

# Project update

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 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.



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 scheme assessment has taken place 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.

Work has focused on the following areas:

- further development of possible dual carriageway route options including provision of grade separated junctions
- extension of the scheme proposals east of Nairn in order to support future dualling of the A96
- engineering, environmental and traffic and economic assessment of the route options

The purpose of this consultation is to explain the route options under consideration and seek public feedback on scheme proposals.



# The scheme

The scheme consists of a new 30km dual carriageway between the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park and a point approximately 3km east of Auldearn.

The proposed scheme can be divided into two distinct sections:

## **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 Newton and two between Kerrowaird and Brackley, giving four route options, IA to ID. These options are all on-line past Morayston and an alternative off-line Morayston Variant (MV) is being considered for each IA (MV) to ID (MV). This results in eight possible route combinations 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 shown at the 2012 public exhibitions.

There are two route options being considered on the west side of Nairn, two proposed locations for crossing the River Nairn and four options past Auldearn. Not every combination of these is feasible, therefore only nine route combinations (2A to 2I) are being considered to bypass Nairn.



# Constraints

Constraints are summarised below and shown on scheme drawings

## Engineering Constraints

Existing A96

Local road network and numerous direct accesses onto the A96

Inverness to Aberdeen railway line

Inverness Airport

Flat low-lying ground

Minor watercourses

Flood plain of Alton Burn

Tornagrain Development areas

Scattered residential development

Utilities – 132kV transmission lines, oil pipeline, gas pipeline

Active and redundant quarry workings

Soft ground and areas of peat bog

River Nairn

## Key Environmental Constraints

European Protected Sites:

- Moray Firth (SAC)
- Inner Moray Firth (SPA)
- Loch Flemington (SPA)
- Moray and Nairn Coast (SPA)

SSSIs – Longman and Castle Stuart Bays and Kildrummie Kames

Ancient and plantation woodlands

Protected species – red squirrels, badgers, bats and otters

Flood risk – e.g. River Nairn, Alton Burn, Ardersier Burn, Cairnlaw Burn and Auldearn Burn

Scheduled monuments

Category A, B and C listed buildings

Auldearn battlefield (1645)

Development land allocation

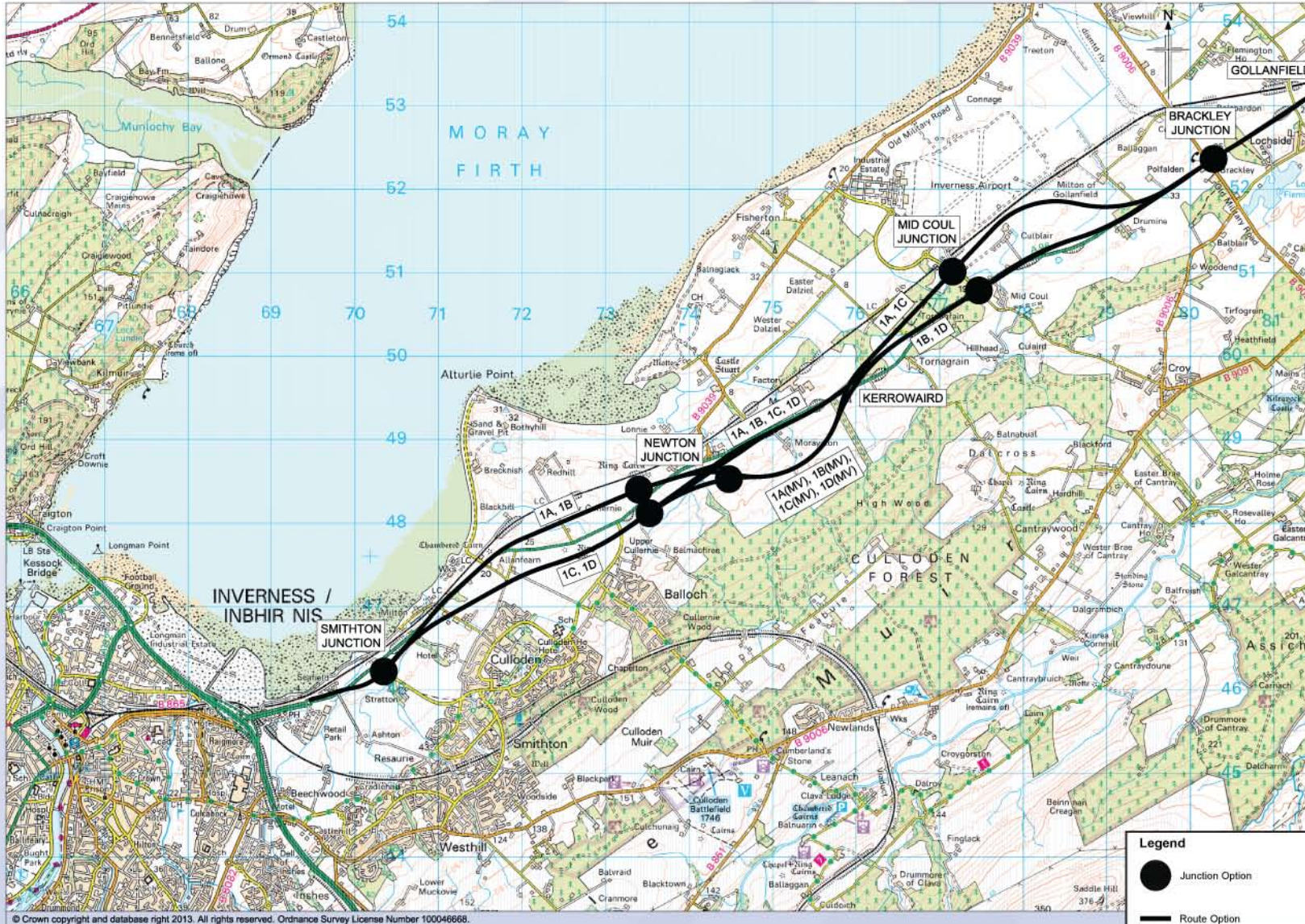
Landscape and visual impacts

Outdoor access – e.g. core paths and National Cycle Network

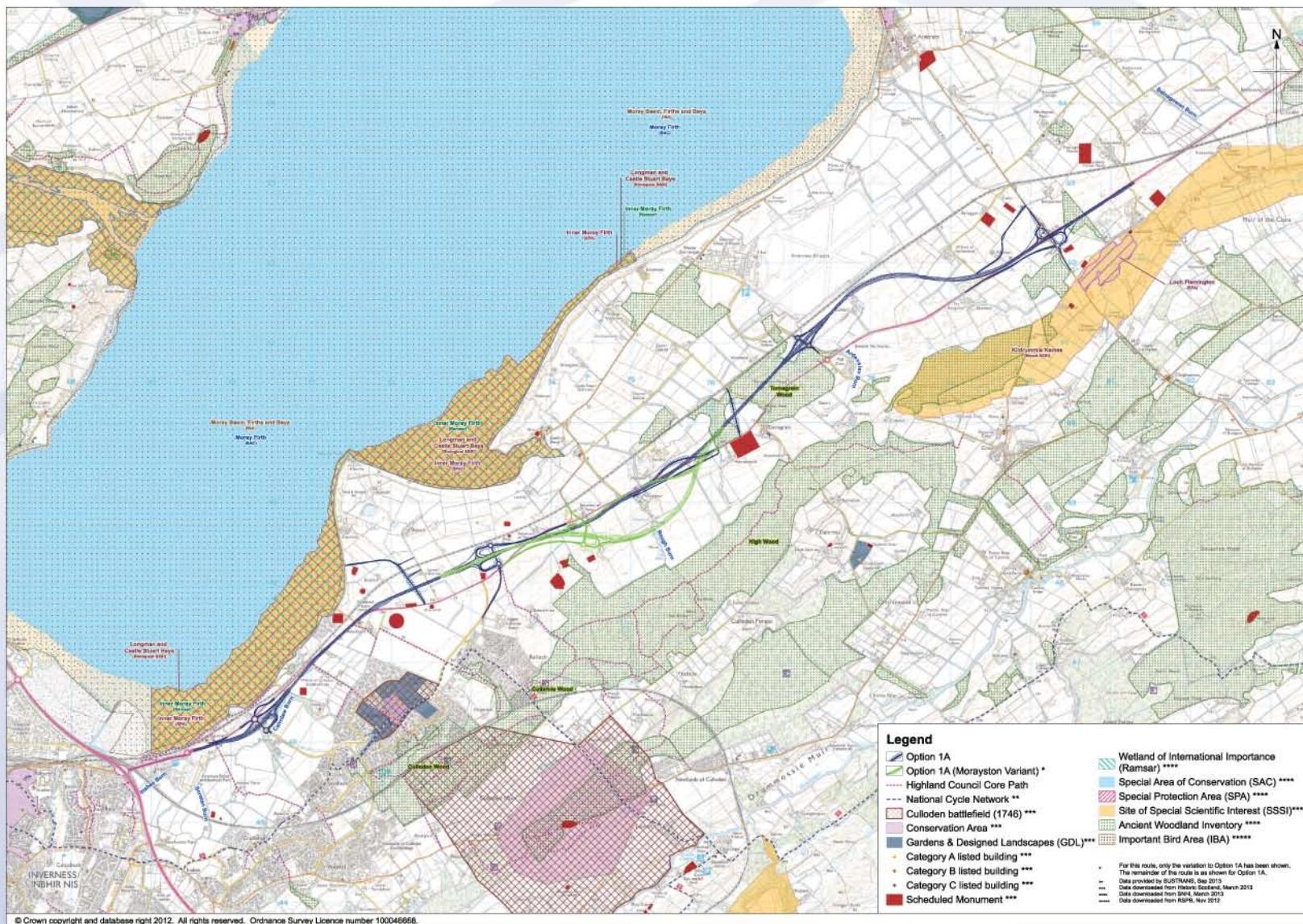


# Route options Inverness to Gollanfield

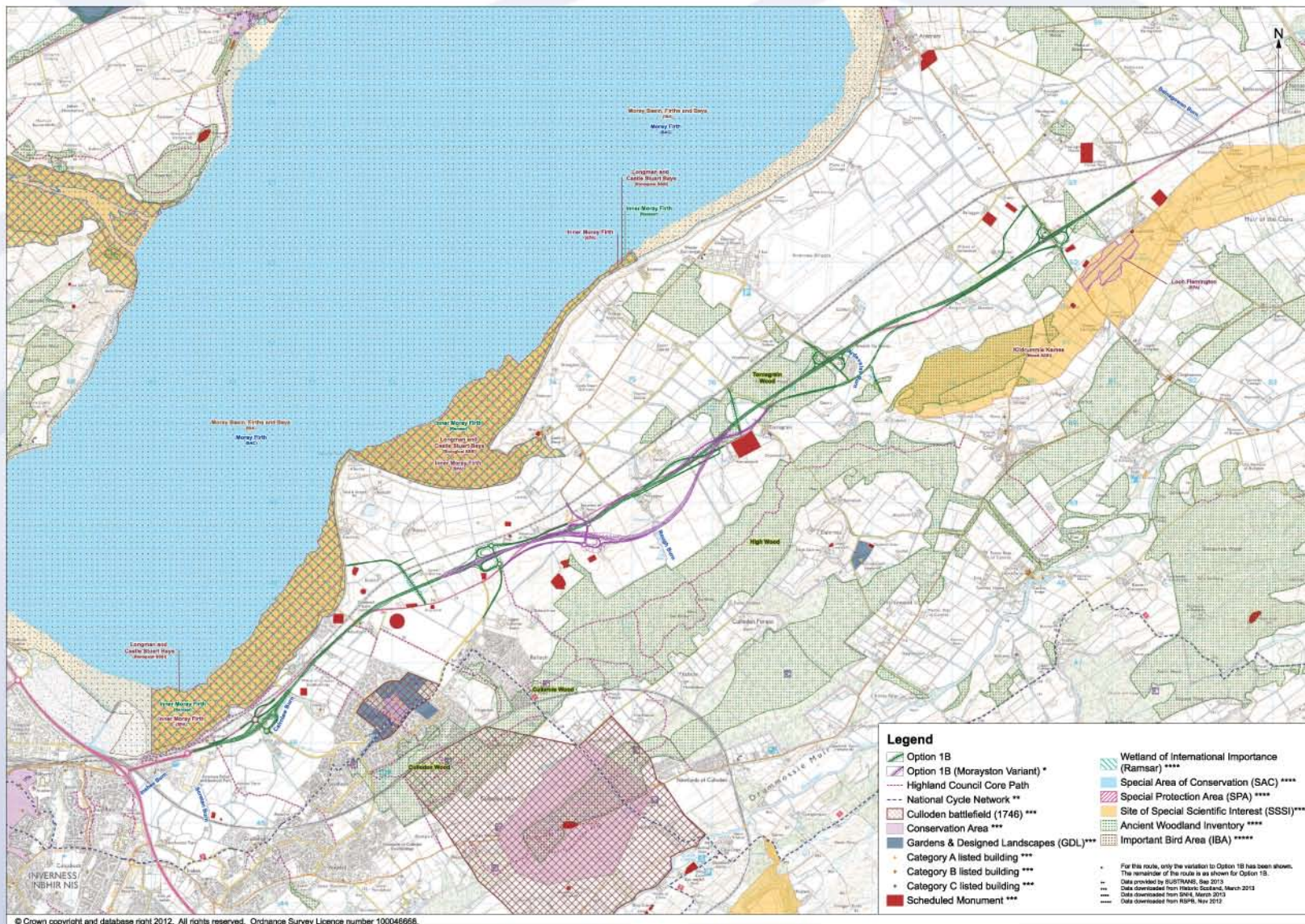
**A96**  
DUALLING  
INVERNESS TO NAIRN  
(incl. Nairn Bypass)



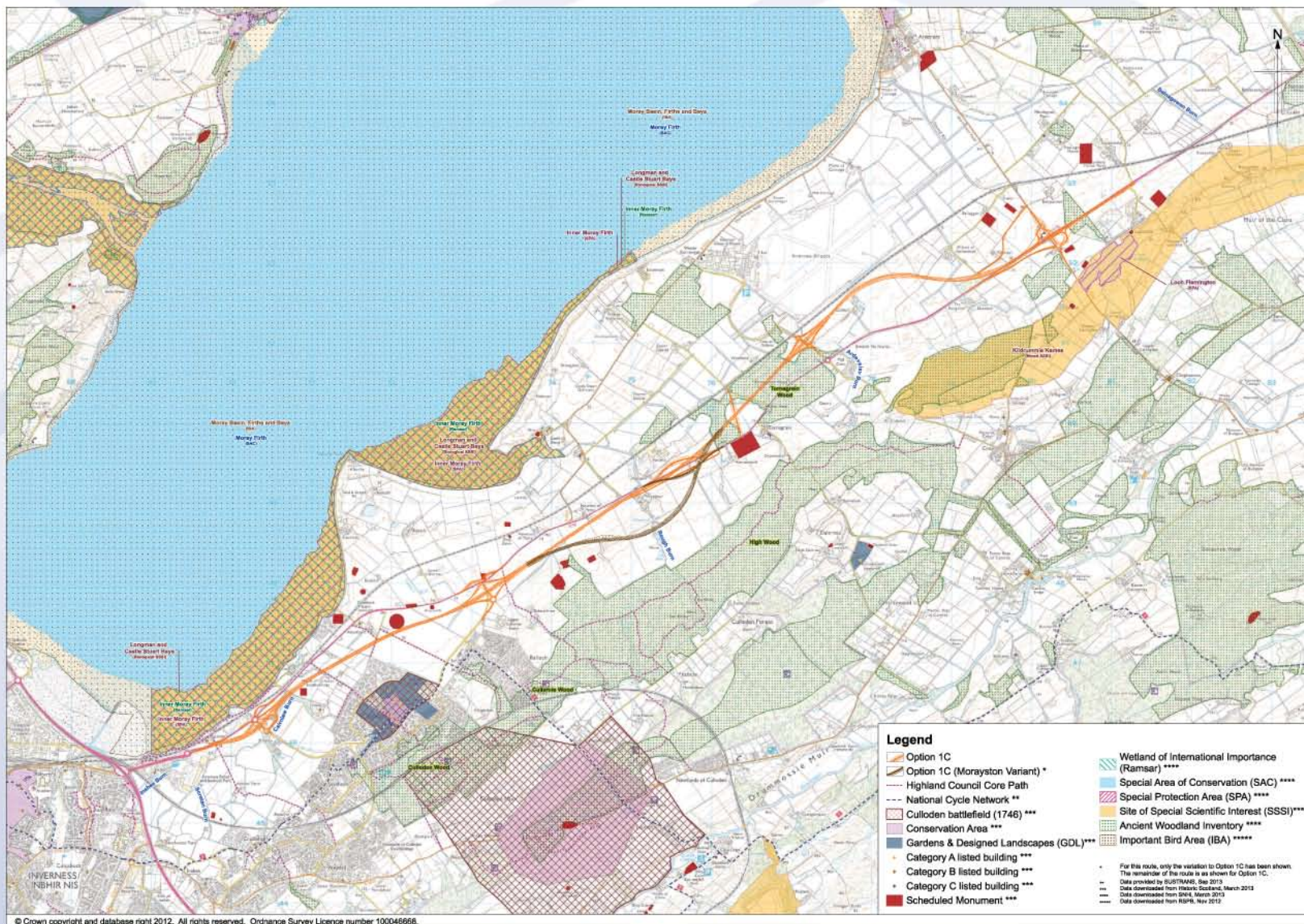
# Options IA and IA(MV)



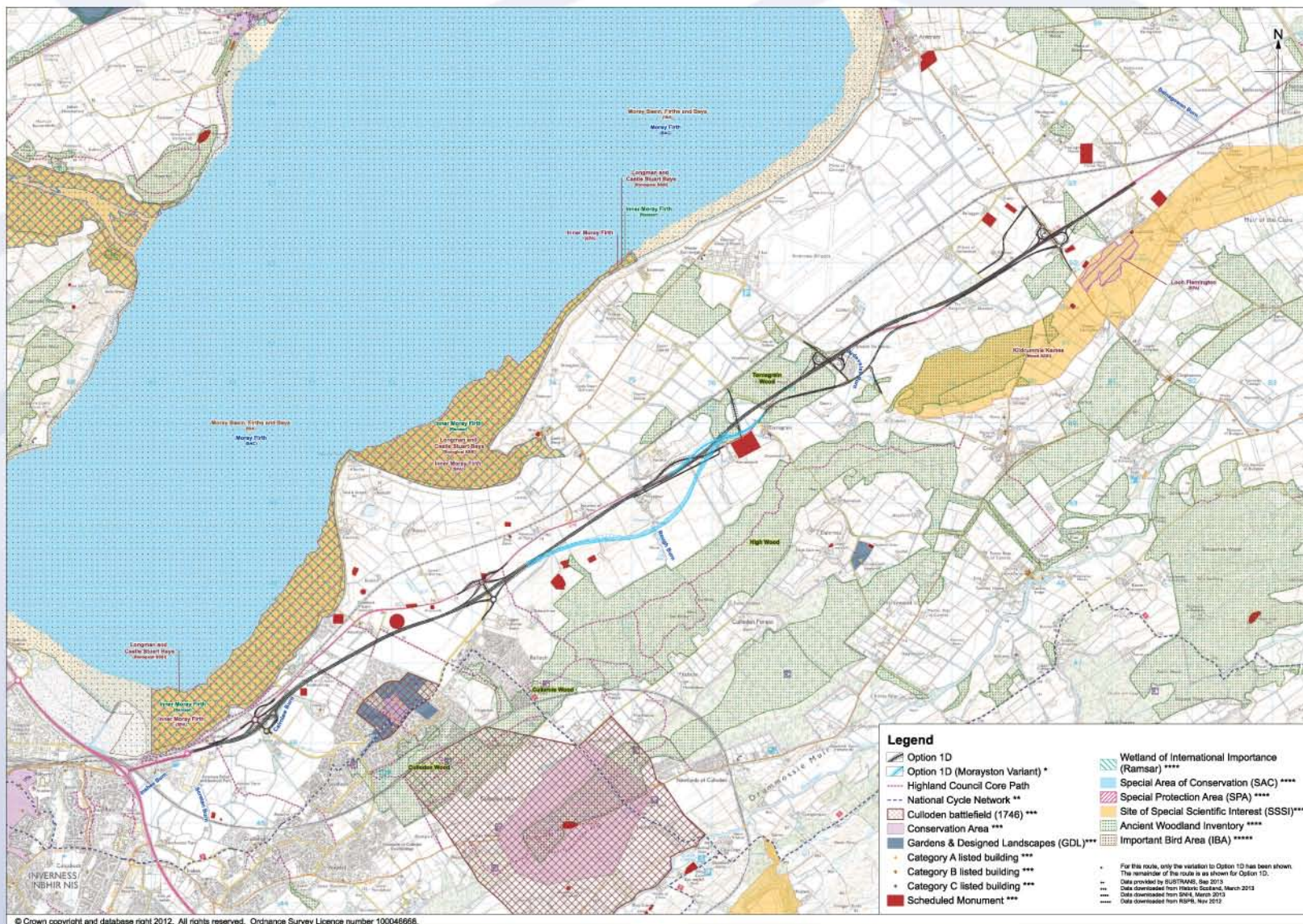
# Options IB and IB(MV)



# Options IC and IC(MV)

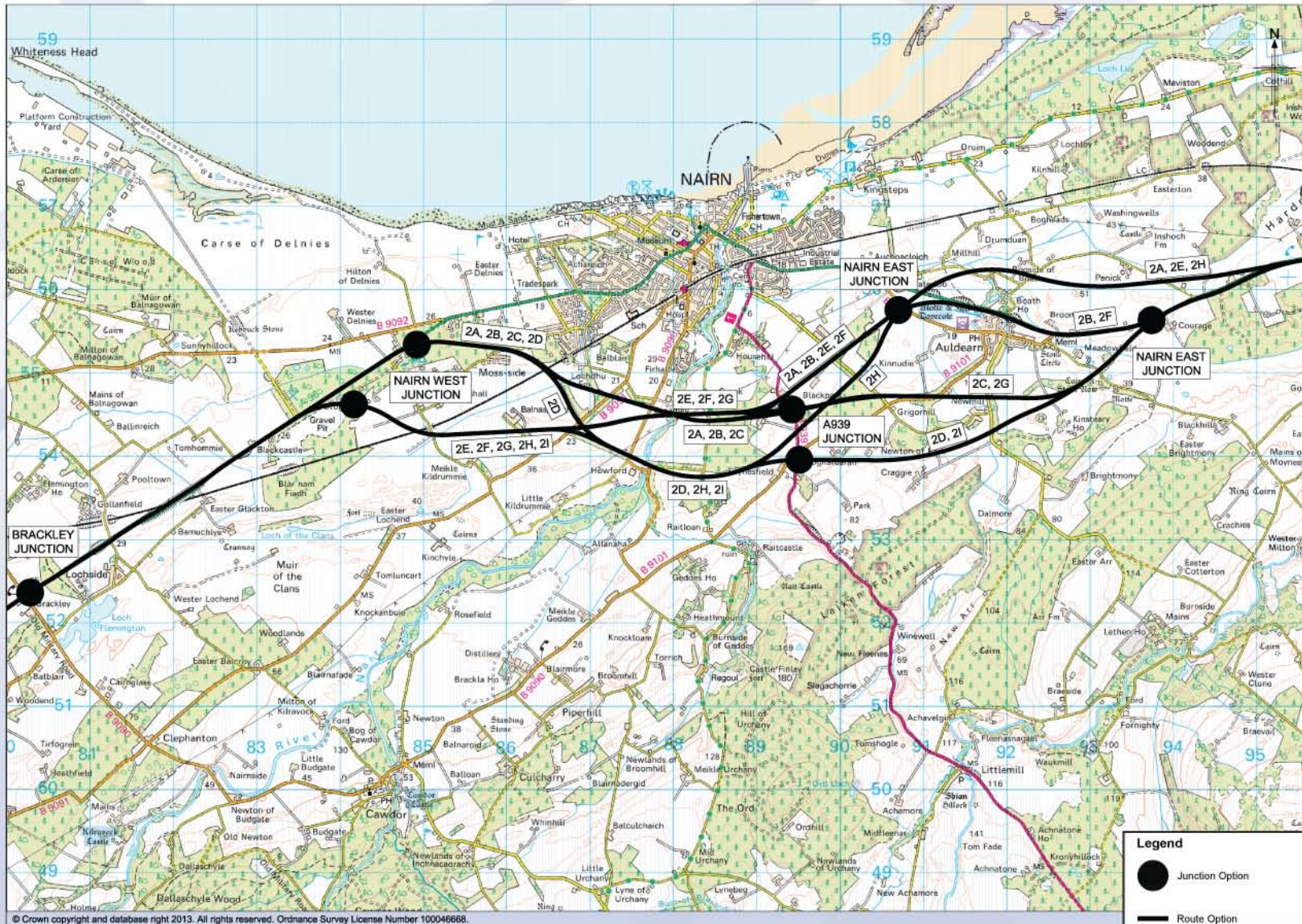


# Options ID and ID(MV)

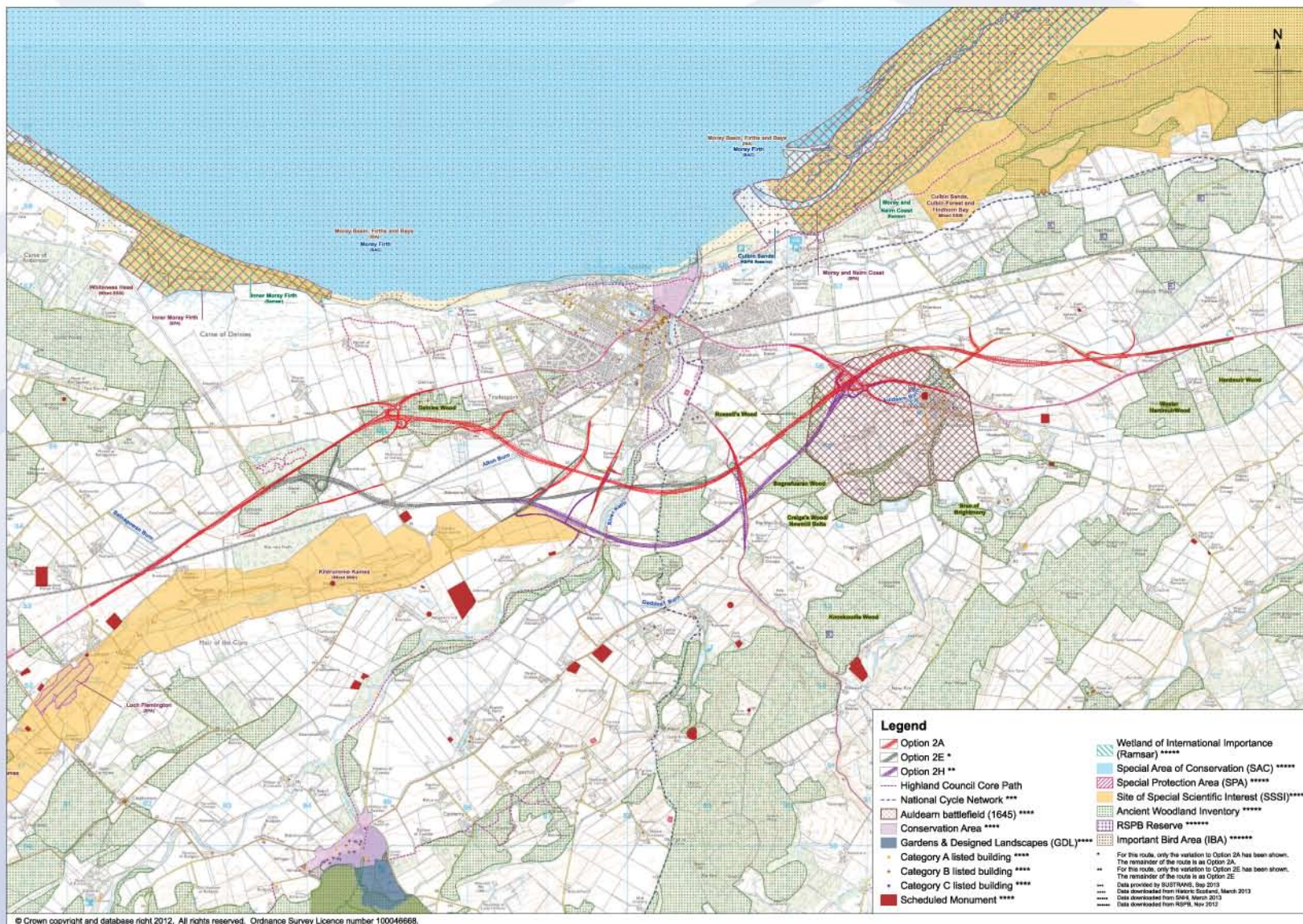




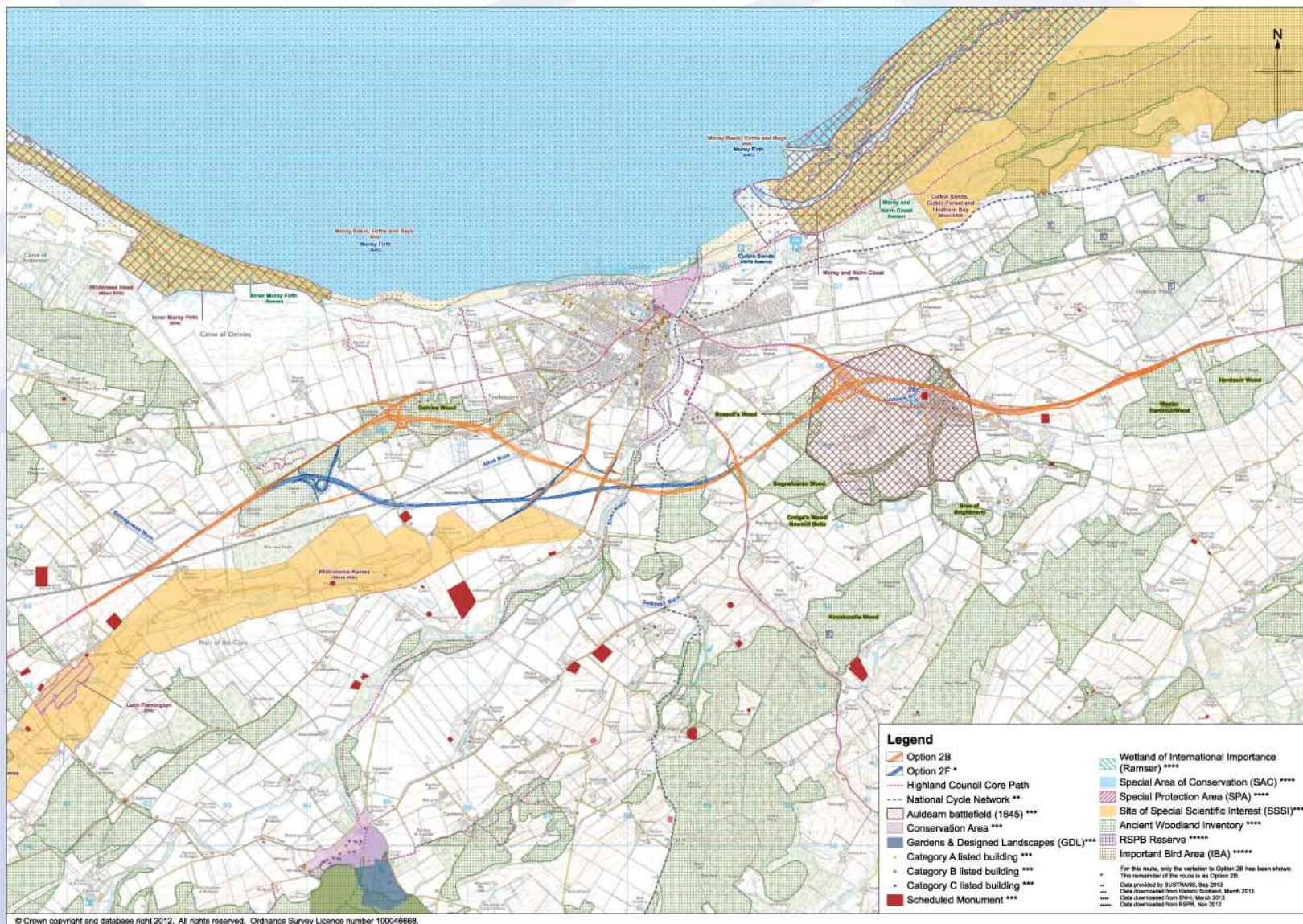
# Route options Nairn Bypass



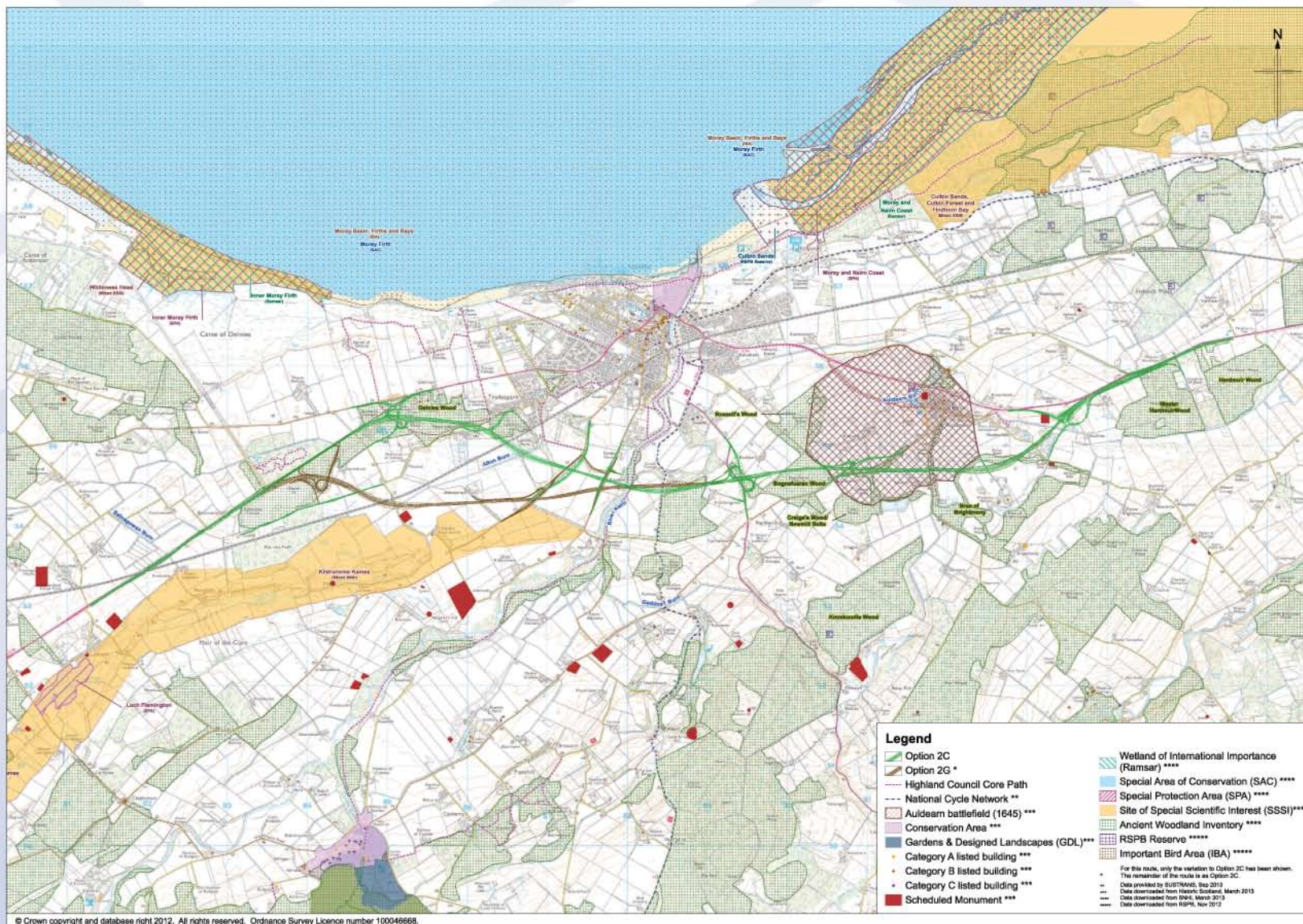
# Options 2A, 2E and 2H



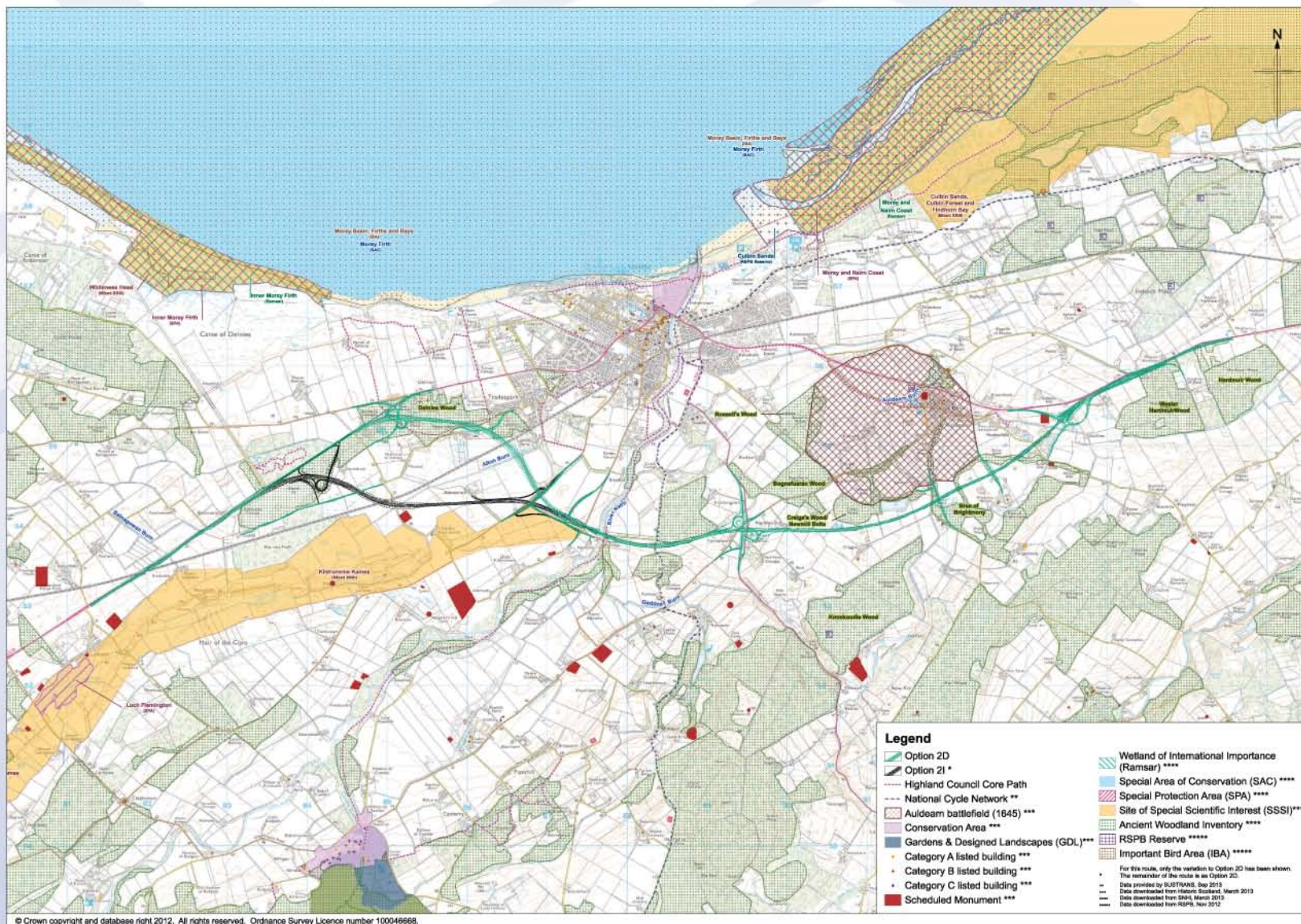
# Options 2B and 2F



# Options 2C and 2G



# Options 2D and 2I



# Environmental Assessment

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 2 (DMRB) Environmental Assessment is assessing the impact of the route options on:

**Baseline**

**Impact Assessment**

**Potential Mitigation**

**Summary and Residual Impacts**

**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** – landscape character and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors.

**Habitats and biodiversity** – e.g. designated sites, 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.

**Community and private assets (including agriculture)** – due to land-take and potential community severance.

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

**All travellers** – users of core paths, rights of way and the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 and impacts on vehicle travellers.

**Materials** – material resources and waste management.

**Water environment** – water quality, geomorphology and flood risk.



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# Environmental Assessment Inverness to Gollanfield



There are a number of emerging challenges to the environment that have been identified as part of the on-going assessment. Some of these are described below.

**Habitats and biodiversity** – all options have the potential to impact on designated sites and protected species (e.g. badgers, red squirrels, otters). **IA**, **IA(MV)**, **IB**, and **IB(MV)** may result in greater fragmentation and disturbance of supporting habitat for wintering birds. **IC** and **IC(MV)** are likely to result in the greatest loss of arable/grassland habitat, whilst **IB**, **IB(MV)**, **ID**, and **ID(MV)** will result in the greatest loss of woodland at Tornagrain Woods.

**Cultural heritage** – all options have the potential to impact on the setting of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. **IC**, **IC(MV)**, **ID**, and **ID(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. **IC(MV)** is expected to have the greatest impact on landscape. **IC**, **IC(MV)**, **ID**, and **ID(MV)** are expected to have the greatest impact on visual amenity.

**All travellers** – all options have the potential to impact on the core path network. **IC**, **IC(MV)**, **ID**, and **ID(MV)** are expected to impact on the largest number of core paths through increased journey length and reduced visual amenity.



# Environmental Assessment Nairn Bypass



There are a number of emerging challenges to the environment that have been identified as part of the on-going assessment. Some of these are described below.

**Habitats and biodiversity** – all options have the potential to impact on designated sites and protected species (e.g. badgers, bats, red squirrels, otters) through habitat loss and fragmentation and potential pollution. **2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H,** and **2I** are likely to have greater impact on the Kildrummie Kames SSSI.

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

**Landscape and visual** – all options have the potential to impact on landscape character and visual amenity. **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 NCN 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.





# Environmental Assessment

## key next steps

We will continue to progress the environmental assessment and liaise with the statutory bodies to gather additional baseline data and review potential impacts.

One of the main next steps in our assessment is to undertake the **air quality and noise assessments**. In doing this, we will use traffic flow data to assess the likely impact on air quality and noise at key sensitive receptors such as residential properties, schools and hospitals.



We will also undertake a review of the suitable **mitigation** measures to reduce the impacts on the environment. For example:

- appropriate construction management plans, taking account of the timing of works
- mammal underpasses, ledges and fences
- sustainable drainage systems
- landscape planting to reduce the impacts on the landscape, visual amenity and setting of cultural heritage assets
- compensatory flood storage
- habitat creation such as squirrel boxes, badger setts or planting of woodland
- noise barriers, bunds and double glazing to reduce noise at source; and limiting duration of construction noise.

# What happens next?

The route options presented in this exhibition are the subject of a full engineering, environmental and traffic and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 2 assessment – route option assessment).

**We invite your comments on these route options using the relevant feedback form. Please leave them in the comments box provided or email:**

[a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

**Or post your feedback form to us at:**

**A96 Dualling Team  
Transport Scotland  
Buchanan House  
58 Port Dundas Road  
Glasgow  
G4 0HF**

**by 31 January 2014**

Your feedback will be taken into account during the route option assessment process.

Transport Scotland is seeking to confirm a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014.



**A96**  
**DUALLING**  
INVERNESS TO NAIRN  
(incl. Nairn Bypass)

**For further information:**



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