Welcome



As part of the ambitious A96 Dualling programme, Transport Scotland has been taking forward route option assessment work for dualling the section of the A96 between Inverness and Nairn, including a Nairn Bypass.

The purpose of this exhibition is to provide the public with an overview of the outcome of this assessment and present the preferred option for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme.



Transport Scotland staff and their consultants will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have in relation to the scheme.

A leaflet summarising the exhibition is also available for you to take away, as well as a feedback form where we welcome your comments.

Project website:

www.transportscotland.gov. uk/project/a96-invernessnairn-including-nairn-bypass



Introduction

Background

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published in 2008, set out the Scottish Government's transport investment priorities over the coming decades. Specific trunk road interventions emerging from the review included upgrading the A96 between Inverness and Nairn to dual carriageway and also the creation of a bypass of Nairn.

The intention to fully dual the A96 was thereafter announced in December 2011, when Scottish Ministers published their Infrastructure Investment Plan, which contained the commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities.



The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme consists of a new 30km dual carriageway between the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park and a point approximately 3km east of Auldearn.



to present the options under consideration for the scheme and seek public feedback on the scheme proposals.



Scheme update

Following the 2013 exhibitions, work has continued on the route option assessment process.

As a result of vital public feedback following the 2013 exhibitions, three changes were made to the design options and these were published on Transport Scotland's website in May 2014. The changes affected some of the design options at Milton of Culloden South, Blackcastle Quarry, Penick and east of Auldearn.







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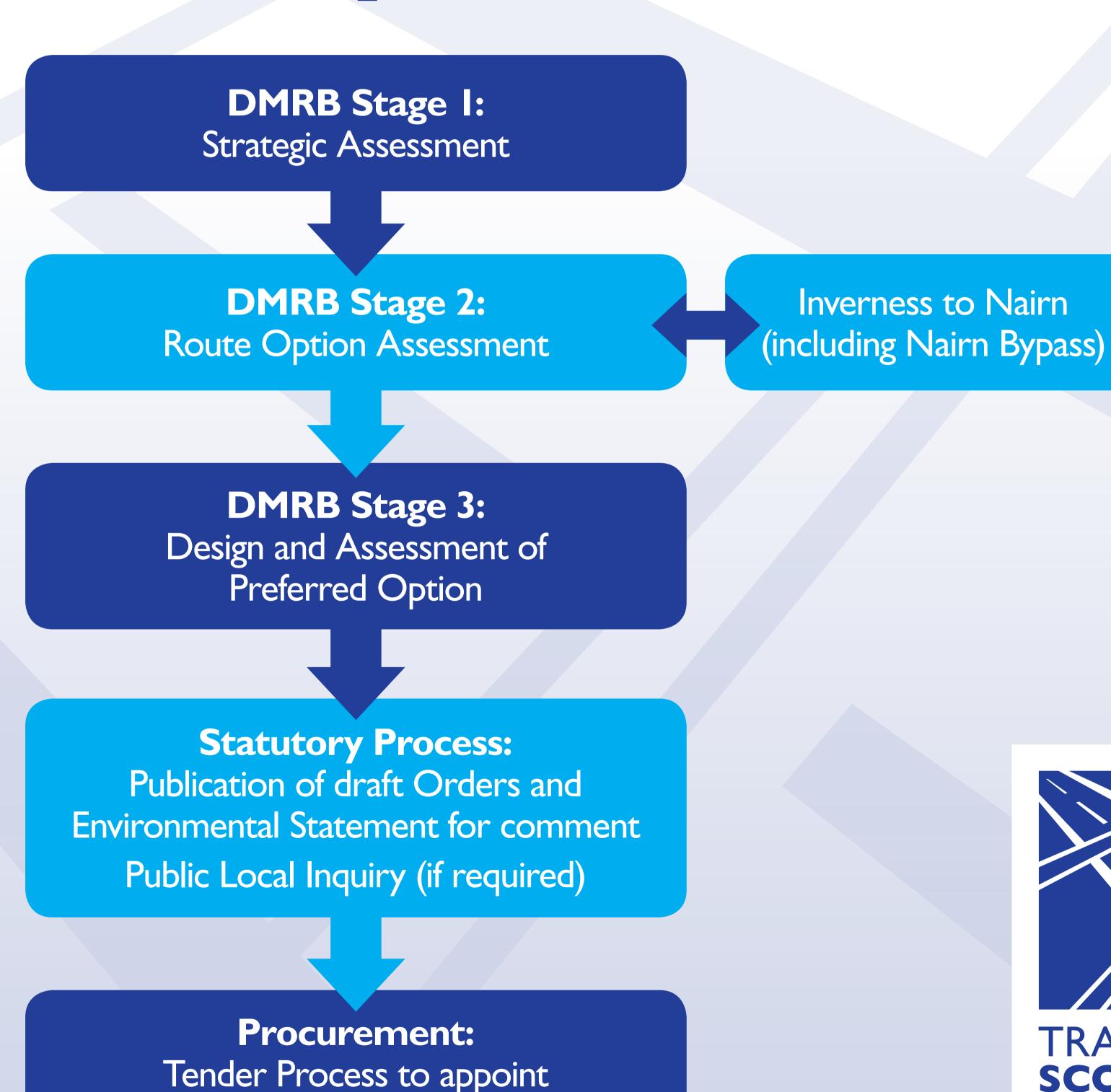
SCOTLAND

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Transport Scotland carries out a rigorous assessment process to establish the preferred option for a trunk road improvement scheme.

The preparation and development of trunk road schemes follows the scheme assessment process set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This three-stage assessment process covers engineering, environment and traffic, and economics. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults a large number of people and interested bodies.

The route option assessment (Stage 2) process for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme has been completed. The outcome is summarised at this exhibition, as well as the preferred option for the scheme.



works Contractor





The route option assessment process has taken into account the scheme objectives and the Scottish Government's five appraisal criteria, namely: environment; safety; economy; integration; and accessibility and social inclusion.

The scheme objectives are:

- to improve the operation of the A96 and inter-urban connectivity through:
 - reduced journey times
 - improved journey time reliability
 - increased overtaking opportunities
 - improved efficiency of freight movements along the transport corridor
 - reduced conflicts between local traffic and other traffic in urban areas.

- to improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users through:
 - reduced accident rates and severity
 - reduced driver stress
 - reduced non-motorised user conflicts with strategic traffic in urban areas.
- to provide opportunities to grow the regional economies on the corridor through:
 - improved access to the wider strategic transport network
 - enhanced access to jobs and services.
- to facilitate active travel in the corridor
- to facilitate integration with public transport facilities
- to minimise the environmental effect on the communities in the corridor.



The Scheme

The new 30km dual carriageway scheme can be divided into two sections:

- Inverness to Gollanfield
- Nairn Bypass.

For the Stage 2 route option assessment process, eight options were considered for the Inverness to Gollanfield section and nine for the Nairn Bypass.

The following exhibition panels present details of the preferred option for both sections of the scheme and also a summary of the key findings of the route option assessment process. The assessment process included consideration of public feedback received following the 2013 exhibitions.





Inverness to Gollanfield

The preferred option is Option IC (MV)

This section includes:

- 15km dual carriageway
- four grade separated junctions at Smithton, Newton, Mid
 Coul and Brackley
- no other direct/local accesses onto the new trunk road
- local road alterations
- major utility pipeline diversions.

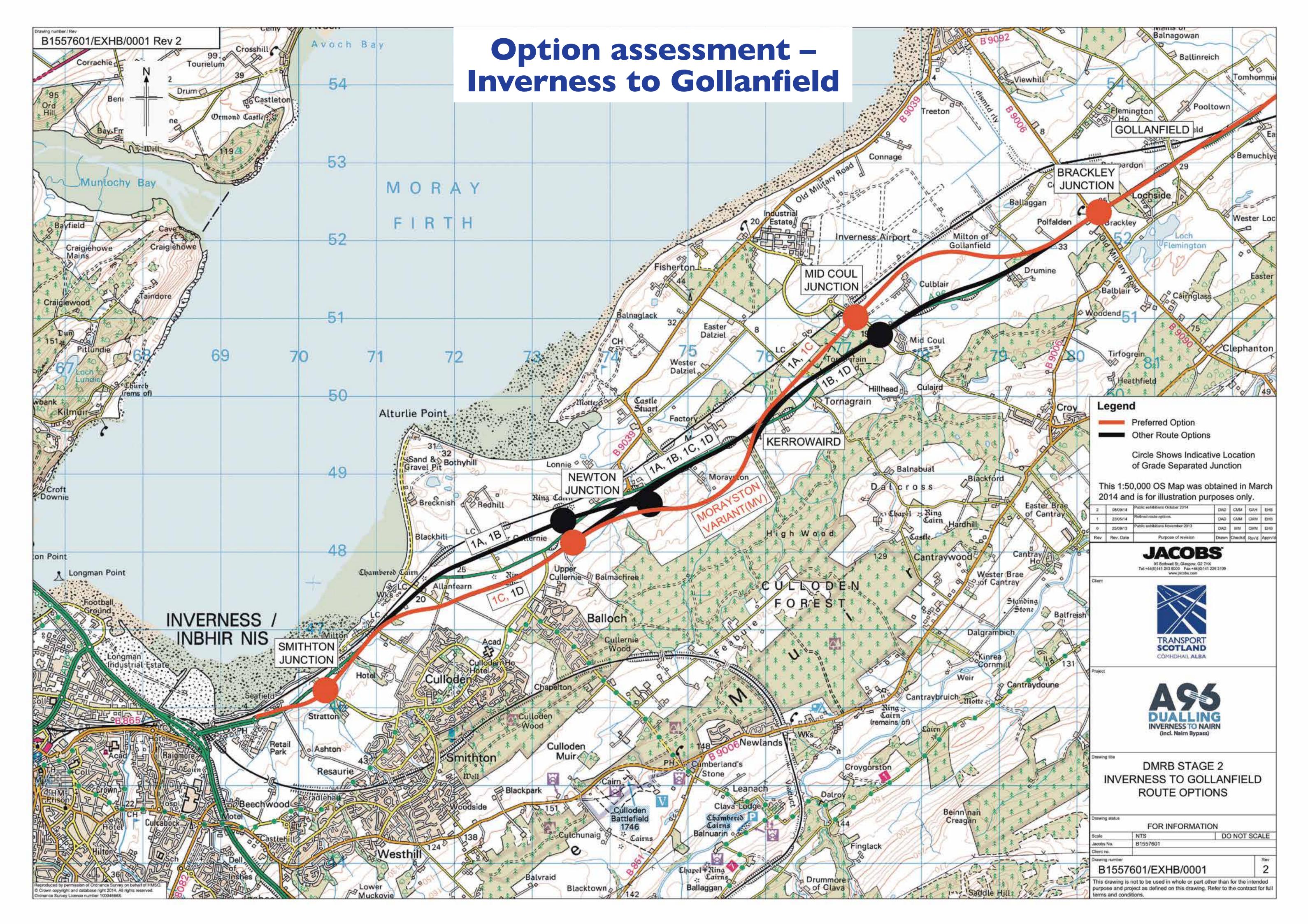
Nairn Bypass

The preferred option is Option 2E

This section includes:

- 15km dual carriageway
- two grade separated junctions at Nairn West and Nairn
 East
- no other direct/local accesses onto the new trunk road
- local road alterations
- approximately 200m River Nairn crossing
- two mainline railway crossings
- major utility pipeline and overhead power line diversions.





Option assessment – Inverness to Gollanfield



Option IC (MV) is preferred for the following reasons:

Engineering

The existing A96 has 17 local road junctions, 23 private accesses and at least 33 accesses into agricultural and forestry land. Options involving longer stretches of dualling on the line of the existing A96 will require more extensive construction works to provide alternative means of access to property and land adjacent to the existing A96.

Option IC (MV) is generally offline (away from the existing A96) with fewer impacts on accesses from the existing A96 to property, agricultural land and businesses.

Overall, the extent of construction work for Option IC (MV) is less than the other options resulting in reduced material volumes and reduced costs.

Option IC (MV) has the shortest route length affected by areas of unfavourable ground conditions such as peat and alluvium (loose soil or sediment).

Option IC (MV) can be constructed with less disruption or impact during construction to road users and the local community.





Option assessment – Inverness to Gollanfield







Environment

The environmental assessment considered ten separate environmental topics (air quality, noise and vibration, landscape and visual, habitats and biodiversity, geology and soils, road drainage and water environment, cultural heritage, all travellers, community and private assets and materials).

While there are differences between the options at individual topic level, the conclusion of the overall environmental assessment is much more finely balanced, with no one option substantially and materially better than the others.

Option IC (MV) is expected to have some of the lowest impacts in relation to habitats and biodiversity, geology and soils, effects on all travellers (e.g. path network), resource use and waste, residential and commercial assets, and development land.

Option IC (MV) avoids the demolition of one property at Mid Coul and the potential acquisition of two further properties near Allanfearn. It also avoids impacts on the development capacity of the development land allocations for Inverness Airport and Tornagrain new town.

Option IC (MV) performs less favourably in relation to noise and vibration, landscape and visual, water quality, cultural heritage, and agriculture and forestry land.

For air quality and flood risk, the environmental assessment concluded that the effects of all the route options were broadly similar.



Option assessment – Inverness to Gollanfield



Safety

For Option IC (MV), the existing A96 is retained between Smithton and Brackley. Safety benefits will occur on the existing A96 for both motorised and non-motorised users (pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians) due to the significant reduction in traffic.

Economy

For all options, dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Gollanfield will reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability.

Option IC (MV) has the lowest estimated scheme cost of all the Inverness to Gollanfield options, and provides value for money.

Integration

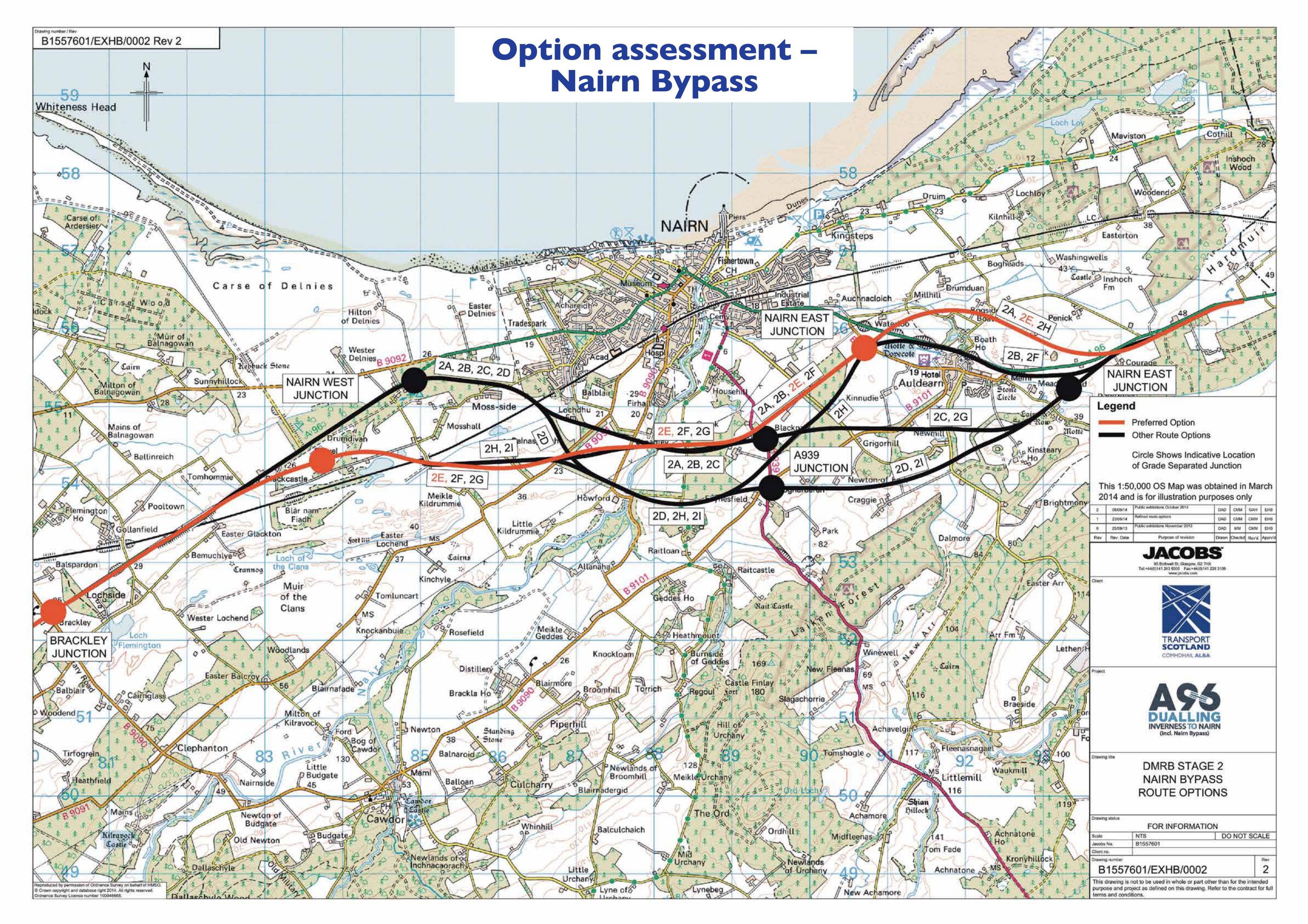
Option IC (MV) offers benefits for public transport and active travel (cycling, etc.) through use of the existing A96 single carriageway between Smithton and Brackley, which will have significantly reduced traffic on it.

Accessibility and social inclusion

Option IC (MV) is expected to have some of the lowest impacts on all travellers (e.g. path network) when compared to other options.







Option assessment – Nairn Bypass



Option 2E is preferred for the following reasons:

Engineering

Quarrying operations are complete over a large part of Blackcastle quarry and the dual carriageway, and Nairn West junction under Option 2E can be located in the former quarry site.

The River Nairn crossing at Broadley is preferred to the crossing at Howford since it is shorter and the lower cost of the structure more than offsets the cost of diversion of the I32kV overhead electricity transmission lines.

All options require using a significant volume of imported material, while providing little acceptable material. Option 2E has the best earthworks balance, hence the lowest volume of required imported material.

Option 2E can be constructed with less disruption or impact during construction to road users and the local community since the route is further away from the existing A96 and the communities at the west of Nairn and Auldearn.





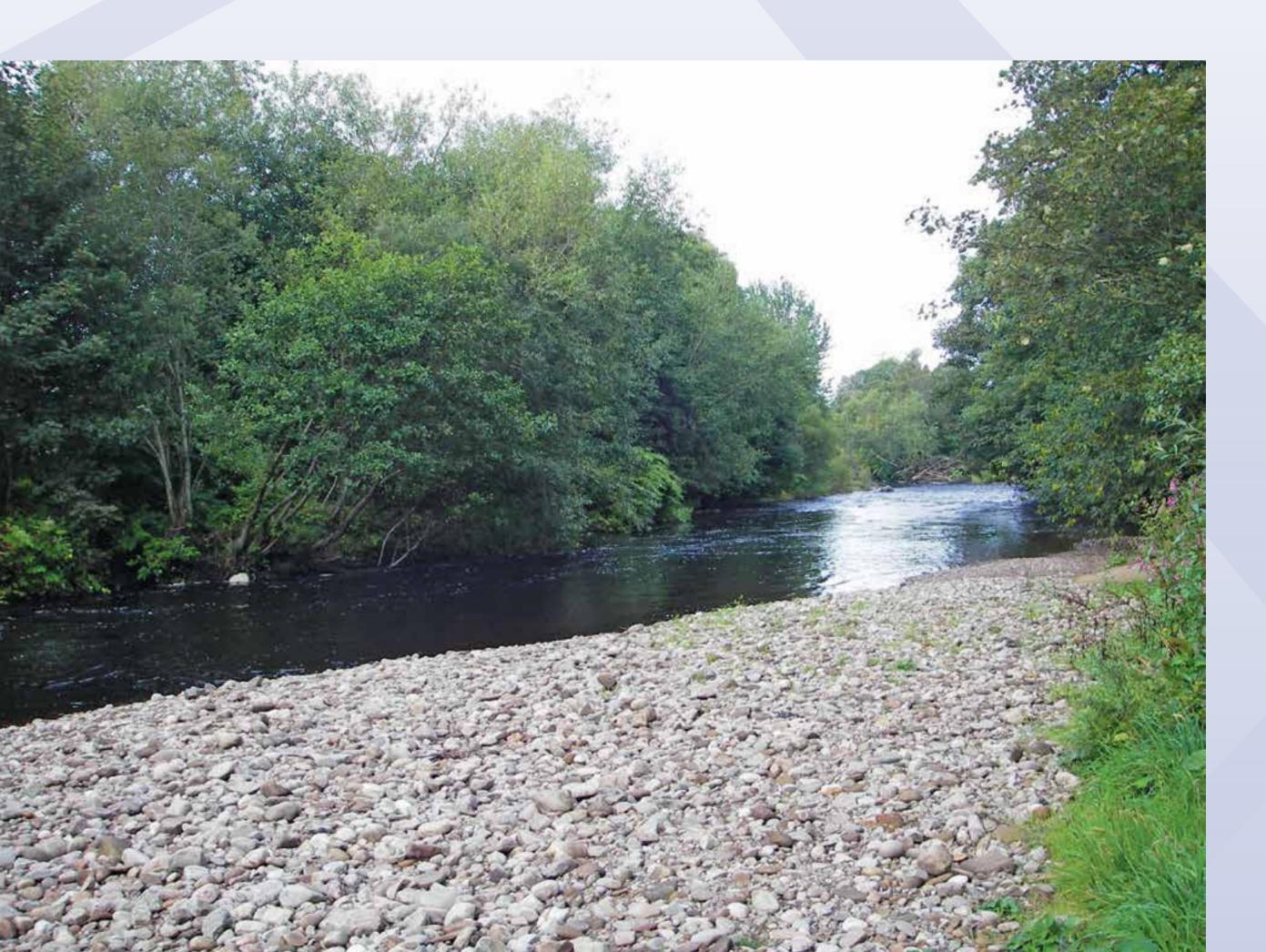
Option assessment – Nairn Bypass

DUALLING INVERNESS TO NAIRN (incl. Nairn Bypass)

Environment

The environmental assessment considered ten separate environmental topics (air quality, noise and vibration, landscape and visual, habitats and biodiversity, geology and soils, road drainage and water environment, cultural heritage, all travellers, community and private assets and materials).

While there are differences between the options at individual topic level, the conclusion of the overall environmental assessment is much more finely balanced, with no one option substantially and materially better than the others.



Overall, Option 2E is expected to have some of the lowest impacts in relation to noise and vibration, geology and soils, water quality, materials, residential and commercial assets, and development land.

Option 2E avoids impacts at Delnies Wood relating to habitats and biodiversity and the path network throughout the woodland.

Option 2E is also further from receptors (e.g. properties) at Moss-side reducing the potential impacts from noise and air pollution and has one of the lowest impacts on the Alton Burn flood plain.

The River Nairn crossing at Broadley is preferred to the crossing at Howford since it is shorter and has a lesser impact on the sensitive landscape at Howford. It also avoids the Kildrummie Kames SSSI.

Options north of Auldearn through Penick, which includes Option 2E, are preferred:

- impacts associated with the options on the line of the existing A96
 (2B and 2F) past Auldearn are avoided relating to noise, cultural heritage, path network and disruption during construction
- impacts associated with the more southern options (2C, 2D, 2G and 2I) are avoided relating to landscape and visual impacts particularly around the A939 junction, Newmill and at Kinsteary House.

Option 2E performs less favourably in relation to landscape and visual, habitats and biodiversity, cultural heritage, and agriculture and forestry land. For air quality, the environmental assessment concluded that the effects of all the route options were broadly similar.



Option assessment – Nairn Bypass



Safety

The significant reduction in traffic using the existing A96 should reduce the number of accidents in Nairn.

Option 2E offers greater safety benefits than other options:

- options south of Auldearn (2C, 2D, 2G and 2l) have an additional junction with the A939 which would increase traffic entering Nairn on this road, with the potential for increased conflicts with non-motorised users (NMUs) such as pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians
- on-line options (2B and 2F) would have greater NMU conflicts in the vicinity of Auldearn.

Economy

The Nairn Bypass offers significant benefits to the town by removing trunk road traffic from the existing A96. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in Nairn town centre is expected to reduce from 17,400 AADT to 7,000 AADT in future year 2031.

Option 2E has the lowest estimated scheme cost of all the Nairn Bypass options and provides value for money.

The junction locations provide opportunities to grow the regional economy through improved access to the wider strategic transport network:

- Nairn West junction located at Blackcastle quarry maintains direct access from the trunk road to Port of Ardesier
- Nairn East junction located between Nairn and Auldearn provides better strategic access than options south of Auldearn.

Integration

The reduction in traffic passing through Nairn should provide benefits to public transport and active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) in the town. Under Option 2E, existing bus routes through Auldearn can be maintained.

Accessibility and social inclusion

Option 2E is expected to have some of the lowest impacts on all travellers (e.g. path network) than other options.







The preferred option for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is shown on the following exhibition panels, which include some artist's impressions.

The preferred option shown on the drawings is indicative and will be developed further during the next stage of design development. This includes the preferred option alignment, layout of all the junctions, side roads and private means of access. Environmental mitigation will also be added to the scheme design.

In addition, the location and layout of detention basins/treatment ponds is indicative and will be subject to further development during the next stage of design development.





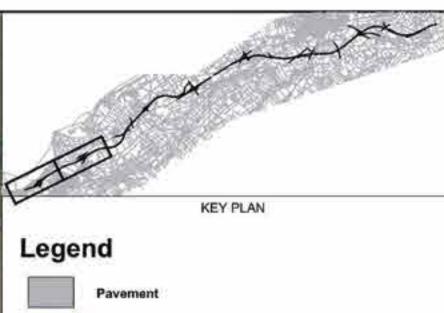




Newton Junction

For continuation see above

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Detention Basin/Treatment Pond

The preferred option shown on this drawing is indicative and will be developed further during the next stage of design development. This will include the preferred option alignment, the layout of all the junctions, side roads and private means of access. Environmental mitigation will also be added to the scheme

The location and layout of detention basins/ treatment ponds are preliminary and subject to further development during the next stage of

The aerial photography was taken in autumn

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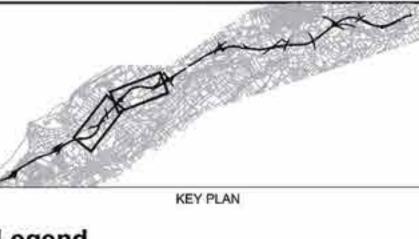
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Legend

Grass verge

Embankment

Detention Basin/Treatment Pond

Please note

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The aerial photography was taken in autumn



Inverness Airport

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0 03/09/2014 Public Exhibition Rev. Date Purpose of revision

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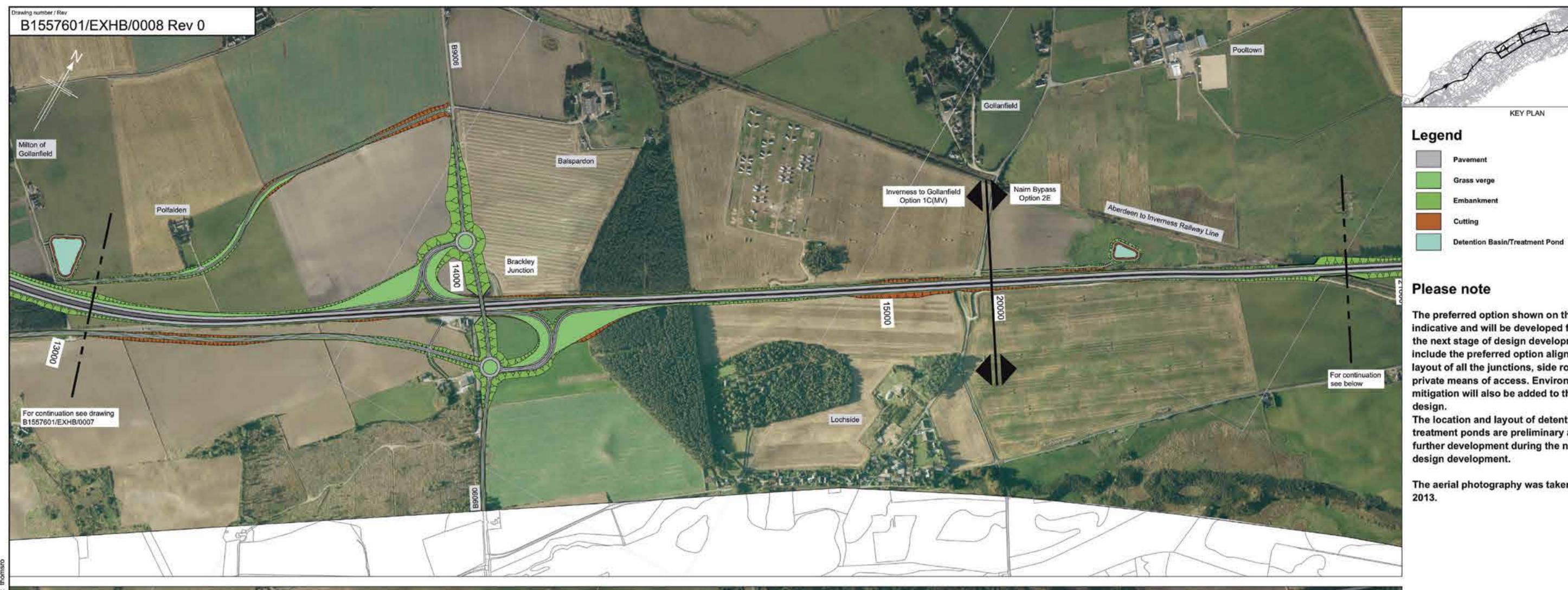
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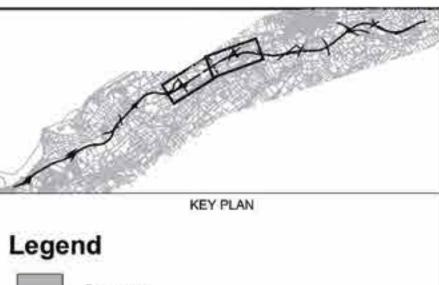
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DMRB STAGE 2 PREFERRED OPTION MILTON OF GOLLANFIELD TO MEIKLE KILDRUMMIE

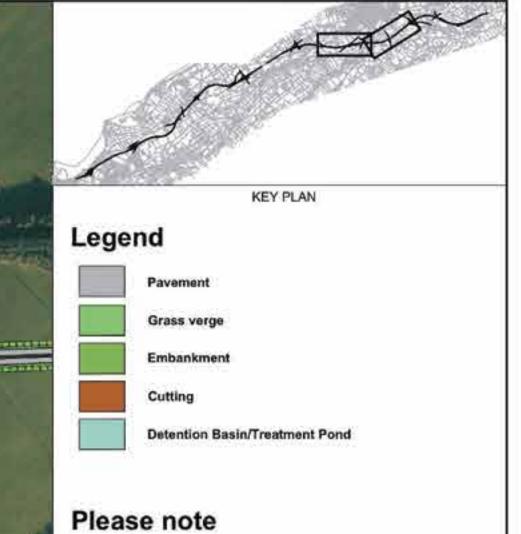
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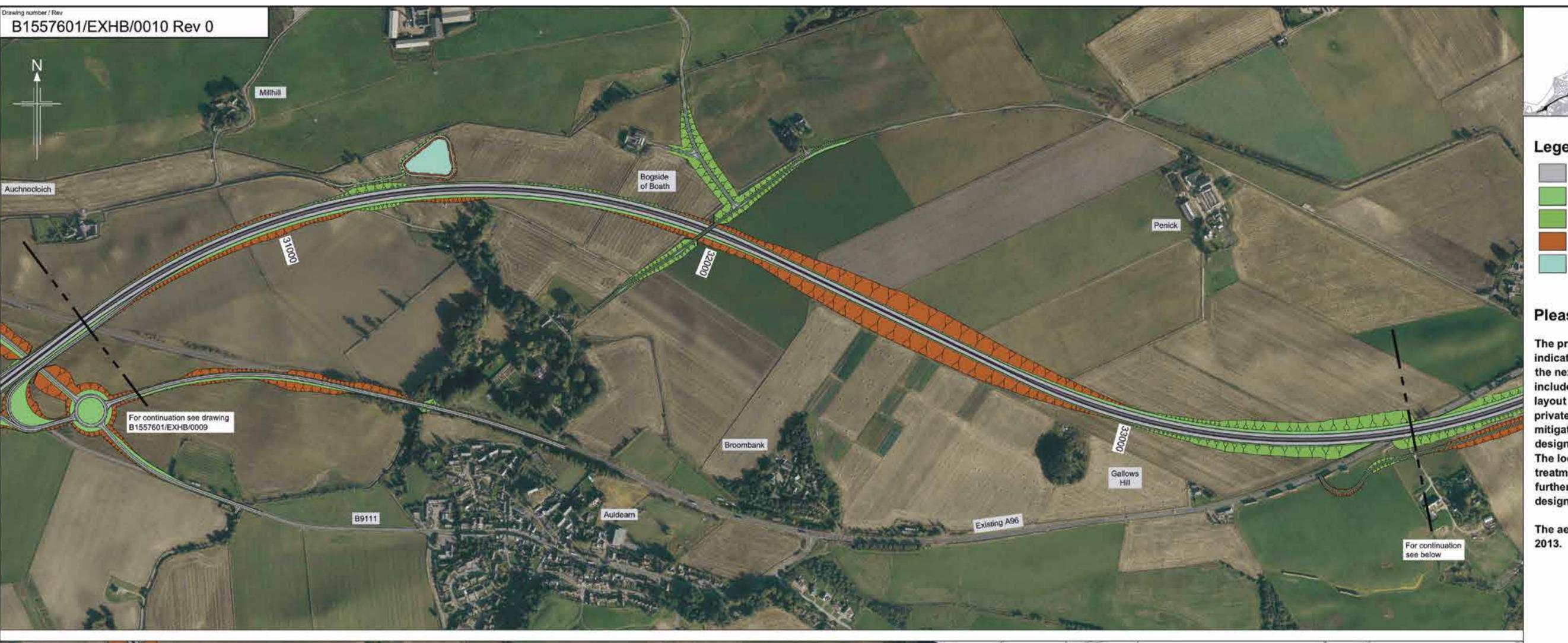
DMRB STAGE 2 PREFERRED OPTION MEIKLE KILDRUMMIE TO **AUCHNACLOICH**

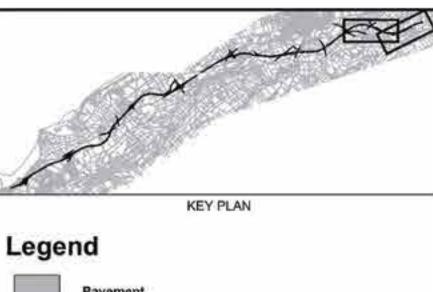
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Detention Basin/Treatment Pond

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The aerial photography was taken in autumn



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DMRB STAGE 2 PREFERRED OPTION **AUCHNACLOICH TO** HARDMUIR

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Artist's impression: Culloden (looking east)



Artist's impression: Nairn West junction



Artist's impression: River Nairn crossing



Artist's impression: Auldearn (looking east)



Artist's impression: Auldearn (looking west)

What happens next?



Transport Scotland has begun a procurement exercise to appoint a multi-disciplinary consultant to take forward the development, assessment and promotion of the preferred option for the scheme (DMRB Stage 3 assessment).

This will allow Transport Scotland to appoint a design consultant early next year to further develop the preferred option. Transport Scotland will look to publish draft Orders and Environmental Statement for the scheme in 2016 for public comment and feedback.

The draft Road Orders will define the line of the developed preferred option. The draft Compulsory Purchase Order will define the extent of land required to deliver and maintain the scheme.

The next stage of assessment process will include:

- consultation with affected parties
- further consultation with statutory bodies,
 Community Councils and other relevant interest groups

- design development of the preferred option
- ground investigation works
- identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of draft Orders
- environmental impact assessment of the developed preferred option and preparation of Environmental Statement
- development of suitable mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environment. For example:
 - appropriate construction management plans
 - mammal (e.g. badger and otter) underpasses,
 ledges and fences
 - landscape planting
 - noise barriers or environmental bunds.







We welcome your comments and feedback. Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have by **28 November 2014**. Comments can be made on the feedback forms provided and placed in the feedback box at the exhibition or sent by email or post.

Please email your comments to A96Dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively post to:

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Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

For further information on the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme please visit the Transport Scotland website:



www.transportscotland.gov.uk/project/a96-inverness-nairn-including-nairn-bypass

Information on the wider A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen programme can be found at:

www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a96dualling

