

# A9 Dualling UPDATE

March 2017



## Welcome

**Welcome to the latest newsletter about the A9 Dualling programme and the work going on to deliver this major infrastructure programme.**

Throughout 2016 and continuing this year, a lot of design work has taken place for the sections to be dualled between Perth and Inverness.

As a sign of real progress, we have now identified preferred route options for over 90 per cent of the road to be dualled.

We have consulted widely with local communities and local representatives, and that feedback has helped shape the design of the preferred routes.

We are working hard to ensure that the benefits of a dualled route are provided as soon as possible, especially for people driving the route or living alongside it. Construction of the first section between Kinraig and Dalraddy is well underway and we expect to complete it this summer.

Last December we published the Made Orders for the next section to be dualled between Luncarty and the Pass of Birnam. Then earlier this year we started the procurement for the construction work with work expected to start by the end of this year.

This newsletter includes updates from each of the three design consultancies on the projects they are working on.

Hand-in-hand with the engineering design work, we have been progressing our exciting new educational initiative Academy9. Since its launch in August 2015, we have held a number of events in schools across the route, giving school pupils the opportunity to learn more about the engineering challenges involved in building a road. And so far over 1,800 primary school pupils and 550 secondary school pupils from schools along the A9 have taken part in a number of events and activities to learn more about the challenges of dualling this major road.

The Academy9 initiative has now been recognised by Inverness College UHI as a formal qualification and the first training



**Economy Secretary Keith Brown views the new Academy9 Glow blog with members of the Academy9 team and Diane Rawlinson, Principal and Chief Executive at Inverness College UHI.**

session for a new module for teachers took place this January at the same time as an Academy9 Glow blog for teachers and pupils went live.

So, a great deal is happening across the dualling programme at all levels, and I hope that this newsletter gives a real flavour of the amount of work going on as we look to deliver this ambitious programme, which will improve road safety and journeys on this iconic route linking the cities of Perth and Inverness.

**Jo Blewett** programme manager



# A9 Dualling Update

## THE A9 DUALLING PROGRAMME – AT A GLANCE

Three consultancies have been appointed to design the route:

**ATKINS mouchel**

Northern Section – Dalraddy to Inverness

**ch2m FAIRHURST**

Central Section – Glen Garry to Dalraddy

**JACOBS**

Southern Section – Pass of Birnam to Glen Garry

### CURRENT STATUS OF THE 11 PROJECTS

#### Luncarty to Pass of Birnam (9.5km)

Made Orders published December 2016. Procurement of construction contract now underway with work expected to start late 2017.

#### Birnam to Tay Crossing (8.3km)

Route option design work ongoing.

#### Tay Crossing to Ballinluig (7.7km)

Preferred route option identified December 2016. Public exhibitions held on 15 and 16 February 2017.

#### Pitlochry to Killiecrankie (6.4km)

Preferred route option identified November 2016.

#### Killiecrankie to Glen Garry (21.6km)

Preferred route option identified March 2016.

#### Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie (9.5km)

Preferred route option identified November 2016.

#### Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore (11km)

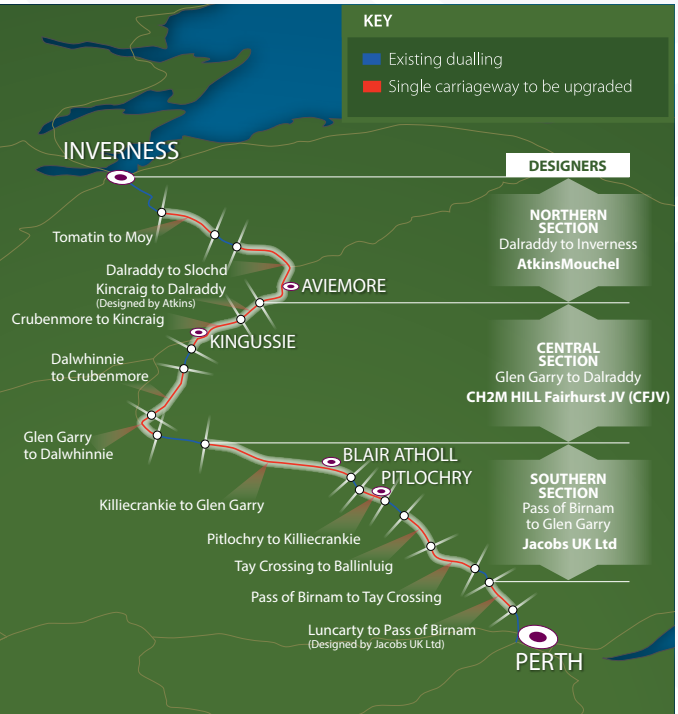
Preferred route option identified March 2016.

#### Crubenmore to Kincaig (16.5km)

Preferred route option identified March 2017. Public exhibitions held on 8 and 9 March 2017.

#### Kincaig to Dalraddy (7.5 km)

Construction well underway.



A9 Perth to Inverness Dualling Programme – overview of all 11 projects

Expected to be completed in summer 2017.

#### Dalraddy to Slochd (25km)

Preferred route option identified March 2017. Public exhibitions held on 2 and 3 March 2017.

#### Tomatin to Moy (9.3km)

Preferred route option identified November 2016.

## THE DUALLING DESIGN PROCESS

The design process for each section of the A9 Dualling Programme follows the national design standard **Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)**, which is a three-stage assessment process relating to the design, assessment and operation of trunk roads.

The DMRB Stage 1 Assessment looks at planning and development of improved transport links between Perth and Inverness. As part of that work, a Strategic Environmental

Assessment and Preliminary Engineering assessment was undertaken from 2012-2014. This work helped define an online corridor for the dualling programme.

The DMRB Stage 2 Assessment identifies the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints associated with the route options, and allows identification of a preferred route option.

The DMRB Stage 3 Assessment involves design

refinement, and a focus on key areas for development including drainage design, design of major structures, impact on environmentally designated sites and floodplain, the development of environmental mitigation and Non-Motorised User (NMU) e.g. pedestrian and cyclist provision, environmental mitigation measures, and utilities diversions.

Landowner, community and stakeholder consultation is ongoing throughout each stage of the process.

### Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Process

**DMRB Stage 1**  
A9 Preliminary Engineering Study and Strategic Environmental Assessment – identification of broad improvement strategies

**DMRB Stage 2**  
Route option assessment and identification of preferred option

**DMRB Stage 3**  
Development and assessment of preferred option

**Statutory Process**  
Publication of draft Road Orders, Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Environmental Statement Public Local Inquiry (if required)

**Procurement**

**Construction**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Engagement with directly affected communities and businesses is at the heart of Transport Scotland's major infrastructure projects and is a vital part of our work as we develop plans to dual the A9 between Perth and Inverness.**

Transport Scotland seeks to actively engage with directly affected communities, landowners, tenants, businesses, road users and other stakeholders. Communication often includes use of a range of methods including:

- one-to-one meetings
- public exhibitions and events
- community drop-in sessions
- community council meetings
- newsletters
- press and community magazine
- adverts and articles
- Transport Scotland's website – A9 dualling section and individual project sections.

All our public engagement events will be widely publicised, both in the media and in locations in the areas where the dualling design work is taking place.



Members of the community examine the preferred route option in Kingussie



One of several A9 Dualling public exhibitions along the route



Local residents attending an exhibition for Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing



Members of the public viewing plans at Newtonmore exhibition

# A9 Dualling Update

## SOUTHERN SECTION PROJECTS

### JACOBS UPDATE

#### LUNCARTY TO PASS OF BIRNAM

The Made Orders for the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam scheme were published in December 2016. The procurement of the construction contract is now underway with work expected to start late 2017.

#### PASS OF BIRNAM TO TAY CROSSING

Transport Scotland continues to work with the Birnam to Ballinluig Community Group to examine a range of options for dualling this section of the route. The community and other stakeholders will be advised of opportunities to get involved in due course.

#### TAY CROSSING TO BALLINLUIG

Following completion of the Stage 2 and Offline assessments, the preferred route option was announced in December 2016 with an exhibition following on the 15th and 16th February 2017. The design will continue to be subject to further refinement and development over the next few months as the Stage 3 assessment is progressed. This will include a further more detailed flooding assessment. An environmental statement will be published which details mitigation to reduce environmental impacts of the scheme.



Virtual reality model looking north along the Tay Valley

#### PITLOCHRY TO KILLIECRANKIE



Members of the community examine the preferred route option in Pitlochry

Following completion of the Stage 2 assessment, the preferred route option for Pitlochry to Killiecrankie was announced at Public Exhibitions held on the 9th and 10th November 2016 in Pitlochry Town Hall. The scheme design is now the subject of further refinement as more detailed site based survey information is gathered. The design of drainage networks, earthworks slopes and other items including private accesses will be developed and the incorporation of environmental mitigation to reduce environmental impacts will also be included in the design. Again, an environmental statement will be published which details mitigation to reduce environmental impacts of the scheme.

#### KILLIECRANKIE TO GLEN GARRY

Since the preferred route option announcement in early 2016 the section from Killiecrankie to Glen Garry has been progressing through Stage 3 assessment with drop-in sessions held in November 2016 to provide the public with an update on the progress. Further survey working including more detailed ground investigations is now being conducted. This work will feed into the final stages of the design.



Environmental survey work

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF – AN AQUATIC ECOLOGIST

**You are probably wondering what an aquatic ecologist is, and what role I could possibly play in helping dual the A9? Well, I am interested in all species, plants and animals that are found in the water.**

We have several internationally protected species in the watercourses along the A9 corridor, and need to understand their numbers and where they are found so that suitable mitigation can be provided for any potential impacts.

As each survey day is unique, different locations, species and dealing with the challenges of the Scottish weather, there is no such thing as a 'typical' day. Today was a good example of this. Setting out this morning for a freshwater pearl mussel survey, the sun was shining and the sky was blue. Although temperatures were lower than expected for late April, calm dry weather conditions were perfect for the survey.

The species I am surveying is one of the most critically endangered molluscs in the world, and Scotland has many of the remaining populations. Suitable habitat for adult mussels is a mixture of boulder and cobble, in areas of river where there is shading.

Young mussels spend a year attached to the gills of salmonid fish (Atlantic salmon and trout). After this stage of their life cycle, the baby mussels drop off into patches of loose sediment, in areas protected from high flows of water, often in the shelter of boulders. It is these habitats I look for when walking along a river bank, trying to identify areas to survey. As



Dr Susie Coyle with measuring stick and bathyscope

salmonid fish are part of the mussel life cycle, I also record any areas of habitat important for these fish.

Once I have chosen my survey area, accessing a watercourse can be challenging, and I often find myself clambering over and under vegetation to get to the bankside. Getting into, and out of a watercourse safely, is the first thing that I assess, but once I have carried out my risk assessment then into the water I go.

Two pieces of equipment are essential; my wading pole, which doubles as a measuring stick, and my bathyscope, otherwise known as a glass bottomed bucket. The latter allows me to clearly view the river bed and any mussels there. With these two pieces of 'high tech' equipment, I slowly wade upstream, counting mussels as I go and assessing habitat that is suitable for salmonids.

Once in the water, visual assessments were reasonably

easy, as the sun was shining. Although the water was deep in places, the river bed was clearly visible. Alas, after several hours and no mussels, spirits were flagging. Then, in the most unexpected place, a mussel was spotted. Only one mussel but suddenly my cold hands and feet were forgotten. However, almost immediately the weather changed, the sky turned grey and it began to rain. Fifteen minutes later and snow was

falling so I had to leave site. On another day, and for a different protected species, I could have continued the survey, but as good light is essential for spotting the elusive freshwater pearl mussel my field survey day was done. However, as mussels can live for over a hundred years I'm sure that they will still be there when the Scottish weather improves and I can finally finish the survey I began in the sunshine.

## Dr Susie Coyle

Dr Susie Coyle is an aquatic ecologist undertaking surveys for several aquatic species groups on the A9 dualling project. The data collected in the field will be used in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and will be reported in the accompanying Environmental Statement and Habitat Regulations Appraisal. Susie has worked for Jacobs for eight years and is based in the Glasgow office. Before joining Jacobs, she studied Aquatic Bioscience at the University of Glasgow, where she also received her PhD in fish behaviour and genetics. She holds several protected species licenses including freshwater pearl mussel. She is a keen hill walker and is happiest when in waders in a river looking at fish.



**Please note that only trained surveyors should be undertaking surveys in water. Members of the public should never attempt to do this.**

# A9 Dualling Update

## CENTRAL SECTION PROJECTS CFJV UPDATE



Peat probing survey near Dalwhinnie

### PEAT SURVEYS

**Peat soils in Scotland act as an important carbon store, can support important habitats and wildlife, and have important roles in water purification, drainage and hydrology.**

For these reasons, peat soils are valuable in many ways and they can be particularly vulnerable to impact from construction of large infrastructure projects such as the A9 Dualling.

Prior to and as part of the DMRB Stage 3 Environmental Impact Assessments for the Central Section between Glen Garry and Kincaig, the CFJV have been completing extensive peat ecology, probing and sampling surveys within and around the project extents. These were undertaken in July, August and December 2016; and involved



surveying of habitat types and assessing peat soil presence and depth with probing rods, together with recovering samples to observe and record the peat soil type, its condition, organic content and water content.

Additional survey efforts are planned for 2017. However the results obtained to date, are helping inform the dualling designs for the Central Section and explore options and solutions to avoid and/or minimise the level of impact on these sensitive soils as far as is practicable.

### GLEN GARRY TO DALWHINNIE

The preferred route option was announced on 23 November 2016 with drop-in events at Dalwhinnie that day and in Blair Atholl on 24 November. The preferred route option was generally well received with a smaller footprint compact junction proposed at Dalnaspical and a left-in/left-out arrangement with an underpass proposed at Drumochter Lodge/Balsporran. DMRB Stage 3 assessment is now underway working towards publication of Environmental Statement and draft Orders.

### DALWHINNIE TO CRUBENMORE

The preferred route option was announced on 8 March 2016 and public drop-in event was held on 11 October 2016 – both in Dalwhinnie Village Hall. The preferred route option and access proposals were generally well received. Discussions are on-going with landowners. DMRB Stage 3 assessment is now underway working towards publication of Environmental Statement and draft Orders.

### CRUBENMORE TO KINCRAIG

DMRB Stage 2 is now complete with particular attention paid to the Spey Crossing where various important environmental designations come into play. The preferred route option was presented to the public on 8 and 9 March 2017.

The DMRB Stage 3 assessment for the project has now commenced working towards preparation and publication of draft Orders and Environmental Statement.



River Spey Bridge crosses important environmental designations

# NORTHERN SECTION PROJECTS

## AMJV UPDATE

### DALRADDY TO SLOCHD

Public exhibitions were held on 2 and 3 March 2017 for the Dalraddy to Slochd project where the preferred route option and junction layouts were on display for locals and road users to see and comment on.

### TOMATIN TO MOY

AMJV held exhibitions on the 14th and 15th November 2016 in the Strathdearn Village Hall to let the public see the DMRB Stage 2 preferred route option for the Tomatin to Moy project. These exhibitions were well attended, with 190 people attending over the two days.

As well as the DMRB Stage 2 preferred route option announcement, various sub-options and detailed design work were on display. All comments received will be considered as part of the ongoing design work on the project. In addition, interviews were conducted with major landowners along the project to gain a greater understanding of their holdings and the nature of their businesses.



Members of the community examine the preferred route option in Tomatin

## DISCOVERING SCOTLAND'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

**As part of the preferred route option development being taken forward during DMRB Stage 3, AMJV's Land and Estates Advisor Patrick Thompson has visited various historical monuments to help identify the cultural heritage baseline along the Tomatin to Moy route.**

Two cairns close to the village of Moy and hidden in forestry plantations provide fascinating backstories, as Patrick explains:

"The Rout of Moy (Ruaig na Maighe) cairn (pictured) marks the location where, in 1746, Lord Loudon of the Hanoverian forces and 1,500 of his men set out to capture Prince Charles Edward Stuart who was being hidden by Lady Anne Mackintosh in Moy Hall. As the Hanoverian forces approached in the darkness, the Moy blacksmith Donald Fraser and roughly half a dozen



The Rout of Moy Cairn (left) and the location of the Living Man's Grave (right)

others fired their muskets and let out war cries signalling the various clans to battle. Thinking that the whole of the Highland army were approaching, the forces swiftly retreated back to Inverness!"

Further south of this location Patrick met with a local forest ranger, who took him to the location of the Living Man's Grave (Uaigh an Duine bheo) cairn (pictured). The story

goes that a follower of the MacGillivray clan of Dunmaglass stood upon Moy Clan land, and falsely claimed that the land he stood upon was his chief's. The Mackintoshes quickly discovered that the follower had filled his boots with Dunmaglass soil when making this claim, and buried him alive there and then, with the cairn supposedly marking the location of where he was buried.



By taking account of the historical monuments along the Northern Section, AMJV are considering the potential and predicted effects of the construction and operation of the proposed route on the cultural heritage resources, within the context of relevant legislation and policy guidelines. Local knowledge is also invaluable to this process.

# A9 Dualling Update

## A9 DUALLING GALLERY A selection of images of events and locations from across the entire dualling programme



**SOUTHERN SECTION**

The A9 looking north towards Guay



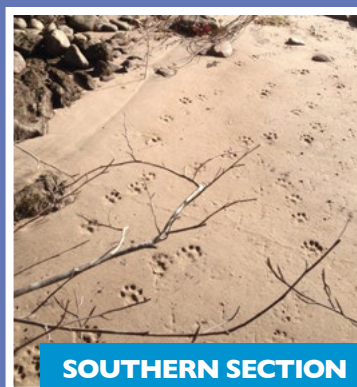
**SOUTHERN SECTION**

Academy9 at Pitlochry area Gateway event



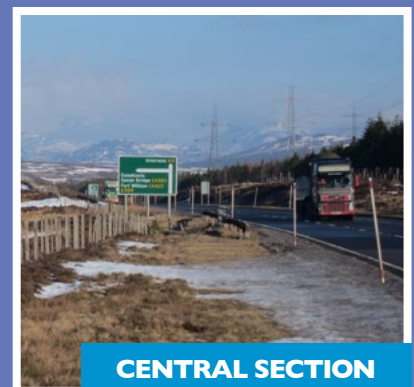
**SOUTHERN SECTION**

Academy9 event at Pitlochry Primary School



**SOUTHERN SECTION**

Otter prints in the beach at Loch Faskally



**CENTRAL SECTION**

New junction proposed for Dalwhinnie





**CENTRAL SECTION**

Donation of gardening tools from CFJV to St Vincents Therapy Gardens at Kingussie



**CENTRAL SECTION**

Exploring current design using Virtual Reality technology at Dalwhinnie drop-in event



**CENTRAL SECTION**

Preliminary ground investigation works underway



**CENTRAL SECTION**

Historic Ruthven Barracks overlooks the site for the River Spey Crossing near Kingussie



**NORTHERN SECTION**

Peat probing on A9 Northern Section

# A9 Dualling Update

## BACKGROUND ON GROUND INVESTIGATIONS

### What is it?

To build on the information obtained from previous ground investigation studies along the A9 Perth to Inverness corridor, a further phase of investigations has been taking place at different sections to be dualled.

These vital works will provide information on the soil, rock and groundwater regime beneath the A9, to enable the design of the A9 Dualling Programme between Perth and Inverness.

The ground investigation works are targeted at specific areas to obtain information and optimise design solutions to minimise the impact on the surrounding area and communities along the A9.

Further detailed ground investigations to start this year will confirm ground conditions across the whole route. This phased approach is very effective and supports the evolutionary design process.

Some of the ground investigation needs to be carried out near to or on the existing A9 carriageway. This requires the introduction of short-term traffic management measures to ensure the safety of road users and road workers. The ground investigation contractors always closely monitor the operation of their traffic management, to ensure that any delays for road users are kept to a minimum.

### How is it done?

Ground investigations use various techniques to investigate the soil, rock and groundwater regime beneath the A9. The most appropriate techniques have been chosen, based on the information required, and using data from previous investigations. Borehole depths range from 5m to 50m below ground level, and target key locations along the A9.

In situ and laboratory testing will be carried out on the samples collected to determine soil and

rock characteristics, such as strength, compressibility and acceptability for re-use. The following techniques will be used during ground investigation works:

### Cable percussion drilling

– used to determine soil and groundwater characteristics. This is a drop tool type drilling method, using steel casing tubes to prevent collapse of the borehole during drilling. The rig has a large tripod and winch, which are used to lift and drop heavy cutting tools down onto the base of the borehole. Cable percussive drilling is useful in areas of alluvial and river terrace deposits, and obtains soil samples for geotechnical, groundwater and contamination testing.



Cable percussion borehole at River Tummel Crossing, Pitlochry – advanced ground investigations, 2015

**Sonic drilling** – used to determine soil, rock and groundwater characteristics. When you use a sonic drill head, the entire drill string is brought to a vibration frequency of up to 150Hz. This causes a very thin layer of soil particles directly surrounding the drill string and bit to lose structure. Instead of a stiff mass, the soil behaves like a powder or paste. Sonic drilling is useful in areas of dense granular glaciofluvial and glacial deposits, and is capable of coring through rock. Sonic drilling is used to

obtain continuous soil profiles and soil samples for geotechnical and contamination testing. It can penetrate through large cobbles and boulders, frequently encountered beneath the A9.



Sonic borehole, Pitlochry – advanced ground investigations, 2015

**Rotary drilling** – used to advance through soil and rock. It is a type of rock drill that chips away rock and produces a hole. Rotary rigs are used to obtain rock samples for geotechnical testing and are useful in areas of shallow bedrock e.g. the rock cuttings near Calvine. Rotary coring in rock is also used to determine rock strengths for structure foundations, e.g. the Loch Faskally crossing.



Rotary borehole north of Shierglas Quarry – advanced ground investigations, 2015

**Machine excavated trial pits** – dug using a medium-sized mechanical excavator to clear the soil from the surface and then dig down to expose the materials

below, to determine soil profile up to 6m in depth, and obtain samples for geotechnical and contamination testing. Trial pits help determine soil characteristics for potential re-use as fill material across the A9 route.



Machine excavated trial pit – Luncarty, 2012

When ground investigation works are complete, the information is used to develop a conceptual ground model, showing the soil, rock and groundwater profile and characteristics across the route. This will allow specimen design of the geotechnical aspects of the A9 dualling to be undertaken, including:

- earthworks design – identify slope angles to determine land purchase boundaries and assessment for re-use of material in other areas where fill material is required
- strengthened earthworks design – reinforced earth embankments and soil nailed cuttings to minimise land required, especially next to constraints such as the Highland Main Line railway or one of the numerous water courses
- rock cutting design, including how much can be excavated and slope angles
- design of foundations for structures such as overbridges and road pavements.

# ACADEMY9 UPDATE



**The dualling of the A9 has opened the door to a valuable opportunity to provide unique, industry-led STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) education in the form of the innovative Academy9 programme.**

As part of Academy9, children and young people are given access to industry professionals from all three design consultancies involved in the A9 Dualling programme. This helps them gain hands-on experience of the STEM industries in real-life contexts; opening their eyes to potential opportunities for their own future careers.

As part of this scheme Academy9 professionals from CFJV recently engaged with fourth year technology students from Kingussie High School with a tour of the Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie project public engagement event, a question



Young people from Pitlochry, Dunkeld, Blair Atholl and Logierait join in with Academy9 Gateway and 'Love the Lorry Week'



and answer session and a chance to use industry-quality Virtual Reality equipment to experience the digital project design in an immersive and engaging context.

Transportation Engineer, David Allen and Engineer in Training, Bruce Gibson, showcased the VR equipment at this exciting event, allowing pupils to observe and interact with the preferred mainline

and junction design for the Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore section and giving them an industry perspective on innovative engineering solutions to the many design challenges faced by the A9 Dualling.

At the start of each academic year, Academy 9 holds gateway events to introduce new primary children to the idea of the A9 Dualling and what related careers may involve. One of those gateway events, held at Pitlochry High School last September, coincided with the Road Haulage Association's (RHA) 2016 'Love the Lorry Week' which aims to raise awareness of the importance of road haulage to the economy. Working with the RHA we included two lorry-related activities for the 50 plus pupils taking part in the event.

These are just a few of the many ways Academy9 has been working directly with schools and communities to provide a wealth of high quality STEM education. From in-school activity sessions with both primary and secondary children, to mentoring opportunities for older pupils and industry

professionals, to creating a specific Level 6 CPD course for education professionals that will soon form part of the curriculum at Inverness College UHI with tutors drawn from the three design consultancies, the Academy9 programme has been working with industry and education professionals to help increase provision of CPD education along the A9 corridor.

A new Academy9 Glow blog recently launched by the Economy Secretary Keith Brown is packed with learning tools for teachers and pupils including video logs from staff working on the dualling programme.

Another element of the programme will be the groundbreaking Apprentice Academy for S2/3 pupils which is being piloted at a joint event taking part in the event. These are just a few of the many ways Academy9 has been working directly with schools and communities to provide a wealth of high quality STEM education. From in-school activity sessions with both primary and secondary children, to mentoring opportunities for older pupils and industry



Pupils from Kingussie High School experiencing Virtual Reality technology

## ACADEMY9 GLOW BLOG

[blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/academy9](https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/academy9)

# A9 Dualling Update

## CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS REPORT

### KINCRAIG TO DALRADDY

#### Work to dual the stretch of the A9 between Kincaig and Dalraddy is moving apace as we enter 2017.

During 2016, significant progress was made on the four underpasses to be rebuilt as part of the project, with the first half of construction at Dunachton, Lower Milehead, Baldow Smiddy and Alt An Fhearna complete and work now well underway on second half of the construction. Upon completion, the underpasses will be able to accommodate larger vehicles and will improve road safety.

A key milestone was reached in Autumn 2016 when road users were able to drive on the first stretch of new road between Kincaig and Dalraddy. Drivers were moved on to approximately 7km of the new carriageway which enabled the Contractor, Wills Bros Civil Engineering John Paul Construction Joint Venture (WBJPV), to begin work upgrading the existing carriageway. Work will continue to focus over the coming months on the construction of the underpasses, upgrading the

existing carriageway, installation of permanent ecological fencing and the provision of accommodation tracks through the estates of Dunachton and, Alvie and Dalraddy.

As well as building the new road, the Contractor has delivered a number of other benefits for the community. This has included the provision of new facilities for the children at the local school, Alvie Primary.

During the summer holidays WBJPV undertook a major revamp of the school playground. They installed an all-weather, multi-use games area to enable the children to play a number of sports, alongside the construction of a climbing wall. The refurbishment was agreed with The Highland Council in return for an area of school land which was required to facilitate the project.

A strong working partnership has also been developed with the local RZSS Highland Wildlife Park in Kincaig with a number of items being donated to the park. This has included a large volume of vegetation which had to be removed from the site to enable the road to be built. Donating this material not only provided food for some of the animals along with bedding and flooring within the enclosures, but enabled this material to be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

Fifty damaged, and therefore unusable, traffic cones and short sections of drainage pipe were also donated to the park along with large brushes, originally used on road sweepers, but now put to use as scratching posts for some of the animals.



New underpass at Lower Milehead



One of the polar bears at RZSS Highland Wildlife Park in Kincaig playing with one of the donated traffic cones

Paul Gilligan, Project Manager, Wills Bros Civil Engineering John Paul Construction Joint Venture said: "As we enter 2017 I am pleased to say that work on the project is progressing well. The team worked tirelessly last year – clearing vegetation, carrying out the bulk earthworks operations, diverting the necessary utilities and completing the first phase of constructing four underpasses and surfacing of the new offline carriageway.

We were pleased to have reached the first milestone in the autumn with the diversion of traffic onto the new offline carriageway and

the commencement of phase 2 works. The site team have worked hard to get us to the stage that we are now at, and will continue to do so in the coming months focusing on upgrading the existing A9, completion of the new underpasses, and the surfacing of the online carriageway.

We remain mindful of the biodiverse environment that we are working in as well as the need to minimise any disruption to the local community, whom I would like to thank for their ongoing co-operation and support as we look forward to completing the project during Summer 2017."



Laying the new road surface

## FURTHER PROJECT INFORMATION

[www.transport.gov.scot/a9-dualling](http://www.transport.gov.scot/a9-dualling)

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