

## NOTICE OF DECISION

### THE A9 AND A95 TRUNK ROADS (DALRADDY TO SLOCHD) PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PARAGRAPH 7 OF SCHEDULE 1 OF THE ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984

The Scottish Ministers give notice that they have decided to proceed in connection with improving and constructing new lengths of the M9/A9 Edinburgh – Stirling – Thurso Trunk Road and the A95 Granish – Keith Trunk Road at Granish between Dalraddy and Slochd in the County of Inverness-shire by widening and reconstructing the existing single carriageway to form a new dual carriageway section.

The Scottish Ministers have complied with paragraph 7(1A) of schedule 1 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 by taking into consideration–

(a) the Environmental Statement available at:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/draft-orders-and-environmental-statement-dalraddy-to-slochd-a9-dualling/>

(b) the opinions on that report and the project which were expressed in writing by: NatureScot, Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) and The Highland Council (THC).

(c) The evidence submitted to the Reporter for consideration in preparation for a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) for the Project to consider the extant objections, and the Reporter's conclusions and recommendations as set out in Chapter 6 of the Reporter's Report dated 20 April 2021.

The Scottish Ministers have taken into consideration (a) and (b) by –

- Reviewing the Environmental Statement (ES) and residual effects as set out in the ES Chapter 22 (Summary of Significant Residual Impacts) which concluded that with proposed mitigation the following topics had significant residual impacts: People and communities - Community and Private Assets (Chapter 8); People and communities - Effects on All Travellers (Chapter 9); Road Drainage and the Water Environment (Chapter 11); Ecology and Nature Conservation (Chapter 12); Landscape (Chapter 13); Visual (Chapter 14); Noise and Vibration (Chapter 17); and Materials (Chapter 18). It was concluded that with proposed mitigation there were significant residual (beneficial) effects on Road Drainage and the Water Environment (Chapter 11); and, Ecology and Nature Conservation (Chapter 12). The other topics including Geology, Soils, and Groundwater (Chapter 10) , Cultural Heritage (Chapter 15) , and Air Quality (Chapter 16) had no significant adverse residual effects
- Reviewing the collated mitigation and monitoring requirements as set out in the ES Chapter 21 (Schedule of Environmental Commitments) and ensuring

that the agreed requirements are incorporated into the construction contract(s), where appropriate.

- Reviewing the responses from the consultation bodies detailed in point (b), acknowledging comments and incorporating requirements into the Employer's Requirements, where applicable. A summary of consultation responses received following publication of the ES, and how these have been considered is provided in Sections 9 and 10 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Record of Decision.
- Reviewing other environmental information such as the Assessment carried out under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994, as amended, which concluded that with mitigation measures, that the proposed Scheme would not result in an adverse effect on River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar, Abernethy Forest SPA, Angach Wood SPA, Craigmore Wood SPA, Kinveachy Forrest SPA, Cairngorms SPA, Cairngorms SAC and Loch Vaa SPA.

## **Reasons for Decision**

The Scottish Ministers have decided to proceed with the project for the following reasons –

- The works are necessary to improve the operational performance of the A9, improve the safety for motorised and non-motorised users, facilitate active travel within the corridor and to improve integration with public transport facilities.
- An EIA has been undertaken as set out in the ES and has concluded that, with mitigation and monitoring measures in place, there will be no significant adverse residual effects in relation to the following topics as a result of the proposed works:
  - Geology, Soils and Groundwater (Chapter 10);
  - Cultural Heritage (Chapter 15); and
  - Air Quality (Chapter 16).
- The Assessment completed under The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, as amended, concluded that the project as proposed will not adversely affect the integrity of the River Spey SAC, Insh Marshes SAC, River Spey – Insh Marshes Ramsar, Abernethy Forest SPA, Angach Wood SPA, Craigmore Wood SPA, Kinveachy Forrest SPA, Cairngorms SPA, Cairngorms SAC and Loch Vaa SPA.
- Consultation with Stakeholders was undertaken, following publication of the ES, as set out in Sections 9 and 10 of the EIA Record of Decision
- The mitigation and monitoring measures as set out in Sections 2, 10, 12 and 13 of the decision will be fully implemented and incorporated into the construction contracts, where appropriate.

A full copy of the Scottish Ministers' decision is available at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/draft-orders-and-environmental-statement-dalraddy-to-slochd-a9-dualling/>

*B Sizeland.*

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