The scheme

The new 38km dual carriageway scheme, from the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park to a point approximately 3km east of Auldearn, can be divided into two sections:

- Inverness to Gollanfield
- Nairn Bypass.

Inverness to Gollanfield

The current route options have been developed from the alignments presented at public exhibitions in 2012. There are two route options between Smithton and Kinmel and two between Kiltarlity and Bothlyde giving five route options: 1A to 5B. These options are all on the A96 main road and an alternative office (Sneyd/Stirling) and an alternative office (Hayford/Virion) (PV) being considered for each. (PV) (1-5B). The route is split into two sections in this section.

Nairn Bypass

The decision to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has changed the route options under consideration from the options past Auldearn. Not every combination of these is feasible, therefore only two route combinations being assessed to bypass Nairn (2A to 2I).

The impacts of each route option on the following topics are being assessed as part of the on-going environmental assessment:

Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospital). Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential area, schools and hospitals).

Landscape and visual – visual impact on land use for built and outdoor receptors.

Habitats and biodiversity – designated habitats and protected species.

Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes (e.g. scheduled monuments, listed buildings and battlefields).

Geology and soils – geology, groundwater and contaminated land sites.

Water environment – water quality, geomorphology, and fish habitat.

Habitats and biodiversity

European Protected Sites:
- Moray Firth (SAC)
- Moray Firth (SPN)
- Loch Ness (SPN)
- Moray and Nairn Coast (SPA)
- SSMS – Langman and Castle Stuart Bays and Kildrummie Kames
- ancient and plantation woodland
- protected species – red squirrels, badgers, bats and others
- flood risk – e.g. River Nairn, Albyn Burn, Auldearn Burn, Cullermuir Burn and Auldearn Burn
- scheduled monuments
- Category A, B and C listed buildings
- Auldearn battlefield (1465)
- development land allocation
- landscape and visual impacts
- outdoor access – e.g. core paths and National Cycle Network.

Community and private assets (including agriculture) – due to land take and pile up water contamination.

Underground assets – e.g. gas pipelines, water mains, telecommunications, power cables and electrical cables.

Services – hard core and general road related services.

What happens next...

Transport Scotland is seeking to reach a position of confirming a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014. The options presented are currently the subject of full engineering, environmental and traffic and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges: Stage 2 assessment – route option assessment).

We have now completed these route options using the feedback from the public consultation. The feedback from this public consultation will be taken into account by 31 January 2014. The feedback from this public consultation will be taken into account.

Further information

Further information is available at the project website: www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a96dualling

On any other part to A96 Dualling Team Transport Scotland Buchanan House 35 Port Dundas Road Glasgow G4 0HF

November 2013

A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)

The scheme

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November 2013

A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)
Introduction

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published by Transport Scotland 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 a bypass at Nairn.

The intention to fully dual the A96 was thereafter announced when Scottish Ministers published their Infrastructure Investment Plan which contained the commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Nairn by 2015, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities. Public exhibitions were held in February 2012 when Transport Scotland presented route options for the Inshes to Nairn scheme, including a Nairn Bypass. Since then further route option design development and future assessment have been undertaken to take into account public feedback, as well as the decision to dual the A96. This leaflet provides a summary of the route options under consideration.

Environmental Assessment

There are a number of emerging challenges to the environment that have been identified. For example:

- **Habitats and biodiversity** – all options have the potential to impact on designated sites and protected species (e.g. badgers, red squirrels, otters). Options 1A, 1A(MV), 1B, and 1B(MV) may result in greater fragmentation and disturbance of supporting habitat, whilst Options 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) may result in the greatest loss of woodland at Torragrain Woods.

- **Cultural heritage** – all options have the potential to impact on the setting of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. Options 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) may result in the removal of part of the Lower Cullernie Ring Ditch (scheduled monument).

- **Landscape and visual** – all options have the potential to impact on landscape character and visual amenity. Option 1C(MV) is expected to have the greatest impact on landscape character, with Options 1C, 1D, and 1D(MV) expected to have the greatest impact on visual amenity.

- **All travellers** – all options have the potential to impact on the core path network and National Cycle Network Route 1. Options 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) are expected to impact on the largest number of core paths through increased journey length and reduced visual amenity.

For further details, please refer to the leaflet providing a summary of the route options under consideration.
Introduction

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published by Transport Scotland 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 a bypass at Nairn. The intention to fully dual the A96 was thereafter announced when Scottish Ministers published their Infrastructure Investment Plan which confirmed the commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities.

Public exhibitions were held in February 2012 when Transport Scotland presented route options for the Inshes to Nairn scheme, including a Nairn Bypass. Since then, further route option design development and route assessment have taken place to respond into account public feedback, as well as the decision to dual the A96. This leaflet provides a summary of the route options under consideration.

Environmental Assessment

There are a number of emerging challenges to the environment that have been identified. For example:

**Habitats and biodiversity** - all options have the potential to impact on designated sites and protected species (e.g. badgers, bats, red squirrels, otters). Options 1A, 1A(MV), 1B, and 1B(MV) may result in greater fragmentation and disturbance of supporting habitat for wintering birds. Options 1C and 1C(MV) are likely to result in the greatest loss of grassland habitat, whilst 1B, 1B(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) will result in the greatest loss of woodland at Torragrain Woods.

**Cultural heritage** - all options have the potential to impact on the setting of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. Options 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) may result in the removal of part of the Lower Cullernie Ring Ditch (scheduled monument). Options 2C, 2D, 2G, and 2I are likely to result in the removal of part of the Meadowfield Enclosure (scheduled monument). Options 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, and 2H have the potential to remove unknown remains associated with the Auldearn battlefield, whilst 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 1H reinforce existing severance of the battlefield.

**Landscape and visual** - all options have the potential to impact on landscape character and visual amenity. Options 2E, 2G, 2H, and 2I are expected to have the greatest impact on landscape character, with 2F and 2G expected to have the greatest visual impact.

**All travellers** - all options have the potential to impact on core paths and National Cycle Network Route 1. Options 2A, 2B, 2C, and 2D are likely to impact on the largest number of core paths through increased journey length and reduced visual amenity.
Introduction

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published by Transport Scotland 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 a bypass at Nairn.

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

Public exhibitions were held in February 2012 when Transport Scotland presented route options for the Inshes to Nairn scheme, including a Nairn Bypass. Since then, further route option design development and feasibility assessment have been undertaken, including input from public feedback, as well as the decision to dual the A96. This leaflet provides a summary of the route options under consideration.

Environmental Assessment

There are a number of emerging challenges to the environment that have been identified. For example:

**Habitats and biodiversity** – all options have the potential to impact on designated sites and protected species (e.g. badgers, red squirrels, otters). 1A, 1A(MV), 1B, and 1B(MV) may result in greater fragmentation and disturbance of supporting habitat. For example, ledge 1B(MV) may result in the greatest loss of undisturbed grassland habitat, whilst 1B, 1B(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) will result in the greatest loss of woodland in Torragrain Woods.

**Cultural heritage** – all options have the potential to impact on the setting of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) may result in the removal of part of the Lower Cullernie Ring Ditch (scheduled monument).

**Landscape and visual** – all options have the potential to impact on landscape character and visual amenity. 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) are expected to result in the greatest impact on landscape character, with 2F and 2G expected to have the greatest visual impact.

**All travellers** – all options have the potential to impact on core paths and National Cycle Network Route 1. 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D are likely to impact on the largest number of core paths through increased journey length and reduced visual amenity.
The impacts of each route option on the following topics are being assessed as part of the on-going environmental assessment:

Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospital).

Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential area, schools and hospitals).

Landscape and visual – visual change and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors.

Habitats and biodiversity – designated habitats and protected species.

Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic parks.

Geology and soils – geology, groundwater, geology and soils.

Water environment – water quality, groundwater and floods.

Development land – land allocation for development or land planning permission.

All travellers – users of core paths, rights of way and National Cycle Network and impacts on vehicle travellers.

Materials – mineral resources and waste.

Noise and vibration – due to land based and mobile noise activities.

Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospital).

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The scheme

The new 38km dual carriageway scheme, from the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park to a point approximately 1km east of Inverness, can be divided into two sections:

- Inverness to Gollanfield
- Nairn Bypass.

Inverness to Gollanfield

The current route options have been developed from the alignments presented at public exhibitions in 2012. There are two route options between Smithton and Inverness and two between Aultar and Bo’ness giving four route options, IA to IC. These options are all in the east Morayston and an alternative office (Morayston North, MN) being considered for each IA (MN/IA, IC to IM). The route might possibly connect in this section.

Nairn Bypass

The decision to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has changed the route options under consideration for this section.

Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)

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- Inverness to Gollanfield
- Nairn Bypass.

Inverness to Gollanfield

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Nairn Bypass

The decision to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has changed the route options under consideration for this section.

Constraints

A thorough review of the existing corridor has been undertaken to determine the present engineering and environmental constraints. These are summarised below:

- Engineering constraints
- Key environmental constraints
- European Protected Sites:
  - Moray Firth (SPA)
  - Inner Moray Firth (SPA)
  - Loch Ness (SPA)
  - Moray and Nairn Coasts (SPA)
- SSSI – Langman and Castle Stuart Bays and Kidrammum Kames
- ancient and plantation woodland
- protected species – red squirrels, badgers, bats and others
- flood risk – e.g. River Nairn, Alton Burn, Auldearn Burn, Culliburn and Auldearn Burn
- scheduled monuments
- Category A, B and C listed buildings
- Auldearn battlefield (SSSI)
- development land allocation
- landscape and visual impacts
- outdoor access – e.g. core paths and National Cycle Network.

Impacts on the environment

The impacts of each route option on the following topics are being assessed as part of the on-going environmental assessment:

- Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).
- Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).
- Landscape and visual – visual character and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors.
- Habitats and biodiversity – designated habitats and protected species.
- Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes (e.g. scheduled monuments, listed buildings and battlefields).
- Geology and soils – geological and geomorphological landform.
- Water environment – water quality, geomorphology and fisheries.
- Community and private assets (including agriculture) – due to land take and possible community severance.

What happens next...

Transport Scotland is seeking to reach a position of confirming a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014. The options presented are currently the subject of full engineering, environmental and traffic and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 2 assessment – route option assessment).

We will now make our assessments on these route options using the feedback from the public consultation. The feedback from this public consultation will be taken into account by 31 January 2014.

Further information

More information is available at the project website: www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a96dualling

If you have any queries or any comments on the project, please contact:

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November 2013