Aviemore to Carrbridge Non-Motorised User (NMU) Route Study

Baseline Assessment Report

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
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1. Scheme Description

1.1. Project Background and Context

In recognition of the Scottish Government's wider commitment to promote active travel in Scotland, Transport Scotland has commissioned Atkins Mouchel Joint Venture (AMJV) to undertake a route study and options appraisal into the provision of a shared use Non-Motorised User (NMU) facility between the settlements of Aviemore and Carrbridge. The study will be led and funded by Transport Scotland working closely with multiagency partners from Transport Scotland Active Travel team, Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), The Highland Council (THC), Sustrans and HITRANS.

In addition to funding the study, Transport Scotland has advised that should any such NMU route successfully obtain all its statutory consents (including land acquisition) in time to be included in the construction contract for A9 Dualling project, then Transport Scotland would make provision for its inclusion accordingly, thereby effectively funding the construction.

1.2. Scope of baseline assessment

This Baseline Assessment considers an NMU facility between the settlements of Aviemore and Carrbridge. Refer to Figure 1.1.

This baseline assessment considers the following aspects with a view to identifying the need for the scheme and the identification and sifting of corridor options to enable future consultation, detailed option generation and assessment:

- National and Local Plans and Policies
- NMU Guidance and Standards
- Existing NMU Facilities
- Data Received from consultation (including A9 Dualling consultation)
- Summary of Findings
- Preliminary Corridor Identification and Assessment

This report summarises the work carried out under the above headings and makes recommendations for the next stage of the project which will consist of the preparation of an Options Appraisal Report which will develop and assess options generated from the corridors defined in this report. This further report will be informed by ongoing data collection and further consultation (including public engagement).

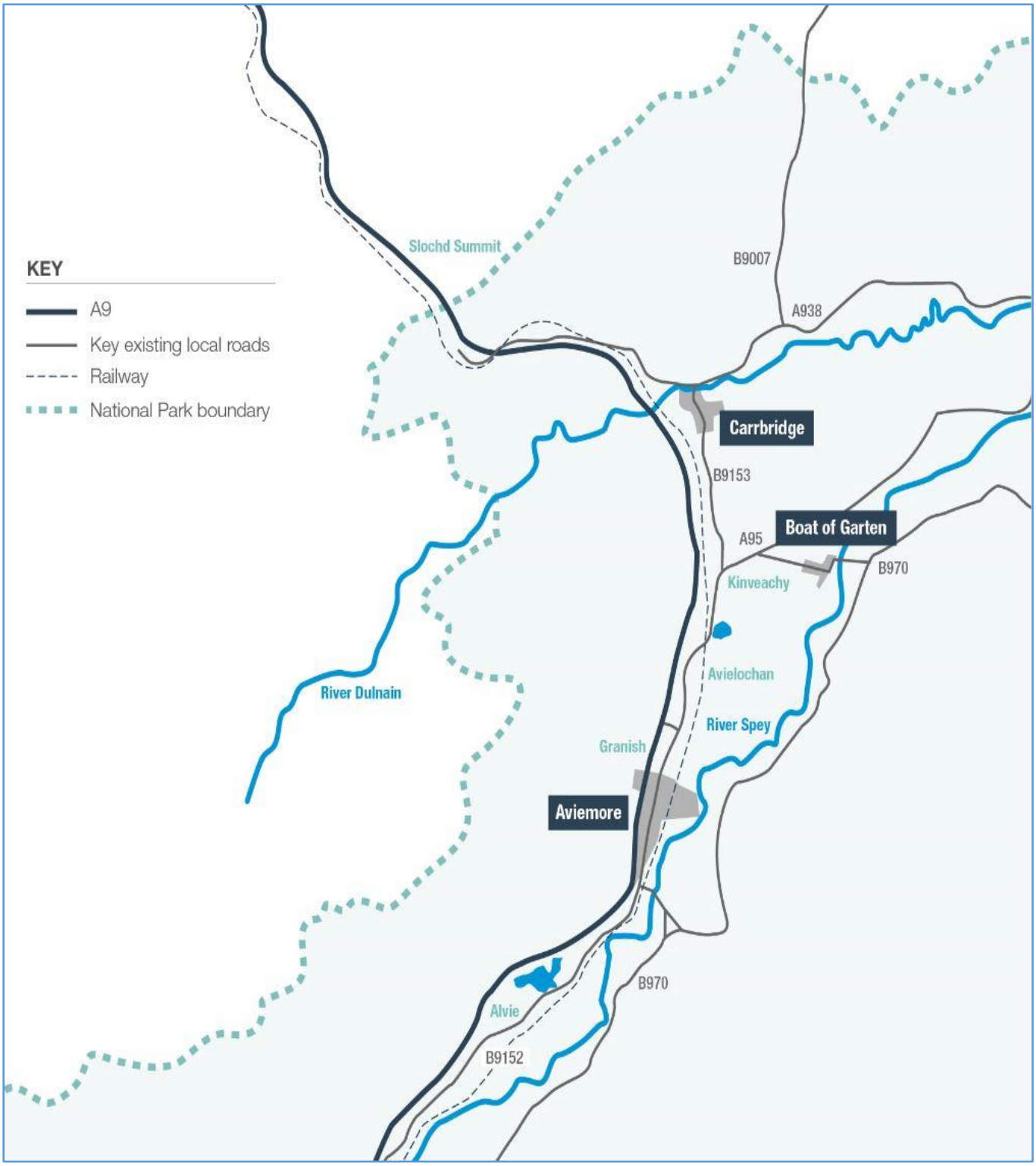

Figure 1.1: Study Area - Location Plan

2. Baseline Assessment Study

2.1. Review of Policies and Plans

National Policies and strategies

The undernoted policies and development plans have been reviewed as part of the assessment. The following includes a summary of the main aspects of these plans which relate to this report:

National Transport Strategy (2016)

The National Transport Strategy (NTS) was originally published in December 2006 and sets a framework for transport in Scotland up to 2026. A refresh of the NTS was published in January 2016. The NTS sets out the following vision for transport in Scotland:

"An accessible Scotland with safe, integrated and reliable transport that supports economic growth, provides opportunities for all and is easy to use; a transport system that meets everyone's needs, respects our environment and contributes to health; services recognised internationally for quality, technology and innovation, and for effective and well-maintained networks; a culture where transport providers and planners respond to the changing needs of businesses, communities and users, and where one ticket will get you anywhere".

The NTS also outlines five high level objectives and three key strategic outcomes. The high-level objectives are as follows:

- Promote economic growth by building, enhancing managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency;
- Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network;
- Protect our environment and improve health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumption of resources and energy;
- Improve safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff; and
- Improve integration by making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connection between different forms of transport.

The key strategic outcomes are outlined as follows:

- Improved journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and lack of integration and connections in transport;
- Reduced emissions, to tackle climate change, air quality, health improvement; and
- Improved quality, accessibility and affordability, to give choice of public transport, better quality services and value for money, or alternative to car.

Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030

This policy sets out the potential for active travel in Scotland and highlights the benefits which could be provided. To achieve these, environments should be created in which cycling and walking are considered primary modes of travel, by providing well promoted and clearly signposted active travel options which put people and destinations above the movement of vehicles. The active travel network must ensure continuity of routes and linking of key destinations, encouraging people to travel safely on foot or by bicycle within and between settlements.

Cycling Action Plan (CAP) for Scotland 2017-2020

The CAP sets a vision for 2020 to develop ambitious and innovative approaches to make Scotland a more active and safe nation. A factor in this is to deliver local infrastructure to encourage people to choose active travel for short journeys, through Community Links programmes, including on and off-road routes with associated public realm improvements. The CAP strives to grow and maintain the National Cycle

Network (NCN) to provide a strategic network of longer distance cycling routes for leisure, recreation, tourism and functional trips on the basis that developing this, especially in rural areas, will promote cycle tourism and connect rural communities. The CAPS sets out 19 actions that should be followed by the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland, as well as local authorities, communities, public, private and third-party sectors to achieve the Scottish Government's vision that by 2020 10% of everyday journeys will be taken by bicycle. The CAPS commits to review and update the Trunk Roads Cycling Initiative, which commits to improving cycling and walking infrastructure around trunk roads when the opportunity is identified.

Sustrans Policy on Cycling and Walking Routes and Networks (2016)

Sustrans policy position on cycling and walking routes and networks is outlined below.

- High quality public space that supports cycling and walking routes and networks is an essential part of creating cohesive, happy and successful communities. Early involvement of local people in designing unique, memorable places that are responsive to their needs, and draws on local knowledge and creativity, ensures a long-lasting legacy.
- Effective segregation of space for cyclists, pedestrians and motor traffic will benefit all users but requires significant additional width and consideration to provide a high level of service. Each situation must be taken on a case by case basis, and careful consideration must be given to relevant factors.
- Well sign-posted routes and networks such as Quietways and Greenways can overcome barriers to cycling and walking by providing an alternative to riding on busy roads.

Active Travel Task Force Delivery Plan

The Active Travel Task Force Delivery Plan was published by Transport Scotland in July 2019. Developed in partnership with stakeholders and building on the recommendations of the June 2018 Active Travel Task Force report, the Delivery Plan seeks to improve delivery of the Scottish Government's Long-Term vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030, the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2017-20, the National Walking Strategy 2014 and wider strategies including the National Transport Strategy, the Climate Change Plan and the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework.

The Delivery Plan draws on the Task Force recommendations on improving delivery noting that infrastructure in and of itself is not enough to bring about the change Transport Scotland wishes to see and therefore includes recommendations on behaviours change, place making and the community led design of any new walking, cycling and public realm projects.

Local Policies and Strategies

The undernoted policies and development plans have been reviewed as part of the study. The following includes a summary of the main aspects of these plans which relate to this report:

HITRAN'S Regional Transport Strategies (2008)

HITRANS' Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) was approved by Scottish Ministers in July 2008 and covers a 14-year period until 2022 The RTS has as its vision enhancing the region's viability. The vision will be achieved in part by improving the interconnectivity of the whole region to strategic services and destinations by delivering walking and cycling links within and between main towns and strategic links within the area.

Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012)

The Highland Wide Local Development[1] (HwLDP) was adopted on 5 April 2012 and was constituted as the local development plan in law. It sets out the overarching spatial planning policy for the whole of The Highland Council area, except the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.

[1] Highland Wide Local Development Plan (2012). The Highland Council.

The HwLDP sets out a vision statement and spatial strategy for the area, taking on board the outcomes of consultation undertaken during preparation of the Plan. The HwLDP represents the strategic element of the development plans and its purpose is to give broad strategic land use planning guidance until 2020. The Plan provides for change in population, employment and in environmental conditions by indicating the nature of development that should be encouraged and where.

The overall aim of moving towards a sustainable region means that the intention of the Plan is to create sustainable communities, balance population growth, encourage economic development and safeguard the environment across the area.

Policies relevant to the NMU agenda contained within the HwLDP include:

Policy 77 Public Access - Where a proposal affects a route included in a Core Paths Plan or an access point to water, or significantly affects wider access rights, then The Council will require it to either:

- retain the existing path or water access point while maintaining or enhancing its amenity value; or
- ensure alternative access provision that is no less attractive, is safe and convenient for public use, and does not damage or disturb species or habitats.

Policy 78 Long Distance Routes - The Council, with its partners, will safeguard and seek to enhance long distance routes, and their settings. Consideration will be given to developing/improving further strategic multi-user routes both inland and along the coast with due regard to the impact on the Natural Heritage features along these routes.

Highland Local Transport Strategy (2010)

The principal themes at the heart of the Local Transport Strategy[2] (LTS) are:

- safety;
- sustainability;
- economic development; and
- integration.

All these themes are contained in national and regional transport strategies and they are again reflected in the LTS. The objectives outlined in the LTS are:

- Economy: Provide a transport network to enable sustainable economic growth, noting the very different conditions between urban and rural locations and addressing the remoteness factor facing Highland trips to the rest of the UK;
- Social Inclusion: Facilitate travel to enable economic/social involvement and improve access/travel choices to essential services for those without access to a private car;
- Environment: Manage/reduce the impacts of transport on the natural and built environment;
- Health: Increase levels of cycling and walking to promote health improvement and modal shift;
- Road Safety: Continue to improve road safety, addressing locations where road accidents are above average levels;
- Personal Safety: Address issues of perceived safety and personal security particularly where they are a barrier to walking, cycling and public transport;
- Policy Integration: Identify policy overlap across Council services, and with other public bodies (e.g. NHS), maximise benefits and minimise contradiction;
- Investment integration: Identify benefits and opportunities of combined transport procurement for all Council services;
- Traffic reduction: Where appropriate consider targets for reducing traffic, although noting the variation in conditions and requirements between rural and urban areas

LTS Policy No 4 states that the:

- The Council will continue to work in partnership with Transport Scotland and Sustrans to develop the National Cycle Network within Highland; and

[2] Highland Local Transport Strategy (2010). The Highland Council.

- The Council will adopt a collaborative approach to encouraging walking and cycling with different Highland Council services and other public agencies.

The Highland Council Core Path Plan (2015)

Local Authorities were granted powers and duties to uphold and facilitate responsible access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The Act placed a duty upon local authorities to prepare a plan for a path network and to keep a list of 'core paths'. Sections 13 and 19 of the Act state:

'It is the duty of the local authority to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any route, waterway or other means by which access rights may reasonably be exercised'; and

'The local authority may do anything which they consider appropriate for the purposes of maintaining a core path and keeping a core path free from obstruction or encroachment'.

Local authorities have a duty to make their Core Path Plans publicly available for inspection under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2015)

The Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP)[3] was adopted by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in 2015 and sets out the policies and proposals for the development of the area and land use. The plan provides the basis for assessing and reviewing all planning applications across the whole National Park.

The LDP reflects the Scottish Government's view that the planning system is essential to achieving its purpose of creating a more successful country through sustained economic growth, with developments being promoted and facilitated in the best places for them while protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. The LDP allows local communities to become involved in shaping the future of their area.

The LDP looks to reinforce the following four aims for Scottish National Parks:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 (2017)

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017–2022 (CNPPP) is the management plan for the National Park approved by Scottish Ministers. The document sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park, whilst also providing the strategic context for the Local Development Plan. It highlights the need to provide active travel enhancements in the Aviemore area that deliver improved transport connections for visitors and residents.

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan (2015)

The Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan (CNPCPP) was adopted by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in March 2015. It identifies a network of paths to provide high quality outdoor access opportunities. The CNPCPP has a number of objectives, including improving paths within, around and between communities and to public transport connections and places of local importance.

Active Aviemore

It is understood the 'Active Aviemore' study is being developed by HITRANS in partnership with the Cairngorms National Park Authority and The Highland Council, to promote the improvement of walking and cycling facilities within Aviemore. This study considers corridors around Grampian Road, the Railway

[3] Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2015). Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Station, Bus Interchange and Dalfaber Drive all within Aviemore itself. The study therefore considers the Aviemore locality alone and does not consider links from Aviemore to other nearby communities.

Whilst it is acknowledged the 'Active Aviemore' assessment may have an interaction with this assessment in relation to the tie-in within Aviemore, it is not considered to be a differentiator to this baseline assessment and the interface shall be considered further in the later stages of this assessment.

Community Councils

Further information from Community Councils can be seen in section 2.4. It is noted this information does not consist of plans or policies.

2.2. Guidance Relating to Non-Motorised Users

The following includes a summary of the main guidance reviewed in the preparation of this baseline assessment.

Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads

The Equality Act (2010), which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), places a requirement on Scottish public authorities to work towards eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment, advance equal opportunities and foster good relations. To comply with the Equality Act (2010), and to help deliver on its duty to actively promote disability equality, Transport Scotland has introduced 'Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads'[4]. Its production was one of the objectives of 'The Trunk Road Network, Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan'[5]. The Action Plan sets out the following objectives:

- To make Scotland's Trunk Road Network safer and more accessible for all users by the removal of barriers to movement along and across Trunk Roads;
- To develop all professional and technical staff involved in the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the Trunk Road Network to recognise and understand the needs of disabled people;
- To ensure the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the Trunk Road Network meets the needs of disabled people through the involvement of disabled people in the development of good practice guidance;
- To make facilities and services more accessible from the Trunk Road Network;
- To make journeys secure and comfortable for all by working with other service providers and utilising appropriate technology; and
- To promote journeys by public transport by working with Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and operators to improve access, facilities and information at bus stops, etc. directly accessed from Trunk Roads.

Cycling by Design

Cycling by Design[6] draws together and rationalises existing international cycle design guidelines into a single comprehensive guidance document. Subsequently, the primary focus of the document is the provision of consistent and appropriate design standards for cyclists that must be followed by consultants and contractors working on trunk road projects. The current version (Revised in 2010) incorporates legislative requirements relating to 'Inclusive Design'.

[4] Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads (2013). Transport Scotland.
[5] Roads for All: The Trunk Road Network, Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan (2006). Transport Scotland.
[6] Cycling by Design (2010). Transport Scotland.

2.3. Existing NMU Routes Within Study Area

Within the study area between Aviemore and Carrbridge, there are numerous existing pedestrian, cycle and equestrian facilities which have been reviewed as part of this assessment. These routes have been identified through data collection and validated through consultation and site walkovers to confirm their accuracy. For details of all routes refer to Figure 1.1 to 1.5 of Appendix A.

The following is a summary of those existing routes which after the initial review were considered for use as part of the corridor selection.

- 01 No. National Cycle Network (NCN Route 7);
- 03 No. Public Rights of Way (PRoWs);
- 02 No. core paths
- 07 No. other NMU Routes

These facilities are in close proximity to the existing A9, B9152, B9153, A95, A938, the Highland Mainline Railway and Strathspey Steam Railway and are used by a combination of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

By following the existing core paths, PRoWs and Other NMU Routes, all non-motorised users can travel between Aviemore, Boat of Garten, Carrbridge and beyond, without the need to travel directly on the existing A9 carriageway. The existing NMU route between the communities of Aviemore and Carrbridge is by way of the NCN7 as discussed further below. This route is not direct and is not fully segregated as shares the B9153 carriageway at the northern end from Kinveachy (A95 junction to B9153) towards Carrbridge.

Detailed descriptions of these existing routes are provided below with table 1 providing a general description and summary of the predominant user group Figures 1.1 to 1.5 in Appendix A illustrate the routes and existing crossing points.

National Cycle Network (NCN)

The NCN is a network of cycle routes comprising minor routes, disused railways, pedestrian routes, canal towpaths and traffic calmed routes, created by the charity Sustrans. Given the mixed nature of routes that make up the NCN, sections of the network are also designated as core paths or PRoWs.

Within the study area, the NCN7 runs through Aviemore on the eastern side of the Highland Mainline Railway. From the centre of Aviemore, NMUs access the route from Dalfaber Drive and follow it north onto Spey Avenue with cyclists on carriageway. At the end of Spey Avenue, the route follows a private track for approximately 5.9km to Kinchurdy Road. Cyclists remain on carriageway for 3.0km along Kinchurdy Road and Deshar Road.

A segregated, shared use footpath/cyclepath continues to the A95/B9153 for a total segregated length of 2.4km. The cycle route then runs on the B9153 carriageway for 3.7km to Carrbridge. Upon reaching Carrbridge and the 30mph speed restriction, although there are adjacent footpaths, cyclists remain on the carriageway for the final 0.4 km.

The total length of NCN7 between Aviemore and Carrbridge is approximately 15.5km measured from the junction of Grampian Road/Dalfaber Drive in Aviemore to the B9153/Carr Road in Carrbridge.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

The National Catalogue of Rights of Way (CROW) is maintained by ScotWays in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and local authorities who can also retain their own records. Access along PRoWs are protected by the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, Section 46. Proposed diversions to PRoWs can be considered where these are deemed suitable by the local planning authority.

Three PRoWs have been identified within the study area and are shown on Figure 1.1 to 1.5, Appendix A. The PRoWs are described as follows:

- HB47 (approx. 12km) – A claimed PRoW which follows the alignment of General Wade's Military Road and connects with NCN7 between Carrbridge and Sluggan. The route was considered to be in use by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and this was further supported by information provided by The Highland Council Access Officer. The PRoW extends from Kinveachy to Slochd and at present terminates to the west of the A9. However, there is a link via NCN7 at Slochd to the at-grade crossing which creates an additional link to PRoW HI110. This small section of the route should be given the same consideration as the PRoWs it connects. In addition, The Highland Council Access Officer noted that there is a connection across the A9 at Kinveachy which was noted during the site visit as being an at-grade crossing to the A95 and B9153. This might reasonably be considered a natural extension of the PRoW connecting in to NCN7.

- HB48 (approx. 8.5km) – A claimed PRoW which commences at the junction of the B9152 and Granish quarry, continues east over the Highland Mainline Railway, after which it turns north where it splits into two sections; the section continuing to the north-east connects with NCN7 towards Boat of Garten. The other section passes west over the Highland Mainline Railway and across the A95 at-grade to the east of Avielochan before continuing west and crossing the A9 at-grade at Balnabruich. The PRoW then continues west in to the woodland area and finally turns north-west to link with HB45. Initial consultation with The Highland Council Access Officer indicated that this PRoW may have been lost through reverse prescription. However, a subsequent site visit with ScotWays and consultation with the owners of Avielochan Farm in June 2016 confirmed that the PRoW is still used to access a private water supply, and by local residents to access the woodland areas via a stile over the fence on to the verge at Balnabruich.

- HB52 (approx. 4.3km) – A claimed PRoW which starts from Granish, crosses the Highland Mainline Railway and runs between the HML and the Strathspey Railway until it meets the NCN7 at Strathspey. The route was considered to be in use by pedestrians and cyclists.

Core Paths

Core paths are defined in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Sections 20 and 21 and can include; Public Right of Ways (PRoWs), footpaths, cycle tracks, paths covered by path agreements / orders, waterways, or other means by which persons may cross land.

Local Authorities have a duty to make their Core Path Plans publicly available for inspection under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The local authorities responsible within the study area are the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and The Highland Council (THC). The Core Path Plans developed by the Local Authorities are The Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan: Developing Active Places (adopted March 2015) and The Highland Council Core Path Plan (adopted October 2011).

There are three core paths that have been considered within the study area that are designated within the CNPA Core Path Plan. These Core paths are shown on Figures 1.1 to 1.5, Appendix A and are described as follows:

- LBS30 (approx. 6km) (CNPA) – comprises Aviemore Orbital Path, an approximately 3km circular route through Aviemore and Milton Woods to the east of the A9 linking to the Speyside Way and NCN7. The paths on the route consist of footpaths and minor roads including woodland paths and are used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians (including vulnerable groups accessing facilities such as the Highland Resort). LBS30 connects to the west of the A9 via three underpasses connecting to a housing estate (High Burnside) and to Other NMU Route 4. Two of these underpasses are solely for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians use and one facilitates access for vehicles in addition to NMUs. LBS30 also passes through Macdonald Aviemore Resort and links with core path LBS145 leading to the underpass at Craigellachie National Nature Reserve (NNR). The Aviemore Orbital Path is promoted by The Highland Council as an 'Independent Walk Around Aviemore'.

- LBS114 (approx. 3.5km) (CNPA) – NCN7. The core path follows the alignment of NCN7 from Carrbridge westwards and under the A9 to Sluggan and beyond to Slochd. This core path has a range of users including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and vulnerable groups accessing facilities within Carrbridge such as the primary school.

- LBS145 (approx. 900m) (CNPA) – Aviemore Orbital to Craigellachie National Nature Reserve. This path extends from the underpass into the Craigellachie NNR through the Macdonald Highland Resort to the Scandinavian Village where the path turns west towards to A9 and then north to connect with the Aviemore Orbital (LBS30). The route is a combination of off-road paths and footpaths alongside the roads through the Macdonald Highland Resort and is known to be used by vulnerable groups to access the Highland Resort and Craigellachie NNR.

- LBS53 (approx. 5.3km) (CNPA) – Described in the core path plan as 'Sustrans Route 7' but no longer part of the National Cycle Network, this path is still used by cyclists but is quite steep, with gradients up to 10%, in places. From the A95 at Deshar Primary School, the route climbs north on the access to Docharn House. Bearing west at the farm and climbing steeply through Docharn Wood to link with the B9153 before turning north-eastward through forestry plantations. The path terminates at Carr Road, close to Carr Cottages. The route consists of shared residential / farm access and forestry tracks.

Other NMU Routes

A number of other NMU routes or informal paths within the Aviemore and Carrbridge study area have been identified through previous assessment work from the adjacent A9 Dualling project. For ease of reference the route numbering system for the A9 Dualling project has been maintained for this assessment.

A total of 7 Other NMU Routes, indicated on Figures 1.1 to 1.5 in Appendix A, were identified within the NMU assessment study area. These are described below:

- Other NMU Route 4 – a combination of paths which connect the Aviemore Orbital Path to the housing estate (High Burnside) on the west side of the A9. There are three existing underpasses providing access to the housing estate. Two of these are suitable for pedestrians and cyclists only which are connected by a gravel path. The remaining underpass is accessible by vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. This path network is utilised by vulnerable groups and links with the Aviemore Orbital (LBS30) and to facilities within Aviemore.

- Other NMU Route 6 (approx. 2.5km) – an existing route which runs from the A95 south of Avielochan to an at-grade crossing of the A9. The route continues to the west of the A9 where it joins with a network of paths within the woodland area adjacent to the Allt na Criche. During site visits in March/April 2016 and May 2017 the path to the west of the A9 was observed as being in use predominantly by dog walkers but with evidence that the route is also used by cyclists and equestrians.

- Other NMU Route 9/9A (approx. 5km) – a section of General Wade's Military Road on the northbound side of the A9 which follows forestry tracks, an existing farm track and through fields providing a connection to Other NMU Route 10 and to PRoW HB47 at Kinveachy. There was evidence of this route being used by equestrians.

- Other NMU Route 13 (approx. 1.75km) - an existing woodland path which provides a link from the B9153 to the west side of the A9 via an underbridge under the Highland Mainline Railway and an at-grade crossing of the A9. To the west of the A9 the path splits into two and follows single-track woodland paths that connect with Lethandryveole and PRoW HB47.

- Other NMU Route 14 (approx. 2.5km) – route which follows an unclassified road leading from the A938 to an at-grade crossing with the A9 via an underpass under the Highland Mainline Railway. This route is on-road rather than segregated and either side of the A9 and provides access to a wider network of paths adjacent to the River Dulnain.

- Other NMU Route 15 (approx. 2.4km) – route which runs adjacent to the northbound carriageway of the A9 at or around Dalrachney Beag where it crosses the A9 at-grade to link in with NCN7. There are two locked gates which are required to be navigated along the path. Information from the A9 Dualling DMRB Stage 1 Report indicates that this path and crossing of the A9 may be frequented by equestrians, although no evidence was found for this during the site visits.

- Other NMU Route 19 (approx. 5km) - B9152 from Aviemore to the existing Granish Junction and the A95 from Granish to its junction with the A95/B9153. This link is utilised by people travelling between Carrbridge and Aviemore and at present there is only a short stretch of segregated path for pedestrians and cyclists alongside the B9152, with users who want to make this journey needing to travel on the local trunk road network for much of their journey.

Table 1 below summarises all the NMU routes defined above annotating what we understand to be the existing predominant user type which has been arrived upon further to site walkovers and consultation.

Table 1: Summary of existing NMU routes within the study area

Path Reference	Type / Description	Predominant User
NCN7	National Cycle Network (B9152/A95/B9153/B970)	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians (where permitted)
HB47	Public Right of Way General Wade's Military Road	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
HB48	Public Right of Way	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
HB52	Public Right of Way	Pedestrians, Cyclists
LBS30	Core path, The Highland Council Promoted Path	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
LBS114	Core path	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
LBS145	Core path	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
Other NMU Route 4	Connections to / from Aviemore Orbital Route	Pedestrians, Cyclists
Other NMU Route 6	Undesignated route south of Avielochan	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
Other NMU Route 9/9A	General Wade's Military Road to Kinveachy	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
Other NMU Route 13	Undesignated route from the B9153 across the A9	Pedestrians
Other NMU Route 14	Undesignated on-road route connecting Carrbridge with the A9	Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians
Other NMU Route 15	Undesignated route which crosses the A9 at-grade and routes south alongside the northbound carriageway	Pedestrians, Equestrians

Path Reference	Type / Description	Predominant User
Other NMU Route 19	A95 / B9152	Pedestrians, Cyclists

Accident Statistics

Accident statistics have been extracted from the most recently available information for the trunk and side road network where relevant to this baseline assessment.

There have been in the region of 178 accidents recorded on the core roads of the side road network. Of the 108 that occurred on the A95, 2 of these involved pedestrians. There was 1 pedestrian accident from 49 in total on the B9152 and 1 out of 18 on the B970. There is no record of pedestrian accidents on the B9153.

2.4. Data collection

As part of this NMU baseline assessment, AMJV requested information to inform the assessment from the following agencies; Sustrans, The Highland Council, HITRANS and Cairngorms National Park Authority during February 2019. A further information request was sent to Aviemore and Vicinity, Boat of Garten and Carrbridge Community Councils during March 2019.

Below is the summary of information received.

Carrbridge to Speyside Way - Survey Summary (Sustrans)

This survey received from Sustrans was undertaken in February 2018 by a community group; Carrbridge Ahead, in relation to the pedestrian/cyclist paths serving Speyside and Carrbridge.

Some key outcomes from the survey are listed below:

- Safety of NMU users is a big concern due to traffic speeds, volumes and geometry of current on roads which can be used by NMUs; Particular emphasis was given to the “old A9”, i.e., the B9153.
- 92% (232 responses) of responses agreed a parallel route along the old A9 (B9153) was a good idea and 93.1% (231 responses) stated that they would use that facility.
- It is noted that 84% (231) users choose to use their car to leave the village to go to other communities i.e. Aviemore, Boat of Garten.
- 89.9% (228 responses) indicate that they do walk, cycle or horse ride out of the village.
- when asked to choose between a new route alongside the A9 or “old A9” (B9153) 56.1% NMU wanted the “old A9” (B9153), 39.6% wanted both and approximately 4% wanted the route along dualled A9 only.

Further details of the survey are summarised in **Appendix B**

Aviemore - NCN7 monitoring report

AMJV received the Aviemore - NCN7 route survey undertaken by Sustrans. The survey was undertaken in October 2017 over four days at a traffic free location east of Spey Bridge.

The key findings of this survey as follows:

- The estimated total annual usage was approximately 160,000 trips in 2017.
- 52% of trips were made by cyclists and 48% by pedestrians.
- 46% of route users were female and 54% male.
- 90% of trips were recreational. 68% of recreations trips were on short trips of less than 3 hours.
- 21% of trips were made by children, 71% by adults aged 16-64 and 8% by adults aged 65 and over.

- 97% of users either agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the surroundings on the route.
- The Annual usage has increased by 40% for pedestrians and 32% for cyclists in between 2010-2017.

The monitoring report is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

Boat of Garten – NCN7 monitoring report

AMJV received the Boat of Garten - NCN7 route survey undertaken by Sustrans. The survey was undertaken in August 2011 and the survey site was on a roadside path in the centre of Boat of Garten.

The key findings of this survey as follows:

- The estimated total annual usage was approximately 47,611 trips in the year 2011.
- 47% of trips were made by cyclists, 50% by pedestrians and 3% by other route users.
- 50.5% of route users were female and 49.5% male.
- 23% of trips were made by children, 67% by adults aged 16-64 and 10% by adults aged 65 and over.
- The majority of those trips, approximately 80%, were for recreation and leisure with the remainder for commuting/other purposes.
- The annual usage has increased by 35% for pedestrians and 2% for cyclists in between 2008 to 2011.

The monitoring report is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

Cairngorms Visitor Survey Summary

Information received from the CNPA focused on the visitors' experience of using their facilities. CNPA has carried out a detailed analysis and captured information primarily on customer satisfaction, such as rating of their facilities, visitors' expectations, purpose of visits, origin of visitors, duration of stay, gender and activities they get involved with. It was observed that 44% of visitors were involved in low level walking activity (i.e. not hill walking) which equates to 810,000 people in a year and also 13% (23,900) of people were engaged in cycling. It suggested that the paths from Aviemore to Glenmore and Aviemore to Kincraig are heavily used by walkers and cyclists and the split percentage for Aviemore to Glenmore is roughly 50:50 and from Aviemore to Kincraig is 47:53. These paths, however, are not within the current scope of this study.

The survey summary is provided in **Appendix B** and detailed survey can be found in https://cairngorms.co.uk/authority/publication/45/

The Highland Council and HITRANS

The Highland Council and HITRANS did not provide any data/information in response to this initial request for information.

Community Councils' responses

- Aviemore and Vicinity – No information received.
- Boat of Garten – Confirmed awareness of existing routes but no further information received.
- Carrbridge – No information received.

Correspondence details between AMJV and Community Councils is provided in **Appendix B**.

2.5. Summary of Findings

The Scottish Government is committed to promoting active travel in Scotland. This is echoed through the national plans and policies referenced in section 2.1 and 2.2 above. A key aspect of this is improving the safety of journeys by reducing accidents in addition to promoting social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network. Moreover, the Cycle Action Plan for Scotland targets that by 2020, 10% of everyday journeys will be by bicycle and suitable infrastructure is required to support this.

Initial consultation with CNPA, THC, Sustrans and HITRANS, in addition to the Local Community Councils referenced above, has suggested there is public desire to provide an NMU link between Aviemore and Carrbridge which is free from traffic as far as possible. The existing cycle route, NCN7 is a mixture of 'traffic free/segregated' and 'on road' sections, including 3.7 km coincident with the B9153 which holds a 60mph national speed limit until it enters Carrbridge where the speed limit is 30mph.

From the information received from the Carrbridge Ahead study, it is noted that a significant amount of the feedback is related to perceived safety issues surrounding the use of the section of the NCN7 coincident with the B9153 carriageway by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians traveling between communities. The feedback suggested the use of the B9153 carriageway was prohibitive to many using or would like to use the existing NCN route, particularly those less experienced cyclists or who wanted to journey with young children. This is evidenced by over 75% of the 225 people interviewed scoring the B9153 an 8 or higher for safety for cyclists where 1 is very safe and 10 very dangerous.

It was further noted as part of the Carrbridge Ahead study, that 84% (231 responses) of people surveyed indicated they travel to other communities by car with 11.7% travelling by bicycle. No details were provided as to the reason for this preference to support the need case or otherwise.

From survey information received from Sustrans at locations on the NCN7 immediately south of Aviemore (2017) and in the centre of Boat of Garten (2011), it was noted the majority of the trips were recreational. In the case of the survey in Aviemore it was also noted that 97% (69 responses) of users agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the surroundings of the routes which are traffic free and has a rural aspect.

As summarised above, the majority of the data collected and assessed to date has consisted of the views and preferences of the public obtained through stakeholder survey information and interviews based on specific questions asked as part of the study. At this time, there are no tangible user numbers available to support the business case to deliver a new fully segregated and traffic free route between Aviemore and Carrbridge. The provision of such or similar route however would help deliver the objectives of several national and local strategies which includes improving connectivity between communities and removing perceived barriers to accessibility with a view to encouraging an increased level of usage.

From the information reviewed, it is clear there is a general preference for a 'traffic free', or fully 'segregated' route between the communities of Aviemore and Carrbridge with the emphasis placed on the suitability of the B9153 for use by NMUs given its alignment, cross section and encountered speed of vehicular traffic. However, in relation to route objectives, some users have expressed desire to use the route for recreational purposes where the surroundings are an important factor to the amenity value of the route, as opposed to others who have expressed a commuter interest where a direct route of shorter overall length would be preferred.

2.6. Initial Corridor Identification

Based on the findings noted above, AMJV has undertaken a desk study of the existing constraints to consider preliminary route corridors considering both recreational and commuter priorities. Based on the data gathering above, this study has focused on the provision of corridors considering segregated or traffic free routes where the corridor runs along the trunk or public road network. It is noted however that consideration will be given to the use of private or unclassified public road carriageways for the development of corridors where traffic flows are exceptionally low and estimated vehicle speeds are also low and therefore interaction with traffic is minimal.

Further consultation and engagement with other agencies and the public is required to substantiate the 'need' and 'function' of this route to identity the predominant user group and therefore develop the remaining corridors for full option assessment.

As part of the baseline assessment, ten corridors were selected to consider provision of a shared use NMU route between Aviemore and Carrbridge. The initial corridor generation considered both engineering and environmental constraints, existing NMU routes, feedback received from data collection and consultation exercises undertaken to date, in addition to guidelines provided by Cycling by Design 2010 and the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). The corridors consider the provision of a traffic free shared use NMU route, except where consideration has been given to corridors which utilise minor unclassified or private tracks with exceptionally low traffic flows and where the interaction with traffic is minimal.

Whilst further consultation is required to confirm the predominant user groups, the assessment has considered that the NMU route will be nominally 3.0m wide (dependent on location and use of existing NMU facilities) and constructed with a combination of bituminous bound and unbound granular materials with suitable drainage provision, where required.

The identification of corridors has attempted to provide a representative range covering different user groups and needs. Initial corridors were identified to represent the direct route(s), i.e. parallel to the A9 or A95/B9153 which is considered desirable for commuter users. Corridors were then developed considering existing NMU routes between Aviemore and Carrbridge (the NCN7) before considering those which utilise a combination of existing and new corridors both east and west of the A9 thereby connecting to other NMU routes and areas of interest which is considered desirable for the recreational user. In each case the corridors were refined and optimised as far as possible further to a review of key constraints.

In instances where it is proposed to follow all or part of an existing route, the assessment allows for the required upgrades to the existing route to ensure minimal cross section and surfacing requirements are achieved and suitable provision for passing places or other required infrastructure is developed.

Where the constraints have given rise to significant issues i.e. topographical constraints leading to steeper than desirable gradients, which would result in potential departures from standard to cycling by design the details of these have been outlined in the corridor summaries and the resultant impacts considered in the assessment. It is noted that further site visits and survey information will be required at the detailed assessment stage to develop more detailed options and inform the detailed assessment stage.

The proposed A9 Dualling represents a major infrastructure project in the vicinity of Aviemore and Carrbridge. For the purposes of this baseline assessment, the identification and initial assessment or corridors has considered the A9 Dualling proposals. Where a corridor interfaces with the A9 Dualling scheme, details of this interaction has been clearly defined in the corridor description.

To aid this understanding the following contains a high-level summary of the A9 Dualling with specific reference to those works which will influence NMU provision between Aviemore and Carrbridge.

2.6.1 A9 Dualling Summary

The proposed A9 Dualling Programme seeks to replace existing sections of single carriageway between Perth and Inverness with dual carriageway and a closed central reservation which will remove at grade vehicle and NMU crossing points to improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users.

In the vicinity of Aviemore and Carrbridge the proposed A9 Dualling includes provision of two grade separated junctions, one at Aviemore South replacing the B9152 junction to the A9 and the other at Granish replacing the existing A95 / B9152 junction. In both cases the grade separated underbridge or overbridge will include provision for both vehicles and NMUs. The A9 Dualling also includes for several further grade separated crossings throughout this section to replace at grade crossings for NMUs, in addition to realigning and improving existing NMU routes where impacted by the A9 Dualling itself.

The below contains a summary of the specific works in relation to NMUs expanded from Figure 9.2 NMU Mitigation drawings of the Environmental Statement of the A9 Dualling Dalraddy to Slochd project;

- Other NMU Routes 6, 8, 9 and HB 48. These routes consist of existing forestry tracks north of Granish and cross the A9 3 times at-grade. The scheme proposals close the

crossings and includes 2 underbridges of the A9; the southern one being along Granish GSJ CP(H) which includes a 2m footway segregated from the carriageway by a 0.5m verge and a further underbridge located at Ch. 11,200 CP(I) which has a track width of 3.0m plus verges and will facilitate NMU and field access.

- Other NMU Routes 10, 11, 12, 13 and HB47. These routes consist of existing forestry tracks between Kinveachy and Feith Mhor and cross the A9 at 4 at-grade crossing points. The scheme proposals close the at-grade crossing points used by other NMU Routes 10 and 11 which are some 250m apart and combine these to a single grade separated crossings crossing point between the two. The underbridge will have a surfaced width of 6.0m plus verges as is shared with a private access and minimum headroom of 3.6m. This crossing will also connect to HB47 and other Route 12 through upgraded track on the approach to the structure.
- The at-grade crossing for other NMU Route 13 shall be replaced with an underbridge which shall be shared use with a proposed private forestry access as per the existing track and have minimal width 6.0m plus verges and headroom of 5.3m.
- LBS114 and NCN7 crosses the A9 at Station road in Carrbridge via underbridge. The scheme will replicate the existing crossing by provision of a parallel structure to support the A9 southbound carriageway.
- Other NMU Route 14. The existing at-grade crossing will be replaced with an underbridge CP(M) of min width 3.5m road plus 2.0m wide kerbed footway and headroom 4.8m. The gradients of the approach alignment will also be reduced and surfacing improved.

2.6.2 Corridor Option Summaries

A brief description of each corridor is given below. The corridors are also shown graphically and overlain with existing constraints within Appendix C, Figures 2.1 to Figure 2.10.

Identified Corridor 1 (IC1)

This corridor starts in Aviemore and follows the route of the existing core path from Dalfaber Drive, north for approximately 1.15km and then utilises the existing Other NMU Route 19 (B9152). It is assumed at this stage that the existing facilities are fit for integration into the route. It ties in with the proposed NMU path at Granish Junction which forms part of the A9 Dualling at proposed A9 Dualling Chainage 8400m. The corridor then follows the proposed A9 embankment toe for 2.74km until it joins a proposed A9 track and continues for 644m after which it again follows the embankment toe of the proposed A9 for 2.9km. It then utilises a small section of proposed A9 SuDS maintenance track at Feith Mhor for 715m and then again follows the toe line for 1.6km before meeting the NCN7 at Station Road near Carrbridge Railway station and continuing to Carrbridge. The length of this corridor is approximately 11.1km. The route will be free from traffic for its full length except for 140m along Station Road and 2 discreet sections of 125m and 715m long which shall be shared with SuDS maintenance accesses associated with the A9 Dualling and will have minimal traffic.

The directness and the appeal of its parallel alignment to the A9 are two of the key parameters which inform this corridor. Conversely the main constraints are the presence of ancient woodland, the proximity to properties and agricultural units, particularly Avielochan Farm and the potential ecological impacts of connections being formed due to underbridges connecting to potential capercaillie habitat west of the A9.

This corridor is shown in figure 2.1 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 2 (IC2)

This corridor starts in Aviemore following the existing footpath along Old Meall Road, crossing the A9 via an existing underpass. The corridor continues and utilises existing and upgraded forestry tracks associated with the A9 Dualling for 6.6km until Kinveachy. Over this section it is proposed that the route will share the forestry track due to infrequent vehicle usage expect during felling operations. The route

will then cross the A9 via a new underpass associated with the A9 Dualling where it will follow the route of the existing NCN7 on a newly formed segregated facility adjacent to the B9153 for 3.6km to Carrbridge finally using existing footpaths within Carrbridge itself. The total length of this corridor is approximately 11.1km.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunity for recreational users to access the wider track network, however this diversification and increase of NMUs may impact the potential capercaillie habitat through connection to the wider track network to which this accesses and therefore represents a constraint. There is likely to be potential conflict with forestry vehicles. The surfacing to the upgraded forestry tracks is assumed to be unbound granular material. Topography in this area represents a further constraint to vertical alignment and is likely to give rise to steeper than desired gradients.

This corridor is shown in figure 2.2 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 3 (IC3)

This corridor is the shortest and most direct route of those being considered. It is a combination of existing segregated core path (LBS116d) within and on the immediate northern extent of Aviemore, Other NMU Route 19 (B9152) and newly formed segregated facilities along the A95 / B9153 north of the proposed Granish junction. This route starts in Aviemore and follows the LBS116d for 410m, then joins the existing Other NMU Route 19 (B9152 / A95) for 5km where a new separated facility will be formed. After joining the B9153 the corridor runs for 4.5km to Carrbridge again on a newly formed segregated facility adjacent to the B9153 carriageway. The total length of this corridor is approximately 9.9km and therefore is likely to be attractive to commuters who want a direct route.

The directness and the appeal of its parallel alignment to the A95/B9153 are two of the key parameters which inform this corridor. The railway structure over the A95 represents a key constraint to alignment as does areas of localised slopes property boundaries and screening adjacent to the corridor.

This corridor is shown in figure 2.3 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 4 (IC4)

IC4 starts in Aviemore and follows Old Meall Road, crossing the A9 through an existing underpass. This corridor continues on the west side of the A9, following the route of an existing track where it joins Other NMU Route 6 for a distance of 1.1km. It then joins the proposed A9 track (Other NMU Route 9 - General Wade's Military Road) for 1.5km before continuing on Other NMU Route 9 for 2.2km, meeting the HB47 (General Wade's Military Road) near Kinveachy. The corridor follows HB47 for 5.3km and joins the south west side of NCN7 around Beananach Wood, which crosses the A9 through an existing underpass and continues into Station Road, Carrbridge. The total length of this corridor is approximately 15.2km. It is considered scenic and connects with other long-distance routes.

The use of the forestry tracks (some 13.6km) provide opportunity for recreational users to access the wider track network, however this diversification and increase of NMUs may impact the potential capercaillie habitat through connection to the wider track network to which this accesses and therefore represents a constraint. There is likely to be potential conflict with forestry vehicles. The surfacing to the upgraded forestry tracks is assumed to be unbound granular material. Topography in this area represents a further constraint to vertical alignment and is likely to give rise to steeper than desired gradients.

This corridor is shown in figure 2.4 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 5 (IC5)

IC5 starts in Aviemore and follows existing core path LBS116d before joining the Other NMU Route 19 (B9152). It runs for 725m before meeting the PRoW HB52, which runs on the east side of the existing B9152 and Highland Mainline Railway This section will be shared with an estate vehicle maintenance access with limited traffic usage. The corridor then follows the route of a private path where it crosses the railway and continues to join other NMU route 19 (A95). A new segregated facility will be constructed along the section coincident with the A95. The route then turns left crossing the A9 via an underbridge crossing at Laggantygown where it will share the carriageway of existing and upgraded forestry tracks for

some 1.5km before crossing the A9 again at the proposed Kinveachy underpass. From here a new segregated facility will be constructed along the B9153 north to Carrbridge. This corridor utilises side roads and underbridges proposed as part of the A9 Dualling project.

The section between Laggantygown will be shared with forestry extraction vehicles however it is understood this section is not as heavily used as other options considered. Notwithstanding any detailed options would need to consider this interaction and form appropriate passing opportunities. The use of this short section of forestry track provides opportunity for recreational users to access the wider track network, however this diversification and increase of NMUs may impact the potential capercaillie habitat through connection to the wider track network to which this accesses. There is likely to be potential conflict with forestry vehicles. The surfacing to the upgraded forestry tracks is assumed to be unbound granular material Along the B9153 constraints are localised slopes, property boundaries and screening adjacent to the corridor.

The total length of this corridor is approximately 12.2km and is shown in figure 2.5 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 6 (IC6)

This corridor is the combination of existing core path LBS116d and NCN7 (B970/A95/B9153). This corridor starts in Aviemore and follows LBS116d, which is formed from a footpath adjacent to the road for the first 1.4km. The route then joins NCN7 to Kinchurdy Road in Boat of Garten. Over this 5.4km length the NCN7 is shared with a private estate access however this route is only used for maintenance access with limited traffic. Over the 900m length of Kinchurdy Road it is proposed for NMU users to use the carriageway due to the number of residential frontages to the road and the limited traffic volumes on the no through road. The route then turns west from Boat of Garten along a footpath and then segregated route to the A9 where it continues on a segregated route to the B9153. Over this length it is proposed to utilise and widen the existing segregated route. North of this point a new segregated route shall be constructed along the B9153 to Carrbridge.

The corridor provides both recreational benefits as approximately half of the scheme is completely remote of the side road network with a more direct section segregated from the B9153 whilst also providing onward connection to other communities including Boat of Garten and other existing NMU routes and local areas of interest. Along the B9153 constraints are localised slopes, property boundaries and screening adjacent to the corridor.

The total length of this corridor is approximately 15.7km and is shown in figure 2.6 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 7 (IC7)

This route is the combination of core paths LBS116d and LBS30 which run north from Aviemore following Other NMU Route 19 to Granish junction. The route then crosses the A9 at Granish Junction and continues north to Feith Mhor on the west side of the A9 utilising existing and upgraded forestry tracks. Over this 7km length it is proposed that the route is shared with the forestry tracks which shall be used for forestry extraction therefore detailed options would need to consider this interaction and form appropriate passing opportunities. The route will cross the A9 via an underbridge constructed as part of the A9 Dualling and utilise a SuDs maintenance access associated with the A9 Dualling for 700m and then a new traffic free route will be constructed north for 1.5km to Station Road at Carrbridge between the A9 and the Railway. At Station Road the corridor will be shared with the carriageway for 140m through the rail structure before joining existing footpaths into Carrbridge.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunity for recreational users to access the wider track network, however this diversification and increase of NMUs may impact the potential capercaillie habitat through connection to the wider track network to which this accesses. There is likely to be potential conflict with forestry vehicles. The surfacing to the upgraded forestry tracks is assumed to be unbound granular material. Topography in this area represents a further constraint to vertical alignment and is likely to give rise to steeper than desired gradients. Heading north from Feith Mhor there is a significant area of ancient woodland.

The total length of this corridor is approximately 11.4km and is shown in figure 2.7 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 8 (IC8)

This corridor starts in Aviemore and follows LBS116d, which is formed from a footpath adjacent to the road for the first 1.4km. From here it joins HB52 for 4.2km until it joins NCN7 for a short length and then continues north west along private tracks for 1.9km to Kinveachy. These private tracks are understood to be used for maintenance access only and therefore have limited traffic. At this point the corridor considers construction of a new segregated facility adjacent to the A95 for some 0.5km and then a similar segregated facility along the B9153 for 3.7km.

The corridor provides both recreational benefits as approximately half of the scheme is completely remote of the side road network with a more direct section segregated from the B9153. It is further noted that this corridor is more direct than IC6 as it does not run through Boat of Garten however onward connection to Boat of Garten from Kinveachy is possible by existing provision. Along the B9153 constraints are localised slopes, property boundaries and screening adjacent to the corridor.

The total length of this corridor is approximately 12.1km and is shown in figure 2.8 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 9 (IC9)

IC9 starts in Aviemore and follows the existing Dalfaber Drive utilising the existing footpath for 590m before joining the Dalnabay Road heading south. It then continues on the footpath along Dalnabay Road for a length of 850m before the road is gated. Beyond this point traffic is considered to be minimal and the route will continue on carriageway to Speybank guesthouse, near Aviemore railway station, where an existing footpath commences for a length of 700m. The corridor then follows the existing dedicated NMU route (NCN7 - Old logging way) for length of 300m before joining the footpath along the B970 for 1.2km to Rothiemurchus camp and caravan park where it will continue along the B970 on a new dedicated facility adjacent to the carriageway for a length of 10km. The corridor then turns west and utilises the existing LBS116c which is formed by existing footpath which shall be widened for a length of 230m followed by a length of new construction for 180m before it re-joins the existing footpath for a length of 2.7km to Deshar primary school where the route turns west and meets the A95 which has an existing segregated route which shall be widened. Finally, a new segregated facility will be considered adjacent to the B9153 to Carrbridge.

This is the longest corridor having a total length of approximately 24.1km and connects to multiple other existing NMU facilities and landmarks which may be an advantage to some recreational users. The additional length of the route however may be prohibitive to some commuter users. Along the B9153 constraints are localised slopes, property boundaries and screening adjacent to the corridor.

The corridor is shown in figure 2.9 of Appendix C.

Identified Corridor 10 (IC10)

This corridor starts in Aviemore and follows LBS116d, which is formed from a footpath adjacent to the road for the first 1.4km. From here it joins HB52 for 4.2km until it joins NCN7 for a short length and then continues north west along private tracks for 1.9km to Kinveachy These tracks are understood to be used for estate maintenance access only and therefore experience minimal traffic flows. At this point the corridor crosses the A9 via a proposed underbridge associated with the A9 Dualling and uses existing and upgraded forestry tracks between Kinveachy and Feith Mhor for 2.5km where the route will be on carriageway which is used by forestry extraction vehicles. At Feith Mhor the route will cross back under the A9 via a propose underbridge associated with the A9 and cross the railway via an existing underbridge which has a restricted headroom and consideration of upgrades to this structure would be required. From here north to Carrbridge a new segregated facility is considered along the B9153 for 3.7km.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunity for recreational users to access the wider track network, however this diversification and increase of NMUs may impact the potential capercaillie habitat through connection to the wider track network to which this accesses. There is likely to be potential conflict with forestry vehicles. The surfacing to the upgraded forestry tracks is assumed to be unbound granular material. Topography in this area represents a further constraint to vertical alignment and is likely to give rise to steeper than desired gradients. The existing railway crossing at Feith Mhor also represents a constraint to headroom which could impact some user groups. Along the B9153 constraints are localised slopes, property boundaries and screening adjacent to the corridor.

The total length of this corridor is approximately 12.8km and is shown in figure 2.10 of Appendix C.

2.7. Preliminary Corridor Assessment

The corridors described above have been assessed in an outline preliminary corridor assessment to determine their suitability for further development and consultation in an options appraisal assessment. This will lead to the publication of an Options Appraisal Report which will determine the preferred route and land requirements for the scheme.

The preliminary corridor assessment criteria utilises the key core design principles from Cycling by Design. The key parameters of safety, coherence, comfort, attractiveness, environmental impact and outline cost all contribute to the design of NMU infrastructure. The geographical location of the study area is environmentally sensitive and the associated beneficial and adverse impacts on the environment are considered to be particularly important. The other contributory parameters used in the assessment have allowed for a holistic review to be undertaken.

The assessment criteria matrix is shown in Table 2 below.

Tables 3.1 to 3.10 below show how the identified corridor options have been assessed against each parameter. It should be noted that impacts may be subject to variation depending on development of the route option within the corridor.

Section 3 of this report includes commentary on the sifting exercise which was undertaken to sift out corridors with potentially significant impacts. The remaindering corridors will be being taken forward for development, consultation and assessment as part of the options appraisal assessment.

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Table 2: Assessment Criteria Matrix

Parameters	High	Medium	Low
Safety	NMU users have the potential to encounter private vehicles for more than 6 km.	NMU users have the potential to encounter private vehicles for between 3km and 6 km.	NMU users have the potential to encounter private vehicles for less than 3 km.
Coherence	Limited opportunity to connect with public transport, communities and other NMU paths. Remote from bus stops and railway stations.	Readily available opportunities to connect with public transport, communities and other NMU paths. Route passes close to bus stops or railway stations.	Direct connection with public transport, communities and other NMU paths. Route links directly with public transport facilities.
Directness	Length of the route is greater than 16km.	Length of the route is between 12 and 16km.	Length of the route is less than 12km.
Comfort	Topography likely to give rise to departures from Cycling by Design standards.	Topography will possibly give rise to departures from Cycling by Design standards.	Topography unlikely to give rise to departures from Cycling by Design standards.
Attractiveness	The corridor runs predominantly in close proximity to or on public roads.	The corridor runs through mixed surroundings.	The corridor runs predominantly through woodland or open country.
Cultural Heritage	Likely potential for direct or major setting impact on designated cultural heritage assets.	Likely potential for minor setting impact on designated cultural heritage assets.	Unlikely potential for setting impact on designated cultural heritage assets.
Ecology & Nature Conservation	High potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance (e.g. permanent displacement) and/or introduces habitat loss/fragmentation or barrier effects.	Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of temporary disturbance (e.g. construction stage) but does not introduce significant habitat loss/fragmentation or barrier effects.	Limited potential for impact on protected species.
Landscape & Visual	Low potential to integrate within the existing landscape (i.e. large earthworks with limited integration potential).	Moderate potential to integrate within the existing landscape.	High potential to integrate within the existing landscape.
Water-environment	Potential loss of flood storage or conveyance disconnection with no compensation available.	Potential for some loss of flood storage or conveyance disconnection.	No loss of flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.
Property and Land take	Property demolition and/or significant land take. Significant interface with private accesses or severance of land management operations.	No property demolition. Requires some land take. Minimal interface with private accesses. No severance of land management operations.	Minimal land take required.
Outline cost	High Impact	Medium Impact	Low Impact

Table 3.1: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 1

Identified Corridor 1		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 980m of this corridor has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low as consists of minor public roads (Station Road) or private roads. This corridor will include approximately 13 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides onward connection to 13 core paths and Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 11.1km long and among the shortest routes from Aviemore to Carrbridge.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes and A9 proposed access tracks which are likely to give rise to a number of departures from standard. The existing topography in areas of new construction is likely to give rise to gradients exceeding 7% in places. 68% of will be new construction and 32% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Out of 11.1km only 3.52km passes adjacent to woodland, 32% of the total length, with significant lengths being in sight of the A9, making this route less attractive for recreational purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on designated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	Loss of an area of approximately 10,560sq. m of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance due to potential for onward connection to forestry tracks.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor runs along the proposed A9 embankment toe line and the profile of the proposed corridor will follow the existing ground. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape.	
Water-environment	This corridor has the potential to encroach into a flood storage area.	
Property and Land take	Significant interface with Highland Mainline Railway operational land and assets. Significant land take and interface with private access.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be High for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.2: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 2

Identified Corridor 2		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 6,610m (56%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low. This corridor will include approximately 23 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides onward connection to forestry tracks and 11 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 11.1km long and among the shortest routes from Aviemore to Carrbridge.	
Comfort	This corridor utilises NMU routes and A9 proposed access tracks with gradients exceeding 7% in places giving rise to potential departures from standard. 31% of the route will be newly constructed with 69% of the surface being an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Of 11.1km, 8km passes through woodland which is 72% of the total length, making this route attractive for recreational and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on designated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	Loss of an area of approximately 24,000 sq. m of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance due to use of forestry tracks.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses existing NMU routes with some widening required along the route. Also, the corridor will be following B9153 (NCN7) profile. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation and interface with private accesses.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Low for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.3: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 3

Identified Corridor 3		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 810m (1%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low as mostly SuDs access tracks for A9 Dualling. This corridor requires 14 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides onward connection to forestry tracks and 12 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 9.9km and is the shortest route from Aviemore to Carrbridge.	
Comfort	82% of this corridor will be new construction following Other NMU Route 19 (B9152/A95) and NCN7 (A95). The gradient will follow the existing ground and the proposed NMU route gradients will be limited to 5% meaning departures from standard are unlikely.	
Attractiveness	Of 9.9km, 4.1km passes through the woodland which is 42% of total length, making this route less attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on designated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	An area of around approximately 12,300 sq. m of loss of ancient woodland. Protected species may be affected in terms of temporary disturbance (e.g. construction stage) but is not expected to introduce habitat fragmentation or barrier effects. The potential impact on protected species through indirect connection to Kinveachy Forest and Crannaich, via the underbridge at Kinveachy, will require further assessment.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor runs along the existing Other NMU Route 19 (B9152/A95) and NCN7 (A95/B9153) and will follow the existing ground. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation required and impact to direct accesses to the A95/B9153.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be High for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.4: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 4

Identified Corridor 4		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 13,600m (88%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low as these are maintenance tracks for estate operations. This corridor requires 13 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides onward connections to forestry tracks and 11 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is approximately 15.2 km long.	
Comfort	This corridor utilises existing NMU routes and A9 proposed access tracks with gradients exceeding 7% in places giving rise to departures from standard. It is considered that the surfacing for the full route will be upgraded.	
Attractiveness	Of 15.2km, 13.1km passes through the woodland which is 86% of total length, making this route attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on designated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	Minimal loss of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance due to use of forestry tracks.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses the existing NMU routes with limited widening requirements along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, Public Rights of Way and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation and interface with private accesses.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Low for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.5: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 5

Identified Corridor 5		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 5600m (47%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low. This corridor requires 17 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides connections to forestry tracks and 18 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 12.2 km long.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes private roads and proposed A9 side roads with steeper gradients which may give rise to departures from standard. 36% will be new construction and 64% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Of 12.2km, 4.8km passes through the woodland which is 40% of the total length, making this route less attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct but minor potential setting impact on designated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	An area of approximately 2,350 sq. m of loss of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance due to use of forestry tracks.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses the existing NMU routes with limited widening requirements along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, Public Rights of Way and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation and impact to forestry private accesses and direct accesses to the B9153.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Medium for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.6: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 6

Assessment of Identified Corridor 6		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 6,340m (40%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low as most of the length is estate maintenance access opposed to major felling routes. This corridor requires 9 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor also provides onward connection to forestry tracks and 18 core paths/Other NMU routes and additionally connects to the community of Boat of Garten.	
Directness	This corridor is around 15.7 km long.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes which may give rise to some localised departures from standard. 24% will be new construction and 76% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Of 15.7km, 9.8km passes through the woodland which is 62% of total length, making this route attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on designated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	An area of approximately 4,900 sq. m of loss of ancient woodland. Protected species may be affected in terms of temporary disturbance (e.g. construction stage) but is not expected to introduce habitat fragmentation or barrier effects.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses existing NMU routes with limited widening requirement along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, Public Rights of Way and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation required and localised impact to direct accesses to the B9153.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Medium for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes	

Table 3.7: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 7

Assessment of Identified Corridor 7		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 7,145m (62%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low however routes are used for felling activities. This corridor requires 15 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides onward connection to forestry tracks and 20 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 11.4 km long and among the shortest routes from Aviemore to Carrbridge.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes and proposed A9 access tracks with gradients exceeding 7% in places giving rise to a number of departures from standard. 15% will be new construction and 85% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Out of 11.4km, 8.0km passes through the woodland which is 70% of the total length, making this route attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on undesignated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	Minimal loss of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses the existing NMU routes with limited widening requirements along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, Public Rights of Way and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation and impact on forestry private accesses and direct accesses to the A95/B9153.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Low for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.8: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 8

Assessment of Identified Corridor 8		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 1880m (15%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. While traffic volumes are estimated to be low, a significant interface with timber extraction, haulage and woodland management vehicles has been identified during these operations. This corridor requires 13 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor also provides onward connection to forestry tracks and 18 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 12.1 km long.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes including a small stretch (1873m) of private road with some short sections where gradients between 5 and 7% may give rise to some localised departures from standard. 35% will be new construction and 65% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Of 12.1km, 8.5km passes through the woodland which is 70% of the total length, making this route attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on undesignated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	An area of approximately 11,043sq. m of loss of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long term disturbance due to use of forestry tracks.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses the existing NMU routes with limited widening requirements along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, Public Rights of Way and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation required and localised impact to direct accesses to the A95/B9153. Significant interface with timber haulage and woodland management operations.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Low for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes	

Table 3.9: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 9

Identified Corridor 9		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 2,570m (11%) has the potential for private vehicles to access along. However, traffic volumes are low as most of these routes are maintenance accesses. This corridor requires 21 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides connections to forestry tracks and 14 core paths/Other NMU routes and additionally connects to the community of Boat of Garten.	
Directness	This corridor length is around 24.1 km long and is the longest route from Aviemore to Carrbridge.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes (NCN7 and core paths) with gradients predominantly below 5% however some localised steeper sections may exist given rise to some departures from standard. 58% will be new construction and 42% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Of 24.1km, 12.3km passes through the woodland which is 50% of total length.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact minor potential setting impact on undesignated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	An area of approximately 12,255sq. m of loss of ancient woodland. Protected species may be affected in terms of temporary disturbance (e.g. construction stage) but is not expected to introduce habitat fragmentation or barrier effects.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses existing NMU routes with widening requirement along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, core paths and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Significant land negotiation required and localised impact to direct accesses to the B9153.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be High for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes.	

Table 3.10: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Matrix for Identified Corridor 10

Assessment of Identified Corridor 10		
Parameters	**Comments**	**Impact**
Safety	Approximately 5,580m (44%) of this corridor will be shared with vehicular traffic. While traffic volumes are estimated to be low, a significant interface with timber extraction, haulage and woodland management vehicles has been identified during these operations. This corridor requires 20 road crossings.	
Coherence	This corridor provides connections to forestry tracks and 16 core paths/Other NMU routes.	
Directness	This corridor is around 12.8 km long.	
Comfort	This corridor uses existing NMU routes which includes a small stretch (1873m) of private road and proposed A9 side roads with steeper gradients which may give rise to departures from standard. 16% will be new construction and 84% of the surface will be an upgrade to existing.	
Attractiveness	Of 12.8km, 9.2km passes through the woodland which is 71% of total length, making this route attractive for recreation and leisure purposes.	
Cultural Heritage	This corridor has no direct impact but minor potential setting impact on undesignated assets.	
Ecology & Nature Conservation	An area of approximately 7,235sq. m of loss of ancient woodland. Potential for protected species to be affected in terms of long-term disturbance.	
Landscape & Visual	This corridor uses the existing NMU routes with limited widening requirements along the route. Also, the corridor will be following Other NMU routes, Public Rights of Way and NCN7 profiles. This corridor has high potential to integrate within the existing landscape. No visual receptors (properties) within close proximity.	
Water-environment	This corridor is not expected to impact flood storage or conveyance that couldn't be effectively mitigated.	
Property and Land take	Some land negotiation and localised impact to forestry private accesses and direct accesses to the A95/B9153. Significant interface with timber haulage and woodland management operations.	
Outline cost	The outline construction cost is estimated to be Low for this route considering the amount of land take, new construction and improvement to existing routes	

3. Preliminary Corridor Sifting

Based on above assessment a sifting exercise has been undertaken to identify the corridors to be carried forward to the options appraisal stage. The justification for each is summarised below.

Identified Corridor 1 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

Whilst this is one of the most direct corridors there are significant engineering constraints to be overcome, particularly with respect to gradient, earthworks and drainage. In terms of physical space, it would be extremely challenging to achieve without directly interfering with the Highland Mainline Railway and associated assets. It is considered to have significant environmental impact, including the potential ecological impact of connections being formed via underbridges connecting to potential Capercaillie habitat west of the A9, in addition to loss of ancient woodland and the impact on properties and agricultural units, particularly on Avielochan Farm.

Identified Corridor 2 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunities for recreational users to access the wider track network. However, this diversification and increase of NMUs is considered a significant impact due to the presence of Capercaillie habitat west of the A9. Furthermore, the forestry tracks are of variable gradient frequently exceeding 5% with potential interaction with forestry vehicles during periods of felling so are unlikely to be appropriate for all user groups and may impact forestry operations.

Identified Corridor 3 will be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment.

This corridor would provide the most direct connection between Aviemore and Carrbridge, an attractive option for commuters although the corridor whilst segregated will run parallel to the side road network and offer fewer connection to other recreational routes. Further detailed option development is required to confirm the route for segregation and therefore impact to landform and adjacent land owners and other associated impacts. Also, its potential impact on protected species through indirect connection to Kinveachy Forest and Crannaich, via the underbridge at Kinveachy requires further assessment.

Identified Corridor 4 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunities for recreational users to access the wider track network. However, this diversification and increase of NMUs is considered a significant impact due to the presence of Capercaillie habitat west of the A9. Furthermore, the forestry tracks are of variable gradient frequently exceeding 5% with potential interaction with forestry vehicles during periods of felling so are unlikely to be appropriate for all user groups and may impact forestry operations.

Identified Corridor 5 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

This corridor is considered to have significant environmental impact, including the potential ecological impact of connections being formed due to underbridges connecting to potential Capercaillie habitat west of the A9, in addition to loss if ancient woodland.

Identified Corridor 6 will be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment.

The corridor provides recreational benefits as approximately half of the scheme is completely remote of the side road network with a more direct section segregated from the B9153 whilst also providing onward connection to other communities including Boat of Garten and other existing NMU routes and local areas of interest. Further detailed option development is required to confirm the route for segregation along the B9153 and therefore impact to landform and adjacent land owners and other associated impacts.

Identified Corridor 7 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunities for recreational users to access the wider track network. However, this diversification and increase of NMUs is considered a significant impact due to the presence of Capercaillie habitat west of the A9. Furthermore, the forestry tracks are of variable gradient frequently exceeding 5% with potential interaction with forestry vehicles during periods of felling so are unlikely to be appropriate for all user groups and may impact forestry operations.

Identified Corridor 8 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment.

The corridor provides both recreational benefits as approximately half of the scheme is completely remote from the side road network with a more direct section segregated from the B9153. However, the use of the forestry track south of Kinveachy is considered to represent an interface with forestry extraction and woodland management operations as well as present the potential for significant disturbance to protected species (Capercaillie) which would be difficult to mitigate.

Identified Corridor 9 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

This corridor option is discounted due to its excessive length and impact to commuter users. It is considered similar recreational benefits can be made through the development of a shorter connection.

Identified Corridor 10 will not be considered for further development in the next stage of assessment due to potentially significant impacts.

The use of the forestry tracks provide opportunity for recreational users to access the wider track network, however this diversification and increase of NMUs is considered a significant impact due to the presence of Capercaillie habitat west of the A9 and south of Kinveachy. Furthermore, the forestry tracks are of variable gradient frequently exceeding 5% with potential interaction with forestry vehicles during periods of felling so are unlikely to be appropriate for all user groups and forestry operations.

Refer also to summary Table 3.11 below.

The corridors identified for further assessment are IC3 and IC6 as shown in figures 2.3 and 2.6 of Appendix C.

Table 3.11: Baseline NMU Corridor Assessment Summary Matrix

Identified Corridor Option	Key aspects / Parameters											
	Safety	Coherence	Directness	Comfort	Attractiveness	Cultural Heritage	Ecology & Nature Conservation	Landscape & Visuals	Water-environment	Property and Land take	Outline cost	Remarks
IC 1												This corridor provides a relatively direct route and is largely segregated from the existing traffic but the significant engineering constraints and potential for disturbance of Capercaillie in Kinveachy Forest eliminates this option from further consideration.
IC 2												This corridor provides many positives but the potential for disturbance of Capercaillie in Kinveachy Forest eliminates this option from further consideration.
IC 3												Although the land take requirements and costs are high, this route satisfies many design principles of Cycling by Design in terms of safety, coherence, directness, comfort and attractiveness.
IC 4												This is an attractive but lengthy route at over 15km with steep gradients at certain sections. However, the potential for disturbance of Capercaillie in Kinveachy Forest eliminates this route from further consideration.
IC 5												The potential for disturbance of Capercaillie in Kinveachy Forest eliminates this route from further consideration.
IC 6												Although this corridor provides a fairly lengthy route, this option provides good connectivity for leisure and recreational users.
IC 7												The potential for disturbance of Capercaillie in Kinveachy Forest eliminates this route from further consideration.
IC 8												This corridor impacts on ancient woodland, forestry operations and potential for disturbance to Capercaillie south of Kinveachy which eliminates this route from further consideration.
IC 9												This is the longest route among all the corridors considered. In previous Dalraddy to Slochd exhibitions the feasibility of this route was questioned. The land take requirements and outline costs are also prohibitive.
IC 10												This corridor provides many positives but the potential for disturbance of Capercaillie in Kinveachy Forest and south of Kinveachy eliminate this option from further consideration.

4. Next steps

Following the conclusion of the Baseline Assessment, and in accordance with the Scoping Paper, the next step is to commence the Options Appraisal assessment and production of the Options Appraisal Report.

The Options Appraisal Report will assess the corridors identified in Section 3 in more detail. Options within the corridors will be informed by additional consultation.

The Options Appraisal Report will seek to identify a preferred route for development and will include the following activities.

- Public Consultation and Event(s);
- Ongoing consultation with potentially affected landowners;
- Further development of constraints and requirements including site survey;
- Option development from remaining corridors, including any required structures and preliminary drainage assessments;
- Assessment of options;
- Outline cost estimates of route options, and;
- Recommendation of preferred option including identification of land requirements.

After the preferred route and land requirements have been identified, Transport Scotland and AMJV will support other agencies as required to undertake the necessary planning applications and land acquisition.

As outlined in the scoping paper, Transport Scotland has offered to fund and construct the NMU route, should it successfully progress through planning in time for it to be included in the A9 Dualling Dalraddy to Slochd construction contract.