1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The A9 trunk road provides a strategic link between the Scottish Highlands and the Central Belt. The Scottish Government's '*Strategic Transport Projects Review*' (STPR), published in 2008, recommended a range of improvements for the A9, including upgrading to dual carriageway standard between Perth and Inverness, a distance of some 177 km.

1.1.2 In December 2011, the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment announced the Scottish Government's commitment to dual the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025; identified as a strategic priority for Scotland via the 2011 Infrastructure and Investment Plan (IIP). This commitment was reinforced in the 2015 IIP.

1.1.3 The A9 Dualling Programme now includes three design 'Sections'; North, Central and South. The Central Section (from Glen Garry to Dalraddy) consists of four design 'Projects':

- Project 7 – Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie
- Project 8 – Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore
- Project 9 – Crubenmore to Kincraig
- Project 10 – Kincraig to Dalraddy

1.1.4 This Environmental Statement (ES) presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed upgrade of the existing A9 trunk road within Project 9 between Crubenmore and Kincraig (referred to as 'the Proposed Scheme' throughout this ES). This project has been progressed to a 'Stage 3' level of design in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

1.1.5 In Scotland, DMRB Stage 3 requires the development of a design to a sufficient level of detail to inform the production of Roads Orders under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. Where the project is of a sufficient scale, the DMRB Stage 3 design is subject to an EIA. A summary explanation of DMRB Stages 1 to 3 is provided in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1: DMRB Staged Development Process

DMRB Stage	Objectives
Stage 1	Identification of route corridor options and principal environmental constraints and opportunities. Selection of a preferred route corridor within which the road project will be designed and constructed.
Stage 2	Development and assessment of mainline and junction options within the preferred route corridor. Engineering, Economic and Environmental assessment of options to a level sufficient to inform selection of a preferred mainline route and junction location(s).
Stage 3	Further design development of selected mainline and junctions to include drainage, structures, accesses, etc. to a level sufficient to inform and support Road Orders. Assessment of the Proposed Scheme undertaken in accordance with Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011 which implements EC Directive 85/337, with publication of an Environmental Statement (ES) (if required).

1.2 Project 9 - Crubenmore to Kincraig

1.2.1 The Proposed Scheme includes the widening of approximately 16.5km of the A9 between Crubenmore and Kincraig to form a dual carriageway. The extent of the Proposed Scheme is shown in **Figure 1-1** below. The Proposed Scheme commences at the end of the existing dual carriageway at Crubenmore and ties into the existing dual carriageway at Kincraig (Project 10). It includes the incorporation of grade separated junctions at Newtonmore and Kingussie.

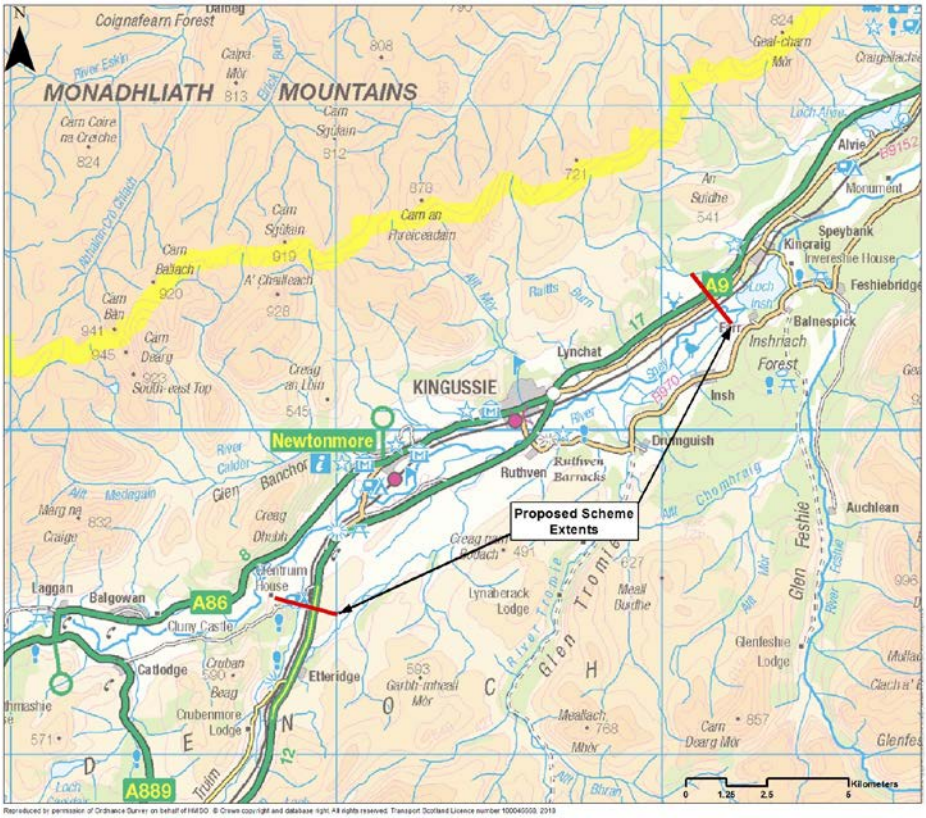

Figure 1-1: Project 9 – Crubenmore to Kincraig – regional context

1.2.2 **Figure 1-2** notes some of the environmental sensitivities of the surrounding area. The key environmental designations in proximity to the Proposed Scheme include:

- River Spey – Insh Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site
- River Spey – Insh Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Insh Marshes Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- River Spey SAC
- River Spey SSSI
- Insh Marshes National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Cairngorms National Park (CNP)
- Ruthven Barracks Scheduled Monument and Category 'A' Listed Building
- Raitts Cave souterrain, Lynchat – Scheduled Monument
- Complex of Category 'B' and 'C' Listed Buildings at Balavil and Meadowside
- Ancient woodland (not shown on **Figure 1-2**)

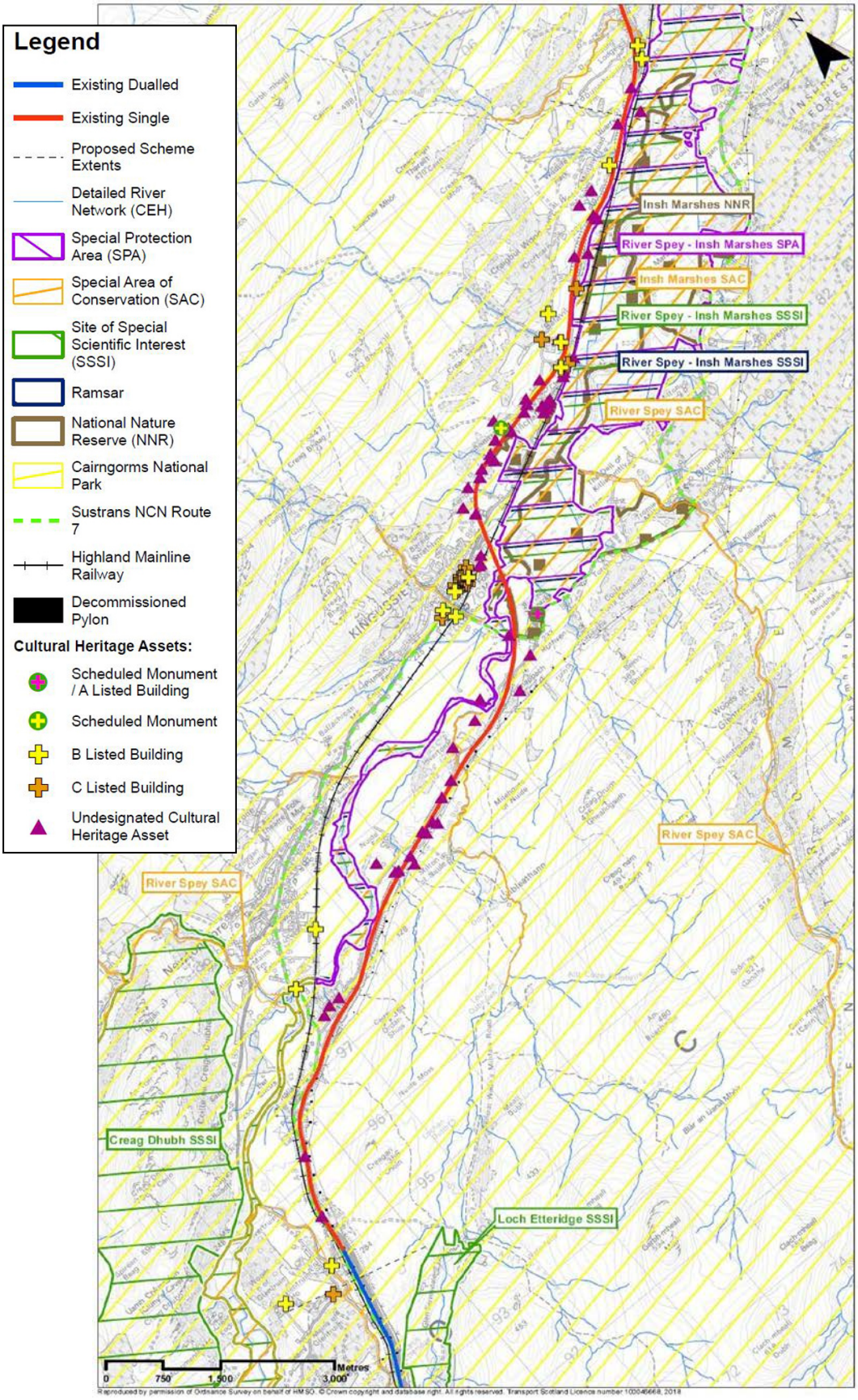

Figure 1-2: Project 9 – Crubenmore to Kincraig location and local constraints

1.2.3 There are also a range of significant engineering constraints in proximity to the Proposed Scheme, including:

- the A9 trunk road itself, which will require continued operation during construction
- Highland Main Line (HML) railway, running to the west of the A9 between Crubenmore and Kingussie, crossing underneath the A9 at Kingussie, then running to the east of the A9 towards Kincraig – under-track drainage connections are required, as well as a replacement HML crossing at Kingussie
- National Cycle Network route 7 (NCN7) runs to the west of the A9 before crossing to the east at Kingussie
- the B970 local road crosses under the A9 at Ruthven
- the A86/ B9152 crosses under the A9 at Kingussie, and the B9152 continues in proximity to the east of the A9, north of Kingussie
- various watercourse crossings, including the River Spey and local tributaries
- fluvial (river) floodplain extents
- various private properties, estates and associated accesses, including the A9 bridge crossing of the Highland Wildlife Park access

1.2.4 Within the Proposed Scheme extents, the A9 crosses 31 watercourses, via 28 culverts and three bridge structure crossings; including the River Spey. The landscape throughout the Proposed Scheme is highly scenic and sits wholly within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP), and partially within the Ben Alder Laggan and Glen Banchor Special Landscape Area (SLA). The River Spey runs in proximity to the A9, allowing open views over extensive floodplains in places. Mountain ranges of the CNP form the backdrop to views in most directions. The towns of Newtonmore and Kingussie are situated to the west of the A9, and are visible from a number of sections of the road.

1.2.5 One of the most important areas of this project is the River Spey crossing, which encompasses important landscape, heritage and nature conservation designations. The landscape to the east opens out over the Insh Marshes National Nature Reserve (NNR), and the Ruthven Barracks Scheduled Monument rising above the strath is a prominent feature within the floodplain. Such landscapes create an impressive experience for travellers through the project extent.

1.3 Statutory Context for EIA

1.3.1 The requirement for EIA originates from EIA Directive (85/33/EEC) ('the EIA Directive'). The original European Directive and subsequent amendments were codified by Directive 2011/92/EU, which was further amended in 2014 by Directive 2014/52/EU. This Directive was adopted on 15 May 2014 and transposed into UK Legislation on 16 May 2017.

1.3.2 As such, EIA regulations relevant to trunk road projects in Scotland are The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (EIA) Regulations 2017. However, transitional arrangements provided by the 2014/52/EU Directive, confirm that EIA for projects subject to Scoping prior to 16 May 2017 can be undertaken in accordance with the previous EIA Regulations. Given that the Scoping procedure for A9 Dualling projects was undertaken prior to May 2017, this EIA is therefore undertaken in accordance with The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as amended by the EIA (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended), hereafter referred to as 'the EIA Regulations'.

1.3.3 Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations sets out categories of large-scale development that definitively require EIA. In addition, the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended) requires an EIA to be undertaken for certain road projects, including construction or improvement projects.

1.3.4 As the Proposed Scheme is over 10 km in length, it falls within the definitions of a Schedule 1 project and EIA is required. Consideration of the need for EIA was confirmed via a 'Record of Determination' (RoD) submitted to Transport Scotland. Whilst the RoD is not a formal EIA Screening or Scoping, it records the basic details of the scheme, the surrounding environment and the fact that it is a qualifying Schedule 1 project. The RoD therefore provides an administrative mechanism to support Transport Scotland's decision to proceed to EIA.

1.3.5 Schedule 4, Part 1 of the EIA Regulations outlines the particular information to be included in an ES, and **Table 1-2** provides a simple overview on where the required information is contained in this document.

Table 1-2: Schedule 4 EIA Requirements

	Specified Information	Location within ES
1.	Description of the development, including in particular – (a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases (b) a description of the main characteristics of the production processes, for instance, nature and quantity of the materials used (c) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration and light) resulting from the operation of the proposed development.	**Chapter 5** **Chapter 18** **Chapters 10 to 18**
2.	An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects.	**Chapter 3**
3.	A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular; population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors.	**Chapters 8 – 18**, see Baseline Conditions and Potential Impacts sections.
4.	A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development, resulting from – (a) the existence of the development; (b) the use of natural resources; (c) the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste, and the description by the applicant or appellant of the forecasting methods used to assess the effects on the environment.	**Chapters 8 – 18**, see Approach and Methods and Potential Impacts sections.
5.	A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.	**Chapters 8 – 18** see Mitigation sub-sections **Chapter 22** (Schedule of Environmental Commitments)
6.	A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 5 of this Part.	See separately available Non-Technical Summary
7.	An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant or appellant in compiling the required information.	**Chapters 8 – 19**, see Limitations to Assessment sections.

1.4 Content of the Environmental Statement

1.4.1 Annex E of Circular 8/2007 '*The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 1999*' provides guidance on the EIA of trunk road schemes in Scotland. Following updates through the 2011 EIA Regulations, Parts III and IV remain extant. Guidance contained in Circular 8/2007 in Annex E therefore continues to apply. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) also provides Government guidance on the design, development and assessment of trunk road schemes.

1.4.2 The purpose of this ES is to report the assessment findings and mitigation recommendations of the EIA undertaken in accordance with the above guidance. Each assessment topic chapter provides details of any further topic-specific guidance applied for each relevant subject, and the full range of ES Chapters are listed in **Table 1-3** below. A description of the structure of these chapters is provided in **section 6.2**.

Table 1-3: Contents of the Environmental Statement

Chapter	Topic
1	Introduction and Overview (this chapter)
2	Need for the Scheme
3	Alternatives Considered
4	Design Development
5	The Proposed Scheme
6	Overview of Assessment Process
7	Consultation
8	People and Communities: Community and Private Assets
9	People and Communities: Effects on All Travellers
10	Geology, Soils and Groundwater
11	Road Drainage and the Water Environment
12	Ecology and Nature Conservation
13	Landscape
14	Visual
15	Cultural Heritage
16	Air Quality
17	Noise and Vibration
18	Materials
19	Policies and Plans
20	Cumulative Effects
21	Schedule of Environmental Commitments
22	Summary of Significant Residual Impacts

1.4.3 It should be noted that design development for the Proposed Scheme has been informed by a series of environmentally-led workshops and reviews, which have themselves been informed by earlier work undertaken through previous DMRB design and assessment stages. In effect, the early involvement of environmental specialists has aimed to use the EIA as a design tool to identify the potential impacts of the Proposed Scheme and recommend appropriate changes to the developing

design which inherently reduce the environmental impact (discussed further in **Chapter 4**, **Design Development**).

1.4.4 This process identified opportunities to refine the details of the scheme; for example, by including mammal ledges in a number of culvert designs or refining the route alignment and earthworks extents to avoid certain habitats, or the 1 in 200-year flood zone, to prevent or reduce potential adverse environmental effects. Such measures, embedded into the DMRB Stage 3 design, are referred to as 'embedded mitigation' throughout the topic chapters in this ES.

1.4.5 Further mitigation requirements, identified to address any potentially significant adverse impacts are referred to as proposed 'standard' or additional 'specific' mitigation in each assessment chapter. All mitigation (embedded and proposed) is collated and detailed in **Chapter 21**, **Schedule of Environmental Commitments.**

1.5 Review and Comment

1.5.1 Copies of this Environmental Statement (ES) are available for inspection at:

Transport Scotland Major Transport Projects Infrastructure Projects (MTRIPS) Buchanan House 58 Port Dundas Street Glasgow G4 0HF Telephone 0141 272 7100 Monday to Thursday 8.30am-5pm, Friday 8.30am-4.30pm	**Badenoch Library** Badenoch Centre Spey Street Kingussie PH21 1EH Telephone: 01540 661 596 Mon 12-5pm, 6-8pm Tues CLOSED Wed 10am-1pm, 2-5pm Thurs 10am-1pm, 2-5pm Fri 10am-1pm, 2-5pm
The Highland Council Service Point The Courthouse High Street Kingussie PH21 1HR Telephone: 01540 664 529 Monday to Friday 9am–12.30pm, 1.30–3pm	**The Highland Council Service Point** Townhouse Castle Street, Inverness, IV1 1JJ Telephone: 01349 886 606 Mon 9am-5pm Tues 9am-5pm Wed 10am-5pm Thurs 9am-5pm Fri 9am-5pm
Please note that all locations are closed at weekends and bank holidays.	

1.5.2 The ES is also available online from Transport Scotland's A9 Dualling, Crubenmore to Kincraig website at: https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/a9-crubenmore-to-kincraig/

1.5.3 A hard copy of the ES may be purchased at a cost of £150, and the ES is also available in DVD format, at a cost of £10, by writing to Transport Scotland at the address shown above, or by email to: A9dualling@transport.gov.scot.

1.5.4 Any person wishing to express an opinion on this ES should write to Transport Scotland at the above address. Formal representations are invited until six weeks after the advertised date of publication.

1.6 References

1.6.1 Relevant references for introductory Chapters 1 to 7 of this ES are compiled and provided at the end of **Chapter 7**.