitment to dual the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025.

In 2014 Scottish Ministers awarded three design contracts to take forward the development of the A9 Dualling Programme. The route between Perth and Inverness was divided into three Sections, the Southern, the Central and the Northern Section. A joint venture between CH2M HILL and Fairhurst consulting engineers (referred to in this report as CFJV) won the contract to develop the Central Section between Glen Garry and Dalraddy.

There are three individual Projects within the scope of services which CFJV are responsible for within the Central Section. These are:

- Project 7 – Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie
- Project 8 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore
- Project 9 – Crubenmore to Kincaig

Project 10 from Kincaig to Dalraddy lies within the Central Section but does not fall within the CFJV scope of services. This project is at a more advanced stage with construction underway and is being taken forward under a separate commission by others.

This report relates to Project 8 and its purpose is to summarise the Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Drop In Event which was held on 8th March 2016 to announce the preferred route that had been selected at the end of the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2.

1.2 Project 8 Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore

Project 8 runs from Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore and is approximately 11.0km in length, linking to the existing dual carriageway (4km long) at Crubenmore. This project is less heavily constrained by designated sites than the projects to the north and south of it however, at the southern end, the project starts in proximity to the Drumochter Hills environmental designations on the eastern (southbound) side of the carriageway.

The A9 forms the boundary of the Drumochter Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation in this area, and the River Truim (which forms part of the River Spey Special Area of Conservation) runs generally to the west side of the carriageway, resulting in a narrow corridor between designated sites in places. The topography is generally less severe than that found in

Project 7 to the south, but adjacent infrastructure including the Highland Mainline railway, the Beaully-Denny powerline and National Cycle Network route NCN7 remain key constraints.

Project 8 passes the village of Dalwhinnie, which currently has an at-grade junction in the area constrained by the environmental designations noted.

As part of the upgrade to dual carriageway, existing at-grade junctions will be affected and improvements to these junctions will require to be considered as part of the assessment works.

1.3 Purpose of the Report

There have been two previous public information events on the DMRB Stage 2 Project 8 scheme development. These took place in March 2015 and August 2015. Reports on these events are available on Transport Scotland's Project 8 website page at the following web address:- [http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9 Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore](http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9%20Dalwhinnie%20to%20Crubenmore)

On 8 March 2016 a third public engagement event was held to announce the preferred route for the Project 8 Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore project which marks the end of Stage 2 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges process.

This event was advertised as a public drop in event and was held in the Dalwhinnie Village Hall.

This report summarises the event.

2 Drop In Event Promotion

2.1 Advertising of the Drop In Event

The public drop in event was advertised via a variety of means including:

- Notification was provided via the A9 Environmental Steering Group (ESG)
- postal invitations to local residents and various stakeholders
- a press release from Transport Scotland to various news media
- news items on the Transport Scotland website and Twitter account
- an advert for the event in the Badenoch and Strathspey Herald

A summary of the steps taken for each of the above is provided in the following paragraphs.

2.2 A9 Environmental Steering Group

The ESG had been consulted on the DMRB Stage 2 assessment and were advised of the preferred route announcement event taking place in Dalwhinnie at their meeting in February 2016.

2.3 Postal Invitations

Letters were issued to local residents, local businesses, landowners, the Community Council and other stakeholders. These letters confirmed the date and purpose of the drop in event. The letters were tailored to the particular audience, with five different letter types issued;

- Landowners within the corridor – 2 issued
- Local business and residents – 62 issued
- Dalwhinnie Community Council and Laggan Community Association – 2 issued
- Property/landowners outwith Project 8 but with an interest in the Dalwhinnie junction
- Respondees who had provided feedback at the previous Project 8 exhibitions

A generic version of the invite letter is included in **Appendix A**.

2.4 Transport Scotland Website and Social Media

Information regarding the event was uploaded to the Transport Scotland website and Twitter social media account as follows:

- Transport Scotland Website: [http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9 dualling Perth to Inverness](http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9%20dualling%20Perth%20to%20Inverness)
Transport Scotland Twitter social media account: [@transcotland](https://twitter.com/transcotland), with a link to an article on the website: Preferred Route On Display For Quarter Of A9 Dualling Programme

2.5 Advert

An advert was placed in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald the week before the event took place. A copy is included in **Appendix B**.

3 Drop In Event Details

3.1 General Details

The drop in event was held over one day on the 8th of March 2016 from 12 noon to 8pm.

Representatives from CFJV and Transport Scotland were available at the event to answer questions. Those in attendance throughout the event included the Transport Scotland Project Manager, the Transport Scotland Stakeholder Manager, and representatives from the CFJV engineering and stakeholder management teams.

The display material presented to the public set out the options considered for the four sections within Project 8 and the preferred route alignment for each section plus the preferred route junction.

In addition, PDFs of the display panels, were made available on the project section of the Transport Scotland website at the following web address:

[http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9 Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore](http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9%20Dalwhinnie%20to%20Crubenmore)

A copy of the display panels is provided in **Appendix C**.

3.2 Pre-Event Briefings

To ensure local land and property owners were fully aware of what was exhibited and how this could affect their land and property, meetings were arranged with representatives of the main landowner on the morning of the event prior to opening to the public. This was also attended by representatives of Transport Scotland and CFJV.

A meeting with a further landowner was not possible due the landowner having other prior commitments, and the relatively short notice provided. This meeting was arranged after the event.

3.3 Event Display Material

3.3.1 Event Display Panels

The material on display included nine panels which presented information under the following headings:

- Welcome
- Dual Carriageway Options
- The Preferred Route Option
- Preferred Option - Section 1 Option a
- Preferred Option - Section 2 Option a
- Preferred Option - Section 3 Option a

- Preferred Option - Section 4 Option a
- Preferred Option – Junction D
- What Happens Next

A copy of the display panels is provided within **Appendix D**

Photographs 3.1 and 3.2 below indicate how the panels were displayed.



Photograph 3-1: General layout of display panels at Dalwhinnie



Photograph 3-2: General layout of display panels at Dalwhinnie

3.3.2 Event Visualisation Material

The drop-in event display panel material was supplemented by three-dimensional visualisations of the engineering designs, shown on a display monitor as indicated on **Photograph 3-3**. Material presented included a video running continuously on a loop, and an interactive model of the proposed scheme which could be manipulated by the CFJV personnel to help people view specific areas of interest.

The interactive model also allowed members of the public to view the options from multiple viewpoints, including from locations of their choice in the local area covered by the model. The model facilitated discussion between event staff and attendees.

The video did not include the preferred junction arrangement, however this was included in the interactive model as indicated in **Photograph 3-3**.

A copy of the visualisation video is available on the Transport Scotland website at the following web address:

[http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9 Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore](http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/A9%20Dalwhinnie%20to%20Crubenmore)



Photograph 3-3: Visualisation display at Dalwhinnie

4 Attendance and Feedback

Each person entering the public engagement event was greeted by the CFJV Stakeholder Manager who explained the layout and the material on display, and also invited him or her to sign in to ensure that an accurate record of attendees was maintained.

A total of 23 individuals attended the event with 22 signing in and most providing their postal code. Some but not all also provided contact email addresses.

Attendees included 14 local residents and business interests, a representative of the main landowner, representatives from SSE, Network Rail, Spey Fisheries Board, representatives of Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore Community Councils, a local THC Councillor and a reporter and photographer from the Strathy (Strathspey and Badenoch Herald).

Each person attending the drop was welcomed by and/or spoke with a Transport Scotland or CFJV representative.

4.1 Summary of Comments Received

4.1.1 Sources of Feedback

As the event was advertised as an announcement of the preferred route, no formal feedback was sought, hence a formal feedback form was not used on this occasion.

However informal feedback was received during verbal discussions with the TS/CFJV team on the day. In general this feedback was favourable, with the preferred Dalwhinnie junction location to the south of the village being broadly welcomed. Feedback from the main landowner was generally positive as they were content that the preferred route option did not include any of the split carriageway options previously presented.

One resident who had previously commented seeking a split junction in order to keep commercial/HGV traffic to a minimum within the village did provide comment to the 'Strathy' reporter which was published in an article later that week. Their concern centred on the potential for increased noise at the southern end of the village. This was related to the possibility of HGV vehicles slowing down to stop and then accelerating at a proposed new link road's junction with the existing A889 south of Dalwhinnie. Concern was also noted by this resident about the possibility of additional light pollution at this location from vehicle headlights and extended street lighting.

Other local residents and businesses made further comment about the detail of how the junction enters the village and discussed the relative pros and cons of the options on display which included a T-junction, roundabout or provision of a through link onto the existing A889. It was noted by CFJV staff to those who raised such concerns that such issues relating to noise, provision for public transport, and lighting will be considered in greater detail during the next stage of development at DMRB Stage 3.

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5 What happens next?

The drop-in event panel titled “What happens next?” highlighted the anticipated reports and assessments that would follow the drop-in event. These are indicated below.

5.1 DMRB Stage 3

Transport Scotland will now take forward the development and assessment of the preferred route option for the scheme.

The next stage of the assessment process will include:

- consultation with stakeholders, affected landowners and the general public to inform the design development of the preferred route option
- identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of draft Orders, preparation of an environmental impact assessment of the developed preferred route option including access issues
- publication of an Environmental Statement which will include suitable mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environment
- an exhibition to present the developing DMRB Stage 3 design and seek further feedback is anticipated in autumn 2016. The publication of the Road Orders, Compulsory Purchase Order and Environmental Statement is anticipated in summer 2017

5.2 Future Events

This drop in event and planned future exhibitions are important to ensure that the public and stakeholders are kept up to date with the progress of the Project and that they are given the opportunity to provide feedback to inform the design process.

It is anticipated that a further public consultation event will be held later in 2016 to seek feedback on the ongoing development to support completion of the design, environmental impact assessment and design of environmental mitigation, together with preparation of the Draft Road Orders.

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Appendix A

Invitation Letters

Appendix A Invitation Letters

Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
Telephone: 0141 2727100, Fax: 0141 272 7272
info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk



«Address»

Your ref:

Our ref: A9/GGD/DAL/EX

Date:

04/03/2016

Dear «Salutation»,

A9 Dualling Programme Project 8 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Preferred Route Announcement Local Engagement Event on 8 March 2016, 12.00pm – 8.00pm

Further to the two public exhibitions held in 2015, our consultants CH2M Fairhurst Joint Venture (CFJV) have progressed the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 assessment process and the preferred route and junction option have been identified for the dualling between Dalwhinnie and Crubenmore.

We are staging a drop-in public engagement event in Dalwhinnie Village Hall for local people on Tuesday 8 March 2016 from 12pm to 8pm to which you are invited. This drop-in event is being held for local residents and landowners in the vicinity of Project 8 and has been advertised in this week's local press. We were keen to make you aware as someone who has provided feedback to the previous Project 8 exhibition.

The preferred route that will be on display is based on the mainline and junction options shown at the exhibitions held in 2015 and marks the end of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2. Work is now underway progressing the DMRB Stage 3 design, which includes the consideration for: side road and access options, structures options, drainage options etc.

Whilst the exhibition will provide an opportunity to view the preferred mainline route, please speak to a member of the team at the exhibition if you wish to provide feedback to assist with the DMRB Stage 3 design, or alternatively we would be pleased to meet with you after the exhibitions.

Representatives from Transport Scotland and CFJV will be present will be able to update you on the process that has been followed to identify the preferred route and junction option and to share the outcome with you. We will also be able to advise on the next steps in the process and give an overview of the key programme timeframes.

Should you have any queries regarding this public engagement event please contact either myself or our consultant Stakeholder Manager Carron Tobin on carron.tobin@ruraldimensions.com or 07715773660.

Yours sincerely,

Sam MacNaughton
A9 Dualling Stakeholder Manager

cc CH2M HILL Fairhurst Joint Venture

Appendix B

Advert

Appendix B Advert

A9 Dualling

Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

Preferred Route Drop-in



A drop-in session is being held by Transport Scotland in Dalwhinnie Hall on 8 March 2016 to give local residents, businesses and road users the opportunity to view the preferred route and junction option for the section of the A9 to be dualled between Dalwhinnie and Crubenmore – part of the overall A9 Dualling Programme.

Transport Scotland officials and the design consultants will be on hand to answer any questions.

Details of the event for the Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore project are as follows:

Location: Dalwhinnie Village Hall, Dalwhinnie, PH19 1AB

Tuesday 8 March 2016

12pm – 8pm

For further information on the A9 Dualling Programme visit:

www.transport.gov.scot/a9dualling



Appendix C

Display Panels

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Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project Welcome



This public information event provides an overview of the route option assessment work Transport Scotland has been taking forward for the A9 Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project and presents the preferred route option.

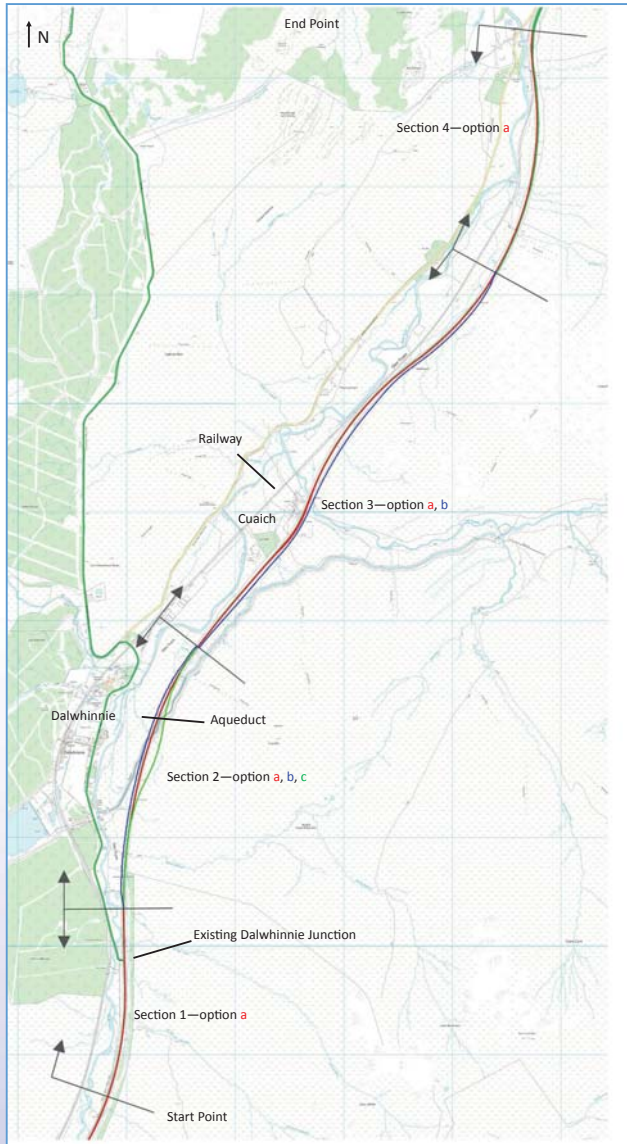
Transport Scotland staff and their consultants will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have in relation to the scheme.

Further information is available on the Transport Scotland website:

<http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/a9-dalwhinnie-crubenmore>



Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project Dual Carriageway Options



The project was split into four sections to aid design work on the dual carriageway options. The sections are shown on the adjacent map and were chosen based on adjacent constraints such as topography, environmental features and the proximity of the Highland Mainline railway.

The southern and northernmost parts of the project are highly constrained and following the earlier sifting stages only one option is being considered in more detail for those areas. The central part of the project is less constrained and multiple options were considered for those areas.

- Section 1 is 1.75km in length (1 option)
- Section 2 is 2.55km in length (3 options)
- Section 3 is 4.45km in length (2 options)
- Section 4 is 2.3km in length (1 option)

The options in each section were assessed separately and the line of the dual carriageway for the overall project was identified by joining together the preferred options for each section.

Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

The Preferred Route Option



- Based on the route options assessment process, section options 1a, 2a, 3a and 4a are to be taken forward as the combined preferred route option. The following exhibition panels present the preferred option within each section.
- During the design and development of the preferred option (DMRB Stage 3 assessment process), the following important elements will be given further consideration:
 - A strategy will be developed and incorporated into the design to provide alternative access provision to the individual private accesses along the route, and to address Non-Motorised User (NMU) access requirements
 - Further development of the design will seek to minimise impact on land, properties and environment
 - The design will also be developed to assist construction and reduce impact on road users



Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

Preferred Option - Section I Option a



This section is 1.75km long located to the south of Dalwhinnie. As this section passes through a very constrained corridor we considered a single option for the new dual carriageway, this involves widening to the east of the existing A9.

There was limited opportunity to widen to the west of the existing A9 due to the proximity of the River Truim and its flood plain.

The preferred option therefore follows the line of the existing A9 northbound carriageway with widening to the east. This is located in the area between the existing A9, the existing tree line and the Beauly to Denny power line.



Detailed plans of this option are available for viewing at this event.



Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

Preferred Option - Section 2 Option a



Section 2 is 2.55km long and is located adjacent to Dalwhinnie. We considered three options for the new dual carriageway in this area taking into account the constraints imposed by the aqueduct, Dalwhinnie and the Drumochter Hills. Option 2a was located to the east, option 2b to the west, and option 2c was an offline southbound carriageway.

The preferred option is option 2a. This option, as with the preferred option in section 1, follows the line of the existing A9 northbound carriageway with widening to the east. Option 2a was recommended as it was considered to have the least visual impact, would require less earthworks fill material, and therefore had the lowest cost. Option 2a also had a smaller land use impact when compared to option 2c.

- Option 2a - widening to the east of the existing A9
- The proposed northbound carriageway would follow the line of the existing A9
- The proposed new southbound carriageway would be constructed to the east of the existing A9
- Realignment of the aqueduct would be required to allow construction of a new bridge



Detailed plans of this option are available for viewing at this event.



Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

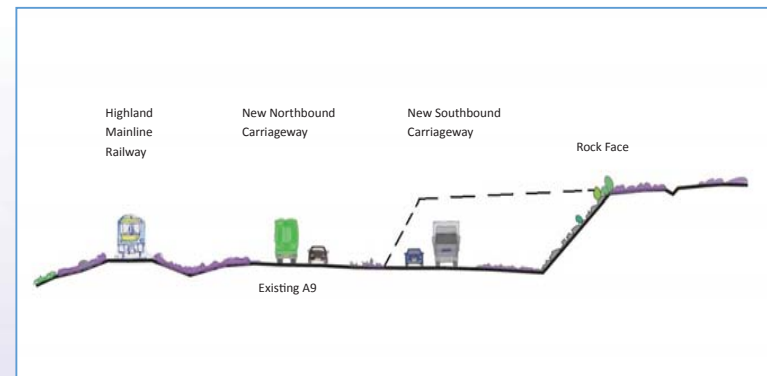
Preferred Option - Section 3 Option a



Section 3 is 4.45 kilometres in length, is located to the north of Dalwhinnie and passes the settlement of Cuaich. Two options were considered. Option 3a proposed widening to the east of the existing A9. Option 3b also involved widening to the east however this option incorporated a split level between the northbound and southbound carriageways.

The preferred option is option 3a. Option 3a was recommended as it required less earthworks excavations, had less imported material requirements and hence a lower cost, and was also considered to have reduced land use impact.

- Option 3a - widening to the east of the existing A9
- Proposed northbound carriageway would follow the line of the existing A9
- Proposed southbound carriageway would be constructed to the east of the existing A9



Detailed plans of these options are available for viewing at this event.



Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

Preferred Option - Section 4 Option a



Section 4 is 2.3 kilometres long and is located to the south of the existing Crubenmore dual carriageway. As this section passes through a very constrained corridor a single option for new dual carriageway was considered which involves widening to the west of the existing A9.

The proposed northbound carriageway would be constructed to the west between the existing A9 and the Highland Mainline railway, with the southbound carriageway following the line of the existing A9.

At the tie-in with the existing dual carriageway at Crubenmore the route is significantly constrained by the Highland Mainline railway to the west and the steep topography and an existing waterfall to the east. To avoid impacting on these constraints it is anticipated that a retaining wall would be required on the west side of the proposed dual carriageway adjacent to the Highland Mainline railway.



Visualisation - looking North



Detailed plans of this option are available for viewing at this event.



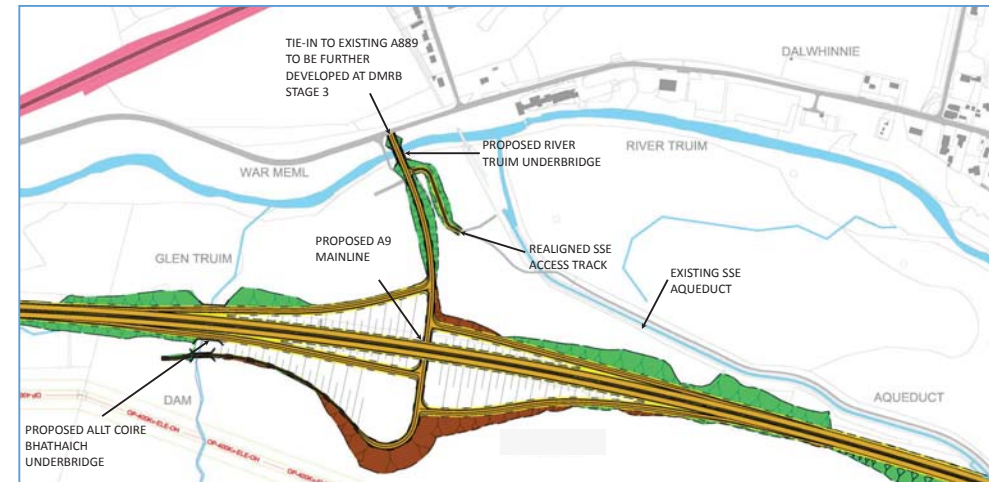
Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project Preferred Option - Junction D



The options that were considered at DMRB Stage 2 assessment were all located towards the south of Dalwhinnie and link to the A889, these options were:

- Option B – Loop layout junction option with overbridge
- Option C – Dumbbell layout junction option with underpass
- Option D – Diamond layout junction option with underpass
- Option E – Loop layout junction option with underpass
- Option F – Split southern option with loop layout junction option and underpass

The preferred junction option was option D - the diamond layout option with underpass.



Junction option D was preferable to the other options as it contributes to an overall earthworks balance for the project. Junction D is preferable in terms of cost. It is also considered to provide a more appropriate fit within the Dalwhinnie landscape, and the diamond layout facilitates mitigation planting.

The plan extract is the current development option of the option D diamond layout junction which was presented at the August 2015 exhibition. This ongoing developing junction option includes a track that would provide access to land to the east.

A detailed plan of this junction option is available to view at this event.



Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore Project

What Happens Next?



Transport Scotland will now take forward the development and assessment of the preferred route option for the scheme.

The next stage of the assessment process will include:

- consultation with stakeholders, affected landowners and the general public to inform the design development of the preferred route option
- identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of draft Orders, preparation of an environmental impact assessment of the developed preferred route option including access issues, and
- publication of an Environmental Statement which will include suitable mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environment
- an exhibition to present the developing DMRB Stage 3 design and seek further feedback is anticipated in autumn 2016. The publication of the Road Orders, Compulsory Purchase Order and Environmental Statement is anticipated in summer 2017

We will keep you updated through a range of direct communications and consultations, as well as further public exhibitions. You can contact CFJV stakeholder manager Carron Tobin at any time on 07715 773660 or carron.tobin@ruraldimensions.com.

Further general information on the A9 Dualling Programme can be found on Transport Scotland's A9 Dualling website at:

<http://www.transport.gov.scot/project/a9-dualling-perth-inverness>

Telephone: 0141 272 7100 Email: A9dualling@transport.gov.scot



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