COMMUNITY INFORMATION EVENT

Garmouth Viaduct

Recovering the fallen spans from the River Spey

How the work will be done, when it will happen, and what it means for you

Why we're here

What happened

Two spans of the historic viaduct have failed and now lie in the river channel.

Why they must be removed

They obstruct the river, could move or break up in floods, and pose a risk to river users and the environment.

Our job

- Safely retrieve both spans from the river
- Move them onto a prepared area on the bank
- Dismantle them into small, transportable sections
- Remove all material along the cycleway — then restore the site

The failed spans in the River Spey

Doing nothing is not an option

A controlled, engineered recovery is the safest way to protect the river, the remaining structure and everyone who uses this stretch of the Spey.

Who's involved

A team of specialists, regulators and the community — working together

MC Moray Council

Project client. Coordinates surveys, cycleway access and public communication.

SC Contractor

Specialist contractor delivering the engineering, recovery and removal works.

SE SEPA

Environmental regulator. The works need a river works licence before we can start.

EC Ecologist on site

An independent Ecological Clerk of Works monitors all work in and near the river.

HB Heritage bodies

Consulted on the viaduct's status, with a full photographic record kept for the archive.

YOU The community

Kept informed throughout — site notice boards, updates and a contact for questions.

The works, step by step

1 Surveys & design

River, bank and structural surveys; detailed engineering of every temporary work.

2 Approvals & licences

SEPA river licence, ecological constraints and council permissions — all in place first.

3 Site set-up

Working platform, anchors and pulling frame built on the bank; protection measures installed.

4 Pulling the spans ashore

Each span braced, connected and drawn slowly onto the bank — one at a time.

5 Cutting into sections

Spans cut into 1–3 tonne pieces within a fenced, protected working area.

6 Removal & restoration

Sections taken out along the cycleway; riverbank, platform area and path fully reinstated.

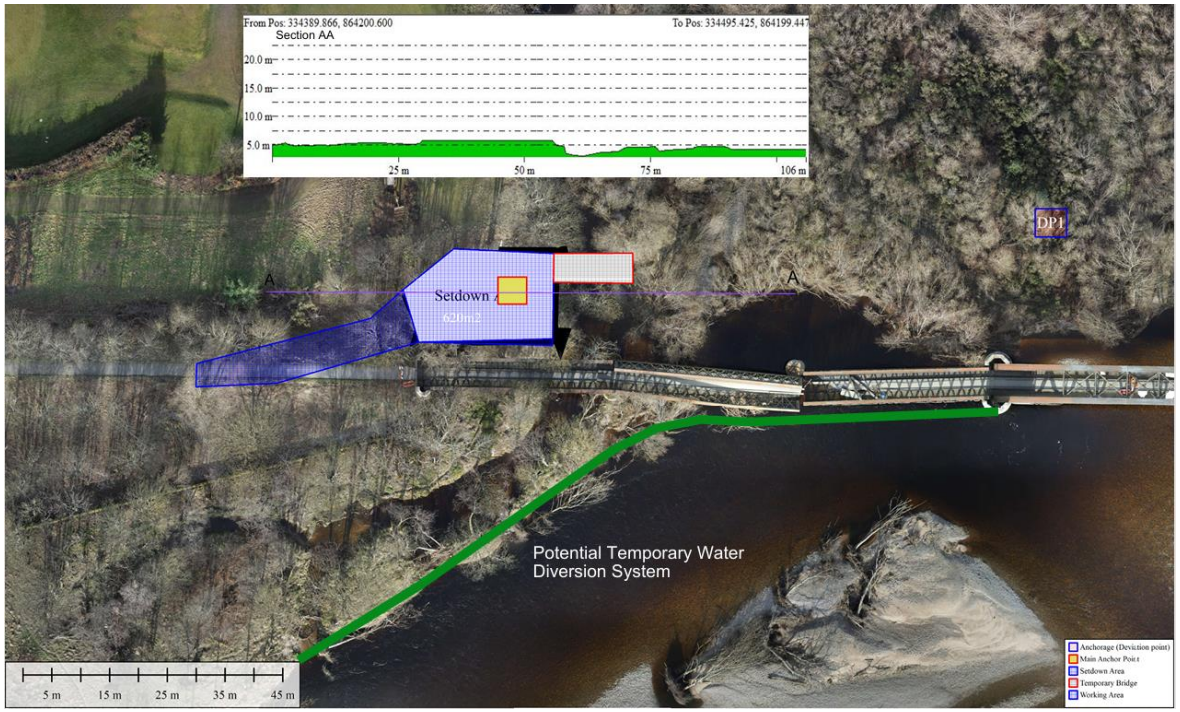
How we'll recover the spans

Gentle, controlled pulling — no large cranes working in the river

Strand jacks — the key to the method

Powerful hydraulic pulling machines, anchored well back on the bank, will draw each span slowly out of the river — a few hundred millimetres at a time, fully under control.

- An engineered working platform is built on the bank to carry the equipment and receive the spans.
- Specialist rope-access engineers prepare and brace the spans before any pulling starts.
- Every stage has an independent engineering check and formal sign-off before we proceed.
- Once ashore, spans are cut into sections of 1–3 tonnes and taken away in small dumpers.



Working area beside the river (indicative plan)

Why this method? It keeps heavy plant out of the river, keeps noise down, and keeps everything under precise control.

Protecting the River Spey

The Spey is one of Scotland's most protected rivers — and that shapes everything we do

Independent ecologist

On site for all in-river work, with power to pause the job.

Silt & pollution control

Silt curtains, bunds, drip trays and spill kits before work starts.

Seasonal working windows

In-river work timed to protect salmon and other wildlife.

Daily checks

Environmental controls inspected every day — and after every rainfall.

Clean materials only

Imported stone is clean and inert; refuelling far from the water.

Invasive plants contained

Any invasive species are isolated and managed under the approved plan.

Nothing happens in the river without a licence. SEPA must approve the full method, and an Environmental Management Plan governs every activity on site.

What it means for you

The cycleway

Used as our access route, with short controlled closures at busy stages. Marshals at crossing points, clear signage, and the path swept and maintained throughout.

Noise & traffic

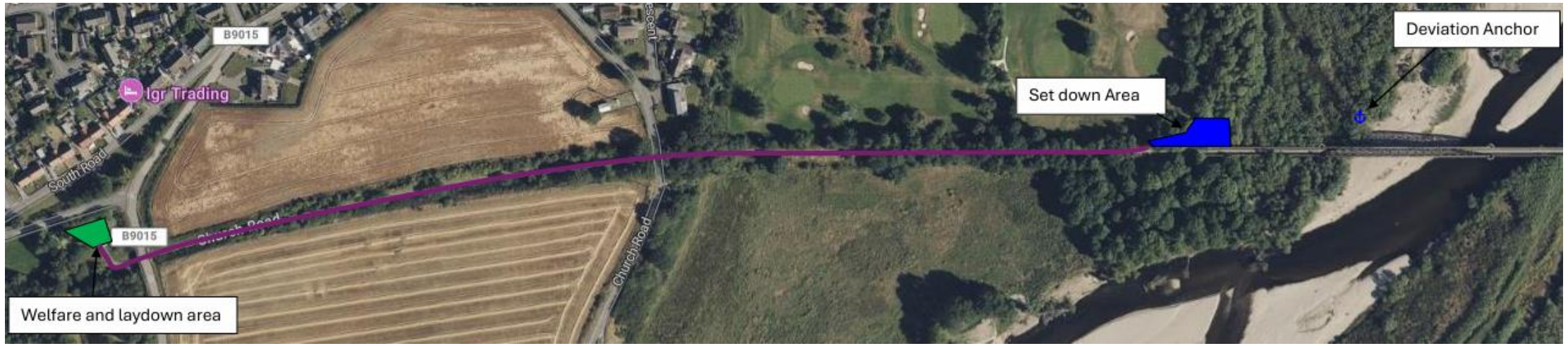
Agreed working hours; quiet pulling method; small 9-tonne dumpers rather than heavy lorries on the path. No road closures are expected.

Safety around the site

The working area and river frontage will be fenced, with clear exclusion zones. Please respect them — strand jacking involves huge stored forces.

Staying informed

Information boards at site entrances, advance notice of closures, and a named contact for any questions or concerns.



Site access along the cycleway — welfare and laydown areas, haul route and working area

Getting heavy loads to the A96

A single agreed lorry route — chosen to keep heavy vehicles off the narrow village streets and the old Spey bridge.

Garmouth
Site loading area

→

B9015
South, alongside the Spey

→

Mosstodloch
A96 junction

→

A96 trunk road
Elgin • Keith • Aberdeen

The agreed route

- Leave the site heading south out of Garmouth on the B9015.
- Follow the B9015 south alongside the River Spey to Mosstodloch.
- Join the A96 at the Mosstodloch junction — east for Keith and Aberdeen, west for Elgin and Inverness.
- One route in and out — clearly signed, with banksmen at the village junctions.

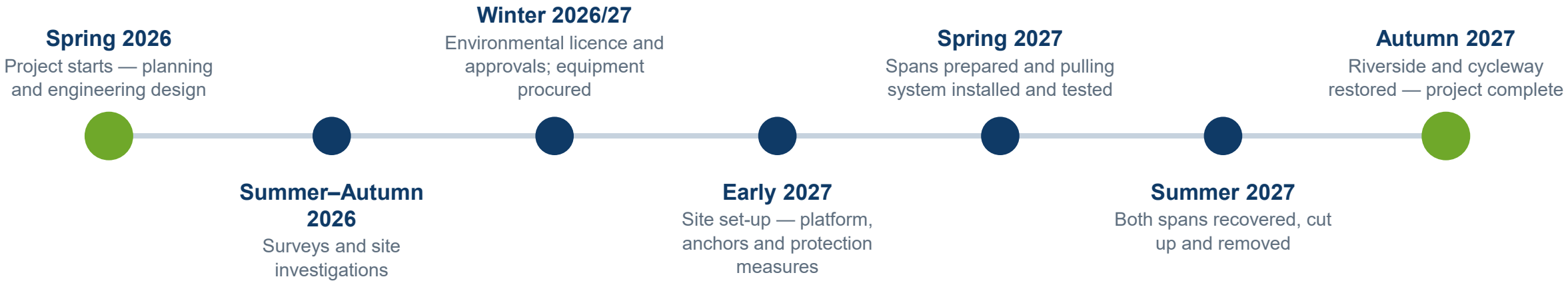
Pinch points we avoid

- The narrow streets and tight corners through Garmouth and Kingston.
- Fochabers conservation-area High Street.
- No heavy lorries through residential village centres.

Most material still leaves by small dumper along the cycleway. Any HGV movements are limited, scheduled in advance, and confined to this one agreed route.

When it will happen

Draft programme — timings are indicative and subject to approvals, weather and river conditions



The milestone moment: the spans come out of the river in summer 2027.

Keeping everyone safe

ST

Specialist teams

Certified strand jack operators, rope-access engineers and appointed supervisors for every lift and pull.

WS

Water safety cover

A rescue boat and trained water-safety team on standby for all work over or near the river.

CM

Continuous monitoring

Loads, movement, river levels and weather watched throughout — with automatic stop-work limits.

RE

Ready for the unexpected

If the river rises, work stops and the site is made safe — rehearsed emergency plans for every scenario.

200–500 mm

how far each pull moves the span

Slow is the point. Every increment is checked, recorded and approved before the next — nothing moves unless we want it to.

After the works

We leave the riverside as we found it — or better

Everything removed

Platform, anchors and all equipment taken away; the riverbank and gravel banks reinstated.

Cycleway reopened

The path repaired, inspected and fully reopened for walkers and cyclists.

River checked

The riverbed inspected and any remaining debris cleared from the channel.

Heritage record

A complete photographic record of the viaduct preserved for the archive.

Materials recycled

Steel sections sent for recycling, with full waste records kept.

Final walk-round

Close-out inspection with the ecologist and the Council — and a community feedback session.