

Initial Appraisal		Intervention 8: Upgrade the A96 to Dual Carriageway between Inverness and Aberdeen						
Estimated total Public Sector Funding Requirement:		Capital Costs/grant				>£500m		
Summary Impact on Key Strategic Outcomes	Improve Journey Times and Connections Reduce Emissions Improve Quality, Accessibility and Affordability	---	--	-	0	+	++	+++
(Judgement based on available information against a 7pt. scale.)								
Intervention Description:								
Upgrade the existing single carriageway A96 to dual carriageway along the entire length between Aberdeen and Inverness, with bypasses around the towns of Nairn, Keith and Elgin.								
Summary: Rationale for Not Progressing								
Partial dualling of the A96, with a series of complementary measures (Interventions D16 (Upgrade A96 to Dual Carriageway between Inverness and Nairn) and D24 (Targeted Road Congestion / Environmental Relief Schemes)) are more likely to address the strategic objectives in a cost effective manner.								
Based on the flow profiles and composition of traffic along the length of the corridor, the dualling of the entire route would not provide value for money. Dualling the A96 could also have significant adverse impacts on water and landscape and a slight adverse impact on noise.								

Table C8.1.1 STPR Objectives

STPR Objectives	
<p><u>STPR Objective 1:</u></p> <p>To improve connectivity, particularly by public transport between Inverness City Centre and the growth area to the east including Inverness Airport.</p> <p><u>STPR Objective 2:</u></p> <p>To improve journey time and increase opportunities to travel, particularly by public transport, between Aberdeen and Inverness.</p> <p><u>STPR Objective 3:</u></p> <p>To reduce the accident rate and severity rate to current national average.</p>	<p><b>1: Positive</b> – The A96 to the east of Inverness is largely made up of single carriageway and suffers congestion in peak periods, especially on the approaches to Raigmore Interchange. This congestion is forecast to increase to Inverness Airport and beyond. Provision of a dual carriageway along this stretch and improvements to Raigmore Interchange will increase capacity and provide capacity for growth to the east of Inverness.</p> <p><b>2: Slightly Positive</b> – Upgrading the A96 to Dual Carriageway between Aberdeen and Inverness is likely to improve journey times between the two cities, as it will allow overtaking of slower moving vehicles on this section of the A96. City to city bus services are also likely to benefit from road improvements on the route.</p> <p><b>3: Slightly Positive</b> – Upgrading the A96 to Dual Carriageway between Aberdeen and Inverness is likely to improve safety levels, as it will provide safer overtaking opportunities than the existing single carriageway sections. Bypassing each of the main towns on the route is also likely to reduce the accident rate on these sections of the A96.</p>

This intervention also addresses an objective in another strategic node.

STPR Objective	Corridor, Urban Network or Strategic Node
To improve connectivity, particularly by public transport between Inverness City Centre and the growth area to the east including Inverness Airport.	Inverness

Table C8.1.2 Key Strategic Outcomes

Key Strategic Outcomes (KSO's)		
Objective:	Assessment Summary:	Supporting Information:
Improve Journey Times and Connections:	Moderate Benefit	This intervention would provide improvements in journey times and road safety between Aberdeen and Inverness with increased capacity, especially on the currently congested approaches to Raigmore Interchange.
Reduce Emissions:	Minor Benefit	The intervention would result in a slight reduction in emissions as a result of reduced congestion and reduced traffic levels within the towns of Nairn, Keith and Elgin; however, this reduction is forecast to be marginal.
Improve Quality, Accessibility and Affordability:	Minor Benefit	Dualling of the carriageway and constructing bypasses of the main towns is likely to reduce journey times, which will benefit bus users. This intervention would also benefit the residents within the towns, as it would increase accessibility and community linkages and reduces severance in the towns.

**Table C8.1.3 Implementability Appraisal**

<b>Implementability Appraisal</b>	
<b>Technical:</b>	There are a number of technical risks associated with this intervention. The Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 1.2km from the A96 at its nearest point. There are a number of Special Protection Areas (SPA) at Moray Basin Firths and Bays, Highland and Grampian, Moray and Nairn Coast and the Inner Moray Firth. SSSI's between Inverness and Nairn are located at Longman & Castle Stuart Bays and Kildrummie Kames. There are also a number of category B & C listed buildings located directly adjacent to the A96, a large number of scheduled ancient monuments and pockets of ancient woodlands including Tornagrain Wood and Delnies Woodland located within this area.
<b>Operational:</b>	Construction of the dual carriageway sections and other improvements along the route is likely to have significant effects on existing users, as the alternative routes between Inverness and Aberdeen are circuitous. During construction work access to a number of rural communities along the corridor may be affected. Limiting the effects on tourist traffic during the construction phase also provides technical challenges to the construction plan. It is unlikely that any adverse factors will affect the operation of this intervention during its projected life.
<b>Public:</b>	This is an important intervention to the economies of Inverness and Aberdeen and the surrounding area, with significant public interest at both local and regional levels.

**Table C8.1.4 Comparative Appraisal**

<b>Comparative Appraisal</b>	
<b>Intervention Hierarchy:</b>	This is a Level 3 intervention involving significant dual carriageway construction.
<b>Interaction:</b>	This intervention would complement interventions 55 (Inverness Southern Bypass from the A96 to A82) and 56 (Inverness Bus Priority Measures and Park-&-Ride).
<b>Mutually Exclusive:</b>	This intervention and intervention 3 (A96 dual to Nairn) are mutually exclusive.

**Table C8.1.5 Environmental Appraisal**

<b>Environmental Appraisal</b>	
<b>Assessment Summary</b>	The intervention has the potential to contribute towards an improvement in air quality and a reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions as a result of more freely moving traffic and a reduction in congestion, especially around Keith, Elgin and Nairn. The intervention however does have the potential to severely impact on biodiversity and the assessment presented here should be considered in conjunction with the Appropriate Assessment being prepared for the STPR. There is also the potential for impacts on noise, water, soils and geology, landscape and cultural heritage. However the extent of these impacts are uncertain at this stage of the decision-making process.