

# Appendix A9.2

View from the Road

Baseline





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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. The following sections provide a narrative of the existing views typically experienced by northbound and southbound vehicle travellers on the existing A9 and side roads affected by the Proposed Scheme. A summary description and the sensitivity of northbound and southbound views associated with the A9 and associated side roads is provided below. These are supported by Figures 9.3 to 9.5 which provide information on the type of view experienced by users of the existing A9 and any prominent views. Reference should also be made to Figure 9.6 and 9.7 which provide photographs that demonstrate the typical views experienced on the existing A9.

### 1.2. Existing A9 Northbound

- 1.2.1. The start of the scheme has the existing A9 descending from the Slochd Summit with the existing side road providing a junction and link road to the south of Tomatin. North of this point the corridor is set within a combination of cutting and roadside vegetation resulting in restricted views, with the exception of the brief but dramatic views experienced by travellers as they cross the River Findhorn via the viaduct. From here there is a notable view west towards the Highland Main Line railway viaduct enjoying scenic views beyond, identified in the A9 Dualling Programme Strategic Environmental Assessment, Strategic Landscape Review Report. To the north of the existing dual carriageway the existing A9 is set within shallow cutting allowing some awareness to the east of woodland in the distance within forward facing views along sweeping bends. There are subsequently intermittent views to the north/northeast, of the River Findhorn valley complex, associated with the Strathdearn/Tomatin Landscape Character Area (LCA E) in Chapter 13 (Landscape). There is little awareness of the landscape to the west, a combination of cuttings and roadside planting limiting views beyond the immediate road corridor, however in the distance Carn na Loinne rises above the intervening tree line. Views north/northeast are considered Medium sensitivity due to the existing glimpses of the River Findhorn and broader landscape considered to be of good quality and medium value, contrasting with the views of the high moors that have been immediately experienced to the south, associated with the Slochd summit.
- 1.2.2. Immediately north of the existing Tomatin junction the road enters a sweeping right hand bend, becoming enclosed by dense woodland either side, views in all directions are subsequently restricted. These restricted views continue to the east, extending to the north of Tigh an Allt Cottage, where roadside planting immediately adjacent to the carriageway limits the opportunity for elevated views overlooking the River Findhorn. Views west, including from the existing roadside layby are briefly exposed, extending to the lower slopes of Tom na h-Ulaidh, these rise in the distance before they are contained by roadside planting and the elevated Highland Main Line railway. The road takes an extended left hand sweeping bend at this point with forward facing and views west limited by highway planting set beyond a wide verge. Views east are open at this point with the flat landform extending to the east, limiting views of the River Findhorn, however views towards the Western Dava Moors Landscape Character Area (LCA D) are visible in the far distance and considered to be of high value and presenting good quality views. These views become increasingly contained by woodland associated with the quarry, becoming entirely contained by mature pine woodland as the road sweeps to the west. Whilst areas of interesting and good quality landscapes exist to the east, the views through this section are considered to be of Low sensitivity due to their restricted nature.
- 1.2.3. North of the junction to Ruthven, and approaching Dalmagarry Burn, which passes beneath the A9, there are open views from the northwest to northeast with Dalmagarry

Farm being a notable feature in the immediate landscape. This represents the perceived transition from the Strathdearn / Tomatin LCA - E to the Moy Estate LCA C, both of which are considered to be of relative low quality but representing medium value. The views comprise relatively flat, improved pasture that contrasts with the conifer plantations beyond and at the foothills of the strath's adjacent hillslopes, particularly Meall a'Bhreachraibh, Beinn na h-Iolaire and Beinn an Uain. The marked change in the aspect makes this view notable and in combination with the restricted views previously experienced it is considered to be of Medium sensitivity. Once north of Dalmagarry Burn the view transitions into a restricted view as the Highland Main Line railway deviates from the road slightly to accommodate for a field; this provides for a restricted view of Carn na Loinne to the west.

- 1.2.4. Approaching the junction of the B9154 the road gently rises and views transition between intermittent views and restricted views due to the adjacent planting. Views to the west and southwest are the rising slopes associated with the moorland of Carn na Loinne and Car na h-Easgairn but these are limited in part by roadside vegetation. To the north and northeast are views of the forest plantations cloaking the lower slopes of Beinn na h-Iolaire and Beinn an Uain and within broader views as the road sweeps within a left hand bend. The white buildings at Tullochclurry contrast with the muted tones of the wider landscape and represent a readily perceptible feature of medium value within the good quality landscape. The intermittent nature of these views are considered to be of Medium sensitivity due to the interest that the contrasting landscape and particular features provide to the road user.
- 1.2.5. The existing A9 crosses the Highland Main Line railway to the south of Moy – the railway cutting slopes are heavily planted and in combination with the existing roadside planting the railway crossing is barely noticeable. From this point north, the existing A9 runs to the west of the railway line, and as such it is set into the slope and shallow but frequent cuttings combine with planting to limit views to the west, resulting in low value views of a medium quality landscape but considered to be of Low sensitivity.
- 1.2.6. Significant roadside vegetation associated with the village of Moy and the transport corridors that include the A9 and Highland Main Line railway heavily curtail awareness of the surrounding landscape, the emphasis being forward facing views and no views are afforded of the village or of Loch Moy. Distant views north focus on the summit of Meall Mor as it emerges above the intervening vegetation, the flat summit forming a distinctive feature within a view of medium value and a landscape of good quality within the otherwise heavily constrained view. Views are considered to be of Low sensitivity.
- 1.2.7. Emerging from the dense woodland that screens Moy, views become open to the north, northeast and intermittently to the west. The focus of the view, particularly forward views along the A9 remains the summit of Meall Mor and Bein a'Bheurlaich, with the hill slopes descending sharply to the floor of the strath that forms the transition between LCA B – Meall Mor and LCA C Moy Estate, which are of medium value and good quality landscapes. This open aspect, considered to be of Medium sensitivity, particularly to the east, continues for approximately 1km and includes a roadside layby.
- 1.2.8. Views become increasingly restricted by roadside vegetation as the existing A9 sweeps in a left hand bend to pass to the west of Meall Mor. The view from the road becomes restricted by a combination of landform and roadside vegetation, decreasing its sensitivity to Low, with glimpsed views through the vegetation to the west of the rising landform and hill slopes of Beinn nah Cailleach. The nature of the view continues as the existing dual carriageway forms to descend to Daviot to the north.

### 1.3. Existing A9 Southbound

- 1.3.1. Travelling south from the junction to the Forestry Access Track, views are enclosed by a combination of landform, including rock cuttings and roadside and plantation woodland. This includes an existing roadside layby to the southern hillslope of Meall Mor, the views from which are heavily restricted with only a distant view to the summits of Carn na Loinne and Carn na h-Easgainn to the south east. As the road narrows to single lanes, views are restricted to forward facing views by a combination of landform and planting; the low value view ahead, considered to be of a landscape that is of good quality but which are represented as being of Low sensitivity, focuses east to the distant rounded summit of Meall a Bhreacraibh.
- 1.3.2. As the wooded slopes of Meall Mor are left behind, the view opens to the north east to encompass far reaching views of the Moy estate with the undulating ridgeline of the distant hills forming the horizon, the Moy windfarm emerging above this natural landform. There is some awareness of the Aultnaslanach viaduct, emerging from vegetation that ties into the woodland associated with the northern fringe of Moy. The existing A9 diminishes in forward views towards the northern fringes of Moy. The value of the view is considered to be of medium value and of good quality, views south are restricted by dense roadside planting that transitions into plantation woodland on the lower slopes of Carn na h-Easgainn. The nature of these views continues for approximately 1km and are considered to be of Medium sensitivity, the woodland around the Moy estate gradually becoming increasingly visible, before the view becomes restricted by a cutting slope and associated vegetation just north of the edge of the village.
- 1.3.3. Similarly to the views afforded to the northbound traveller, significant roadside vegetation associated with the village of Moy and the transport corridors that include the A9 and Highland Main Line railway limit awareness of the surrounding landscape and no views are afforded of the village or of Loch Moy itself. Forward views are constrained by shallow bends within the road alignment, enclosed by existing roadside vegetation. The value of the view is low, and of low quality, however these views are considered to be of Low sensitivity due to its constrained nature.
- 1.3.4. Emerging from this enclosed corridor to the south of Moy the views become noticeably more open and far reaching, including an opportunity for views from an existing roadside layby, with forward views southeast of the distant hills. To the south are intermittent views across Carn na Loinne's lower slopes and towards Tom na h-Ulaidh's summit. Views southeast and east transition from intermittent views of the distant Beinn na h-lolaire, Carn nan Eag, Tom na Slaite and Tom a'Ghealagaidh, to open views of the Funtack Burn and strath, which then return to intermittent due to road side trees. The good quality landscape associated with the valley landform and some notable features allows for views of medium value and results in views of Medium sensitivity.
- 1.3.5. Descending towards the cluster of buildings that comprise Dalmagarry Farm the views are open across the strath to the east and southeast and once passed the farm there are open views southeast towards the confluence of the Dalmagarry Burn and Funtack Burn, framed by the coniferous plantations that rise either side. The views of a good quality landscape and which are of medium value, result in views of Medium sensitivity. Views south and southwest are restricted by the adjacent railway line, its earth embankment and associated planting. To the south of Dalmagarry Farm the road elevation rises slightly and an extended right hand sweeping bend allows some wider forward views to the south to take in the distant horizon, views east and west are restricted by roadside planting comprising mature pines and scrubby vegetation.

- 1.3.6. South of the entrance to the quarry there is a greater sense of views experienced, including those from the existing roadside layby being limited by a combination of landform and immature tree planting whilst views into the strath are not possible there is a greater sense of openness and views of the sky are noticeable.
- 1.3.7. Approaching Tigh an Allt Cottage from Invereen, views become increasingly restricted as a result of adjacent woodland either side of the existing A9, and of a landscape of good quality. Views from the off line roadside layby and parking area are similarly heavily restricted by roadside planting and adjacent woodland, the broad sweeping left hand bend limiting forward visibility.
- 1.3.8. Approaching the existing Tomatin junction the views become open again to the east; these Medium sensitivity views are brief but expansive and comprise adjacent rough grassland leading to medium distance views of the River Findhorn and gentle hill slopes towards Lower and Upper Inverbrough, with the back drop of distant hills which comprise a good quality landscape and a view of medium value.
- 1.3.9. South of the junction, views become increasingly enclosed by a combination of roadside vegetation to the east and cutting slopes with associated planting to the west resulting in views of low sensitivity, before the carriageway widens and the existing dualling is approached. There a brief but spectacular views from the crossing of the River Findhorn, identified within the Strategic Landscape Review as a Priority View. The road continues south with forward views are constrained in a combination of shallow cutting and roadside vegetation to the Tomatin South junction as vegetation to the west of the existing A9 diminishes to a single line of trees.

## 1.4. Existing B9154

- 1.4.1. The B9154 joins the existing A9 at an at grade junction to the north of Dalmagarry Farm, it initially descends from the A9 before turning on a sharp left hand bend and continuing north to the village of Moy. The views for northbound travellers are expansive, overlooking the floor of the strath and which is representative of a good quality landscape, these medium value views are constrained by landform to the north east as the lower slopes of Beinn na h-Iolair rise above the strath and of Medium sensitivity. Dense woodland limits views to the north, whilst rising ground to the south west accommodates the wooded embankment to the A9 resulting in restricted views. On reaching the southern edge of the village the views become increasingly restricted by roadside planting and broader blocks of woodland that extend either side with no available views, resulting in Low sensitivity.
- 1.4.2. Travelling south from the village of Moy views are initially constrained by planting either side of the local road, resulting views of Low sensitivity. Views gradually become increasingly intermittent as the vegetation to the north east reduces in density, before ending where views become open, the white cluster of buildings at Tullochclurry being highly visible to the east represented within a medium value view, with views being of Medium sensitivity.
- 1.4.3. Views south east remain open for the remainder of the road and to the tie in with the existing A9, Dalmagarry Farm becoming increasingly visible within broader views across and along the strath of good quality landscape. Medium value views south west are restricted by a combination of rising landform and dense vegetation before the road bends sharply to the right and rises to the junction with the A9. Views are considered to be of Medium sensitivity.

## 1.5. Existing Ruthven Road

- 1.5.1. Ruthven Road provides a direct link from the A9 to the east, initially following the Dalmagarry/Funtack Burn valley before joining the Strathdearn on the slopes of the River Findhorn. Travelling east from the A9 the view is focused to the east, the local road following the Dalmagarry Burn and filtered views across the strath incorporates several fields and some distant views towards the Funtack Burn. At the crossing of the Funtack Burn, via a picturesque stone bridge there is an opportunity for views north west towards Dalmagarry Farm and north east towards confluence of the Funtack Burn with the River Findhorn. The views are of high value to the local residents as the setting to the approach to properties set along the valley, and are represented by a good quality landscape. As a result these views are of Medium sensitivity.