

A83 Rest and Be Thankful

MTS EIAR VOLUME 4, APPENDIX 9.2 – LANDSCAPE
METHODOLOGY

Transport Scotland

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A9-2. Landscape Methodology

A9-2.1. Introduction

- A9-2.1.1. The assessment approach was informed by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA 107 Landscape and Visual Effects and DMRB LA 104 Environmental Assessment and Monitoring standards, and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3).
- A9-2.1.2. The [Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park](#) and the [Guidance for Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities \(AESLQ\) | NatureScot](#) (Consultation on this guidance closed in July 2024. Currently Draft status). In addition, the [Landscape Character Assessment: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs – Landscape Evolution and Influences](#) report has been considered.
- A9-2.1.3. Given the iconic nature of the route and the sensitivity of the landscape within the study area, the methodology includes consideration of the [Special Qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park](#) (LLTNP).
- A9-2.1.4. The assessment was undertaken by two Chartered Landscape Architects and comprised of desk study, field surveys and consultation. A site visit was undertaken in February/March 2023 as part of the DMRB Stage 2 process and helped to gain an understanding of the landscape context and to supplement information gathered during the desk study. Site surveys at DMRB Stage 3 were undertaken in August 2023, October 2023 and May 2024.
- A9-2.1.5. The assessment has considered the effect of the Proposed Scheme in the winter of year 1 and the summer of year 15 in line with DMRB standards as well as potentially significant temporary effects during construction.
- A9-2.1.6. The effects of the Proposed Scheme have been assessed with potential mitigation i.e. both embedded mitigation during construction and essential mitigation in year 15. Natural Capital and Biodiversity Net Gain enhancement areas have also been considered in the assessment.

A9-2.2. Consultation

- A9-2.2.1. Consultation was undertaken throughout the DMRB Stage 1 and DMRB Stage 2 processes through the A83 Environmental Steering Group (ESG) which

includes, in relation to landscape, The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority and Scottish Forestry.

A9-2.2.2. Public Consultation was held between 26th May and 7th July 2023 to announce the decision of the Preferred Option which included four days of public exhibitions in Arrochar and Lochgilphead in June, and a virtual exhibition online. In addition, a question was added to the questionnaire made available at the public engagement events held at Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Lochgoilhead and Arrochar in March 2024. Together these helped identify what the public valued about the landscape and visual amenity of the area. A number of responses were received related to landscape and visual.

A9-2.3. Assessment Methodology Criteria LVIA

A9-2.3.1. In accordance with DMRB LA 107 and LA 104 and GLVIA3, the assessment has considered the sensitivity of the landscape receptor, the magnitude of effect of the Proposed Scheme upon it and resulted in a determination of the significance of effect of the Proposed Scheme on the landscape resource.

A9-2.3.2. The landscape assessment considered designated landscapes and landscape character. In addition, it has considered the Special Qualities of the LLTNP.

A9-2.3.3. The assessment of sensitivity is based on consideration of value and susceptibility of the landscape resource.

Value

A9-2.3.4. There is considerable overlap/integration between all the factors that contribute to landscape value; GLVIA3 describes value as 'the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society'. GVLIA3 states that this includes the value of Landscape Character Types or Areas, designations, and also non-designated landscapes. However, there is a recognition that nationally designated landscapes will be accorded the highest value in the assessment.

Susceptibility

A9-2.3.5. Susceptibility relates to the ability of the landscape to absorb specific changes without undue consequence for the baseline or the strategies, plans and policies relating to the landscape. Susceptibility was assessed in terms of the

following criteria, based on professional judgement, as set out in Table A9-2.1 below:

Table A9-2-1 - Landscape susceptibility criteria

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The landscape is unlikely to be able to accommodate the proposed change without undue consequences.
Medium	The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate the proposed change, albeit with some consequences.
Low	The landscape will be able to accommodate the proposed change with little or no consequences.

Sensitivity

A9-2.3.6. Sensitivity was assessed by considering landscape value and susceptibility and has been assigned levels of very high, high, medium, low and negligible as set out in DMRB LA107 and shown in Table A9-2.2 below.

Table A9-2-2 - Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity (susceptibility and value) of receptor/resource	Typical Description
Very High	Landscapes of very high international/national importance and rarity or value with no or very limited ability to accommodate change without substantial loss/gain (i.e. national parks, internationally acclaimed landscapes – UNESCO World Heritage Sites).
High	Landscapes of high national importance containing distinctive features/elements with limited ability to accommodate change without incurring substantial loss/gain (i.e. designated areas, areas of strong sense of place – registered parks and gardens, country parks).
Medium	Landscapes of local or regional recognition of importance able to accommodate some change (i.e. features worthy of conservation, some sense of place or value through use/perception).

Sensitivity (susceptibility and value) of receptor/resource	Typical Description
Low	Local landscape areas or receptors of low to medium importance with ability to accommodate change (i.e. non- designated or designated areas of local recognition or areas of little sense of place).
Negligible	Landscapes of very low importance or rarity able to accommodate change.

Magnitude of Effect

A9-2.3.7. In accordance with DMRB LA107, the magnitude of landscape effect was derived from the size or scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the change on the landscape resource and is set out in Table A9-2.3 below.

Table A9-2-3 - Magnitude of Effect Criteria

Magnitude of effect (change)	Typical Descriptions
Major Adverse	Total loss or large-scale damage to existing landscape character or distinctive features or elements; and/or addition of new uncharacteristic, conspicuous features or elements (i.e. road infrastructure).
Major Beneficial	Large scale improvement of landscape character to features and elements; and/or addition of new distinctive features or elements, or removal of conspicuous road infrastructure elements.
Moderate Adverse	Partial loss or noticeable damage to existing landscape character or distinctive features or elements; and/or addition of new uncharacteristic, noticeable features or elements (i.e. road infrastructure).
Moderate Beneficial	Partial or noticeable improvement of landscape character by restoration of existing features or elements; or addition of new characteristic features or elements or removal of noticeable features or elements

Magnitude of effect (change)	Typical Descriptions
Minor Adverse	Slight loss or damage to existing landscape character of one (maybe more) key features and elements; and/or addition of new uncharacteristic features and elements
Minor Beneficial	Slight improvement of landscape character by the restoration of one (maybe more) key existing features and elements; and/or the addition of new characteristic features.
Negligible Adverse	Very minor loss, damage or alteration to existing landscape character of one or more features and elements.
Negligible Beneficial	Very minor noticeable improvement of character by the restoration of one or more existing features and elements.
No change	No noticeable alteration or improvement, temporary or permanent, of landscape character of existing features and elements.

Significance of Effect

A9-2.3.8. The significance of effect has been determined using professional judgement but considering the sensitivity of the landscape resource and the magnitude of impact (change) upon it in relation to the Proposed Scheme. A landscape effect is considered significant where it is moderate or above.

Table A9-2-4 - Significance of Effect

Significance of Effect	Criteria
Very Large Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would be at substantial discord with the character (including quality and/or value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, degrade or diminish the integrity of most of the characteristic features or elements or damage a sense of place resulting in an adverse effect.
Very Large Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would substantially enhance the character (including quality and/or value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, create an iconic high-quality feature and/or series of elements or

Significance of Effect	Criteria
	enable a sense of place to be created or enhanced resulting in a beneficial effect.
Large Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would be at considerable variance with the character (including quality and/or value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features or elements or damage a sense of place resulting in an adverse effect.
Large Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would enhance the character (including quality and/or value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, create an iconic high-quality feature and/or series of elements or enable a sense of place to be created or enhanced resulting in a beneficial effect.
Moderate Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would conflict with the character (including quality and value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, have an adverse effect on characteristic features or elements or diminish a sense of place resulting in an adverse effect.
Moderate Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would improve the character (including quality and value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements partially lost or diminished by inappropriate management or development or enable some sense of place resulting in a beneficial effect.
Slight Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would not quite fit the character (including quality and value) and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, be at variance with characteristic features and elements or detract from a sense of place resulting in an adverse effect.
Slight Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would complement the character (including quality and value) and/or special qualities of the landscape, maintain or enhance characteristic features and elements and enable some sense of place to be restored resulting in a beneficial effect.
Negligible / None (Neutral)	The Proposed Scheme would maintain the character and/or special qualities of the landscape receptor, blend in with characteristic features and elements and enable a sense of place to be retained.

A9-2.3.9. DMRB LA107 provides a matrix for significance. This is set out in the Table below.

Table A9-2-5 - Significance Matrix

Environmental Value (sensitivity)	Magnitude of impact - No change	Magnitude of impact - Negligible	Magnitude of impact - Minor	Magnitude of impact - Moderate	Magnitude of impact - Major
Very high	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or large	Large or very large	Very large
High	Neutral	Slight	Slight or moderate	Moderate or large	Large or very large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate or large
Low	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight	Slight or moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight

A9-2.4. Limitations of the Assessment

A9-2.4.1. The assessment was predominantly undertaken from publicly available locations. Where access to private land was required, this was agreed with the landowner in advance of the assessment.

A9-2.5. Assessment Methodology SLQs

A9-2.5.1. The assessment is informed by the [Guidance for Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities \(AESLQ\) | NatureScot](#). (AESLQ). Special Landscape Qualities are the characteristics that, individually or combined, give rise to an area’s outstanding scenery.

A9-2.5.2. The assessment considers the impact of the MTS interventions on the SLQs of the LLTNP. The details of the MTS are set out in Chapter 4: The Proposed Scheme and are not repeated here.

- A9-2.5.3. The study area is 1km. The following have influenced the study area and the scope of the assessment:
- The Scottish Landscape Character Assessment
 - ZTV mapping
 - Identification of the most relevant SLQs based on the key characteristics of the LCTs within the study area, and the SLQs specifically requested for inclusion by the LLTNPA and
 - Site visits to the area by two chartered landscape architects in various seasons.
- A9-2.5.4. Although the AESLQ allows for assessing the SLQs in a combined landscape and visual impact assessment chapter, they have been addressed separately in Chapter 9: Landscape Effects and Chapter 10: Visual Effects.
- A9-2.5.5. The range of people who will experience the SLQ are identified. Where existing viewpoints (associated with the landscape and/or visual assessment as part of the MTS EIAR) are relevant to the SLQs, these will be identified. SLQs will be separate e.g., where the SLQ is likely to be experienced at more specific area or under certain conditions e.g. tranquillity or the famous through roads. Other SLQs may be grouped e.g. where the scale they are experienced at is likely to be experienced throughout the study area.
- A9-2.5.6. There will be an opportunity to develop the design based on design objectives at the next stage of more detailed design in liaison with the LLTNPA.
- A9-2.5.7. The assessment of sensitivity is based on consideration of value and susceptibility.

Value

- A9-2.5.8. The value of the SLQs is high as they are integral part of the LLTNP.

Susceptibility

- A9-2.5.9. Susceptibility relates to the ability of the SLQ and/or people's perception of the SLQ to absorb specific changes without undue consequence for the baseline or the strategies, plans and policies relating to the SLQ. Susceptibility was assessed in terms of the following criteria, based on professional judgement, as set out below:

Table A9-2-6 – Susceptibility Criteria

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The SLQ is unlikely to be able to accommodate the proposed change without undue consequences.
Medium	The SLQ is likely to be able to accommodate the proposed change, albeit with some consequences.
Low	The SLQ will be able to accommodate the proposed change with little or no consequences.

Sensitivity

A9-2.5.10. Sensitivity was assessed by considering value and susceptibility and has been assigned levels of high, medium and low.

Table A9-2-7 – Susceptibility Criteria

Sensitivity (susceptibility and value)	Typical Description
High	SLQs of high sensitivity containing distinctive features/elements with limited ability to accommodate change without incurring substantial loss/gain.
Medium	SLQs of medium sensitivity able to accommodate some change.
Low	SLQs of low to medium sensitivity with ability to accommodate change.

Magnitude of Impact

A9-2.5.11. The magnitude of landscape effect was derived from the size or scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the change on the landscape resource.

Table A9-2-7 – Magnitude Criteria

Magnitude of effect (change)	Typical Descriptions
Major Adverse	Total loss or large-scale damage to one or more SLQs.

Magnitude of effect (change)	Typical Descriptions
Major Beneficial	Large scale improvement to one or more SLQs.
Moderate Adverse	Partial loss or noticeable damage to one or more SLQs.
Moderate Beneficial	Partial or noticeable improvement to one or more SLQs.
Minor Adverse	Slight loss or damage to one or more SLQs.
Minor Beneficial	Slight improvement to one or more SLQs.
Negligible Adverse	Very minor loss, damage or alteration to one or more SLQs.
Negligible Beneficial	Very minor noticeable improvement to one or more SLQs.
No change	No noticeable alteration or improvement, temporary or permanent, to one or more SLQs.

Significance of Effect

A9-2.5.12. The significance of effect has been determined using professional judgement but considering the sensitivity of the SLQ and the magnitude of impact (change) upon it or to people experiencing it in relation to the Proposed Scheme. An effect is considered significant where it is moderate or above.

Table A9-2-8 – Significance Criteria

Significance of Effect	Criteria
Very Large Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would be at substantial discord with the SLQ degrade or diminish the integrity of most of the characteristic features or elements resulting in an adverse effect.
Very Large Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would substantially enhance the SLQ, enhancing its integrity and resulting in a beneficial effect.

Significance of Effect	Criteria
Large Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would be at considerable variance with the SLQ, degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features or elements resulting in an adverse effect.
Large Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would enhance the SLQ, and preserve or somewhat enhance its integrity resulting in a beneficial effect.
Moderate Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would conflict with the SLQ, have an adverse effect or diminish its integrity resulting in an adverse effect.
Moderate Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would improve the SLQ, or have a contribute to its integrity resulting in a beneficial effect.
Slight Adverse	The Proposed Scheme would not quite fit the SLQ or detract from its integrity resulting in an adverse effect.
Slight Beneficial	The Proposed Scheme would complement the SLQ and enable some integrity to be restored resulting in a beneficial effect.
Negligible / None (Neutral)	The Proposed Scheme would maintain the SLQ.

A9-2.6. Limitations of the Assessment

- A9-2.6.1. The assessment was predominantly undertaken from publicly available locations. Where access to private land was required, this was agreed with the landowner in advance of the assessment.