TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

A96 DUALLING
EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN

A96 Dualling

East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Route options – design update
Public drop-in sessions

transport.gov.scot/projects/a96-dualling-inverness-to-aberdeen/a96-east-of-huntly-to-aberdeen

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Welcome

Transport Scotland has been progressing options assessment work for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme.

In October 2018, public exhibitions were held to seek feedback from stakeholders and local residents on the initial route options being developed.

The purpose of today's event is to provide you with an update of the work carried out since last October, giving further information on the design and assessment process and on the options being progressed through the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Assessment.

Transport Scotland is seeking vital feedback from local residents, road users and other stakeholders to help inform the ongoing design development work.

Representatives from Transport Scotland and its design consultants, AmeyArup, will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have.

Existing A96 at Blackhall roundabout

A leaflet summarising the exhibition content is available to take away. There is also a feedback form on which we would welcome your comments.

Further information can be found on the project website:
transport.gov.scot/projects/a96-dualling-inverness-to-aberdeen/a96-east-of-huntly-to-aberdeen

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Background

2011

The then Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment launched the 2011 Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) which provided an overview of the Scottish Government's plans for infrastructure investment over the coming decades. The document contains a commitment to complete the dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities.

Dualling the A96 will help tackle congestion in towns along the route, reduce journey times, improve journey time reliability and improve road safety for all those who use this important transport connection.

2013

In May 2013, the then Minister for Transport and Veterans set out how the A96 Dualling Programme would be progressed over the coming years. The outline strategy identified a series of initial packages of design and assessment work to be developed over the next few years with the objective of completing full dualling between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. These packages of work included Preliminary Engineering Services (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 Assessment) and Strategic Environmental Assessment work along the A96 between east of Nairn and Aberdeen.

2015

Transport Scotland presented the outcome of the Preliminary Engineering and Strategic Environmental Assessment work along the route between east of Nairn and Aberdeen in May 2015 at a series of public information exhibitions along the A96 corridor between Forres and Aberdeen. Based on the outcome of the preliminary work, the next stage of design was taken forward based on Western (46km), Central (31km) and Eastern (42km) Sections, starting with the Western Section (Hardmuir to Fochabers) in 2016 and followed by the Eastern Section (East of Huntly to Aberdeen) in 2017.

2017

In August 2017, Transport Scotland appointed the AmeyArup Joint Venture team to progress the design and assessment of the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme. A series of "Meet the Team" events were held in November 2017 to give the local community an early opportunity to discuss the scheme with the team.

2018

Following on from the "Meet the Team" events, AmeyArup commenced the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment and following initial options assessment, these options were presented at a series of public information exhibitions held at Inverurie, Huntly and Blackburn in October 2018.

2019

The feedback received from the October exhibitions is being taken into account as part of the ongoing design and assessment process.

To assist the delivery of the design and assessment process associated with the A96 Dualling Programme, Transport Scotland has sub-divided the route into sections.

A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen Programme

The **A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme** will provide dual carriageway from the tie-in with the existing A96, east of Huntly, to the A96 junction with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), a distance of **42km (26 miles)**.

*The **Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme** also forms part of the A96 Dualling Programme and is at a more advanced stage of development relative to the Western, Central and Eastern sections.

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Scheme assessment process

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

The preparation and development of trunk road projects follows the project assessment process set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

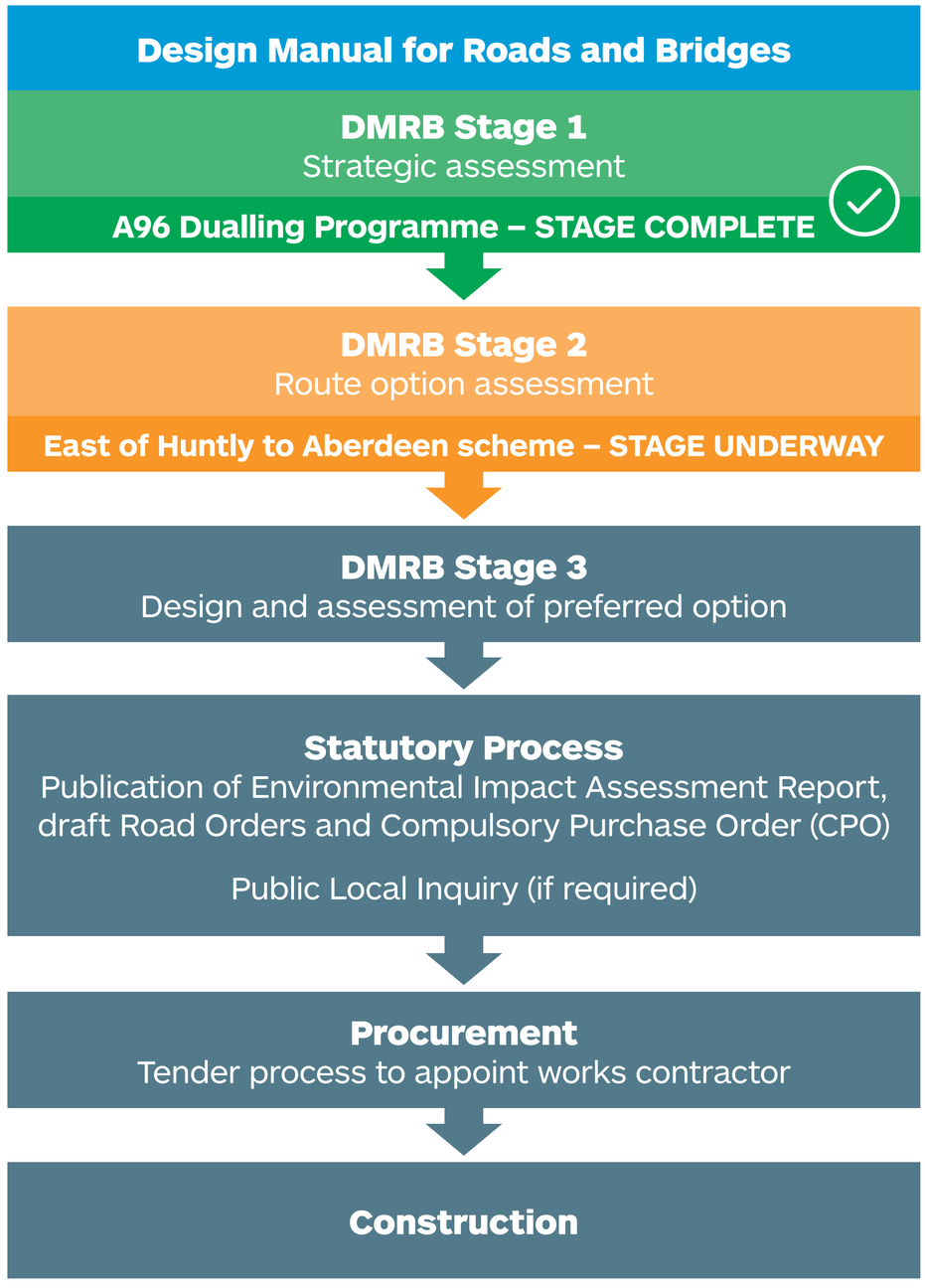
This three-stage assessment process covers engineering, environment, traffic and economic considerations.

To support the design development, Transport Scotland consults with stakeholders, landowners, local communities and other interested parties such as heritage and environmental groups, as well as Non-Motorised User (NMU) groups such as pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists.

The DMRB Stage 2 Assessment is now well underway for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme.

The route options that are available for you to view here have been further developed, following the October 2018 public exhibitions.

We aim to complete the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment and announce a preferred option by the end of 2019.



A96 DUALLING
EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Scheme objectives

The design and assessment process considers the performance of route options against the scheme objectives. Performance is also assessed against the Scottish Government's five appraisal criteria, namely: environment, safety, economy, integration and accessibility and social inclusion.

The following objectives have been developed for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme.

- **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 and strategic journeys
  - Improved network resilience
- **To improve safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) through:**
  - Reduced accident rates and severity
  - Reduced driver stress
  - Reduced potential conflicts between motorised and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs)
- **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 avoid significant environmental impacts and, where this is not possible, to minimise the environmental effect on:**
  - The communities and people in the corridor
  - Natural and cultural heritage assets.

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Option development and assessment

The route options on display today have been developed from the initial route options that were presented in October 2018.

All decisions regarding the route selection process have been carried out whilst taking into account engineering, traffic, economic and environmental factors, as well as the important feedback received from stakeholders and members of the public.

We have highlighted seven areas on the plan where sections have been subject to alterations and explained the reasoning for this. Dashed lines represent sections that have been superseded since the previous exhibitions were held in October 2018.

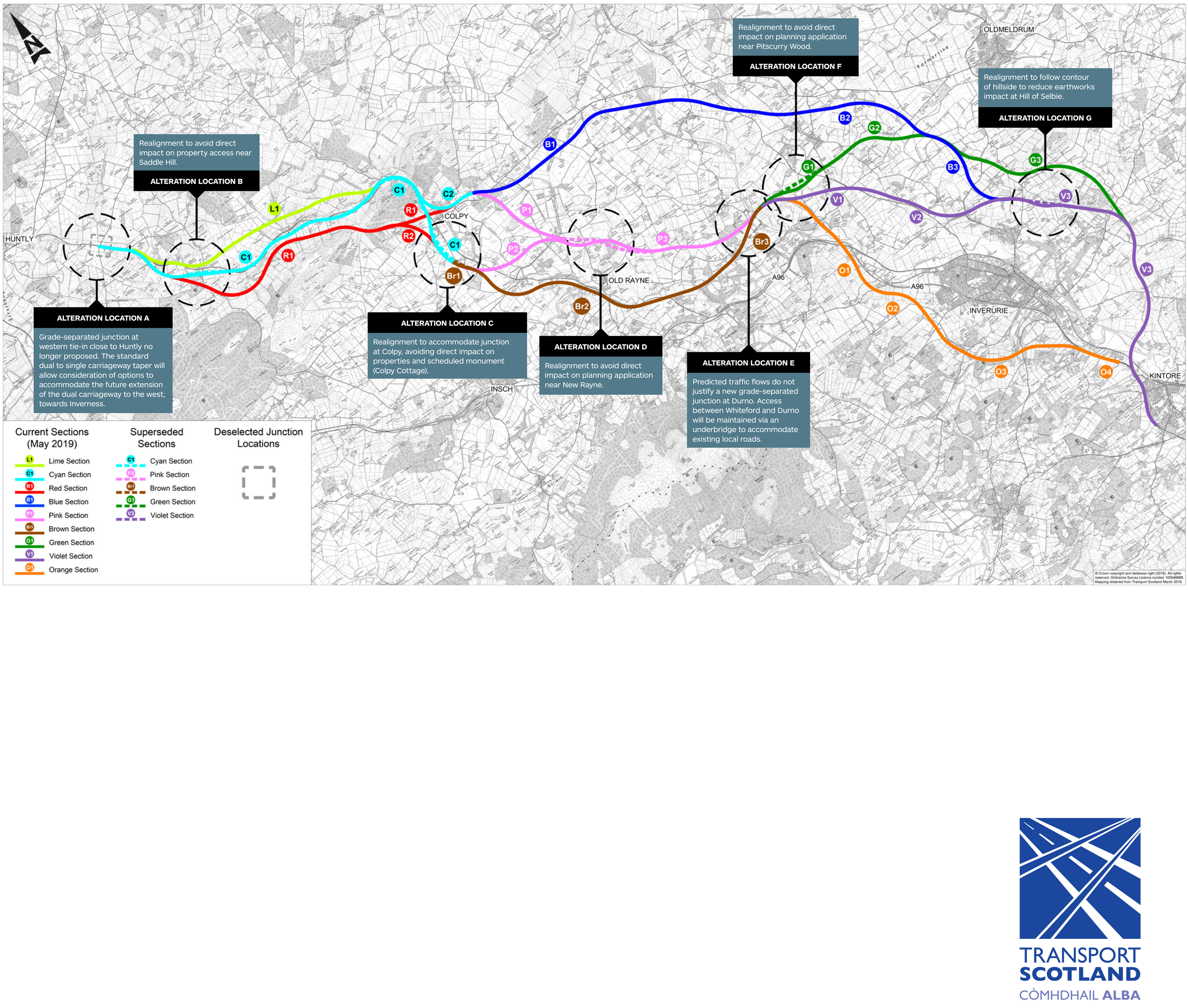
Initial route options exhibitions **(October 2018)**

Develop and amend options following stakeholder and public feedback

Undertake multi-disciplinary pairing assessments to reduce number of options

Design update exhibitions on remaining options **(May 2019)**

Preferred option exhibitions **(end of 2019)**



A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Deselected options plan

The next stage focussed on how to reduce the number of options that we are considering. This led to multi-disciplinary comparative assessments being carried out, comparing two options at a time, where they perform the same function. In each case, the better performing option was identified, and the poorer performing option was deselected.

The following sections from the initial route options presented in October 2018 were therefore deselected from further consideration:

Lime Section L1
Cyan Section C2 and Red Section R1 (part)
Pink Section P1
Blue Sections B1, B2 and B3
Green Sections G1, G2 and G3

These deselected sections are illustrated on this plan in dashed lines. The remaining sections are shown as solid lines.

Comparative Assessment between **Blue** and **Pink** – **BLUE deselected**

- **Pink** performed better due to having fewer structures and less impact on flooding and drainage than **Blue**
- **Pink** performed better than **Blue** due to a lesser impact on ecologically and culturally designated sites, such as stone circles at Loanhead and Newcraig
- **Pink** performed better due to it attracting more traffic from the existing A96.

Comparative Assessment between **Green** and **Violet** – **GREEN deselected**

- **Violet** performed better due to **Green** requiring more difficult earthworks, structures and drainage; and greater construction cost
- No clear environmental preference
- **Violet** performed better due to it attracting higher traffic flows and providing better value for money than **Green**.

Comparative Assessment between **Cyan** and **Lime** – **LIME deselected**

- **Cyan** performed better due to **Lime** requiring a difficult viaduct crossing of Glen Water and having a greater construction cost
- No clear environmental preference
- **Cyan** provided better value for money.

Comparative Assessment between **Pink 1** and **Pink 2** – **PINK 1 deselected**

- **Pink 2** performed better due to **Pink 1** requiring a long, complex viaduct crossing of the River Urie; its impact on overhead electric transmission lines; and its greater construction cost
- **Pink 2** performed better due to negative impacts of **Pink 1** on Snipefield Wood; impacts on the setting of a Category A listed building and scheduled monument; and significant interactions with watercourses and ecology
- **Pink 2** performed better due to junction connections with the existing A96 attracting more traffic; less severance between the communities of Colpy and Kirkton of Culsalmond with resulting benefits for Non-Motorised Users; and providing better value for money.

DAVIOT JUNCTION
URYSIDE JUNCTION
LAWRENCE ROAD JUNCTION
COLPY JUNCTION
KELLOCKBANK JUNCTION
CARDEN JUNCTION
DRIMMIES JUNCTION
BLACKHALL ROAD JUNCTION
THAINSTONE JUNCTION
TAVELTY JUNCTION

Indicative Grade-Separated Junction Locations

Current Sections (May 2019)

- C1 Cyan Section
- R1 Red Section
- P1 Pink Section
- Br1 Brown Section
- V1 Violet Section
- O1 Orange Section

Deselected Grade-Separated Junction Locations

Deselected Sections

- L1 Lime Section
- C2 Cyan Section
- R2 Red Section
- B1 Blue Section
- G1 Green Section
- P1 Pink Section

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Updated route options on display

About the plans:

- The following plans show the remaining route options and their constituent coloured sections. The preferred option will comprise of a combination of the remaining sections, forming a continuous dual carriageway between the east of Huntly and Aberdeen.
- The route options plan shows indicative grade-separated junction locations with a black square. Further junction details for the options are provided on the engineering layout plan which follows.

Further design and development work on route options has included:

- Consideration of vital feedback received from stakeholders, local residents and road users following previous consultations and public events
- Environmental walk-over surveys
- Traffic modelling to determine junction locations
- Preliminary earthworks and drainage design
- Initial flood risk assessment
- Access arrangements for properties affected by the remaining route options
- Consideration of Non-Motorised Users' requirements
- Consideration of safety during construction and operation.

Based on current information, no property demolition is required for any of the remaining route options. The exact positioning of the route options will be subject to further development and assessment as the scheme progresses.

A96 DUALLING
EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Route options strip plan map

Engineering layout plan

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Environmental assessment

A comparative assessment of the environmental impacts of each route option, during construction and operation will be carried out as part of the DMRB Stage 2 work.

This assessment will cover the topics of land use, geology, contaminated land and groundwater, the water environment, ecology, landscape, visual impact, cultural heritage, air quality, noise and vibration, pedestrians and Non-Motorised Users, vehicle travellers, disruption due to construction, policies and plans and the cumulative impacts of all of these. All relevant planning policy at national, regional and local levels is considered.

It will identify and comparatively appraise potential impacts of each route option for each topic area, and where appropriate, outline mitigation measures will be suggested. This work will be further developed during DMRB Stage 3 Assessment once a preferred option is selected.

The route options aim to avoid or minimise impacts upon the following environmental receptors:

- **Archaeology and cultural heritage –** Williamston House, Newton House and Keith Hall Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL), Harlaw Historic Battlefield, Scheduled Monuments, and Category A Listed Buildings
- **Communities –** avoidance of current or future settlement boundaries, minimising severance of communities from their facilities, and reducing potential for noise and air quality impacts upon communities
- **Nature conservation –** Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) such as Pitscurry Moss and areas of ancient woodland
- **Landscape –** areas of highest landscape sensitivity.

A96 DUALLING
EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

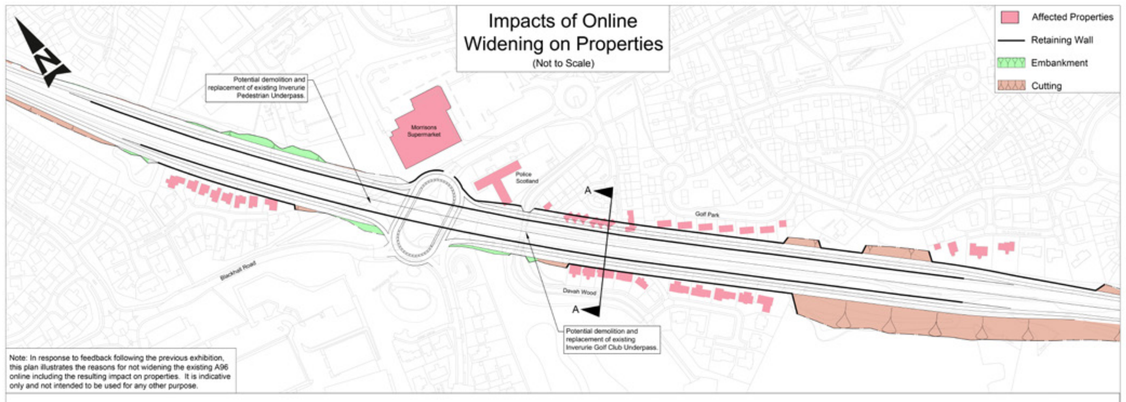
Why is the existing A96 not being widened?

In response to feedback received following the previous public exhibition, this panel provides further explanation of the reasons for not widening the existing A96.

The widening of the existing A96 carriageway was investigated as part of the early assessment work. This work determined that the existing A96 single carriageway is constrained at several locations by the standard of the existing road geometry, by a high number of roadside properties and by a high density of existing junctions and accesses.

This limits the opportunity for an online dual carriageway upgrade of the existing route. Online construction is also more disruptive to the road user and the local community.

It was concluded that it is generally more suitable to develop the new dual carriageway offline from the existing road, with the existing A96 retained for use as part of the local road network. This also helps to meet one of the scheme objectives to reduce the potential conflicts between local and strategic traffic journeys.



The existing A96 Inverurie Bypass

Online widening of the existing A96 between Inveramsay Bridge and Inverurie Roundabout (approximately 6.6 kilometres) was assessed against the scheme objectives and was found to perform poorly against the environmental and engineering criteria for the following reasons:

- An online dual carriageway and associated grade-separated junction would unavoidably encroach into and permanently impact on adjacent residential and commercial properties, requiring demolition in some cases
- There would be visual and noise impacts on a high number of receptors, including residents living and working in properties adjacent to the road, during construction and operation. There will be additional effects on receptors within Inverurie that would be impacted upon by construction traffic routing through the town
- Local roads in Inverurie currently suffer from peak hour delay and congestion. A dual carriageway located along the existing A96 is considered not to offer the benefits that an offline option would in terms of improving the traffic conditions within Inverurie itself
- Dualling the Inverurie Bypass in such a constrained corridor will be extremely challenging and will require major traffic disruption during construction, together with the associated impacts this will have on the community.

Therefore, as already confirmed in the October 2018 public exhibitions, an online dual carriageway upgrade of the A96 through Inverurie is not being considered further as part of the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment.

Note: In response to feedback following the previous exhibition, this plan illustrates the reasons for not widening the existing A96 online including the resulting impact on properties. It is indicative only and not intended to be used for any other purpose.

"Why is the existing A96 through Inverurie not being widened?"

The Impacts

Scale 1:10000

Access and Severance Issues
Direct access to properties from a new high quality dual carriageway should be avoided where possible. New access roads are therefore likely to be required in addition to the dual carriageway causing further impacts.

Visual, Noise and Air Issues
Where properties are not directly affected by the construction of the new dual carriageway, visual, noise and air impacts are significant as a result of existing landscaping being removed and closeness of the trunk road.

Traffic Issues
There are minimal benefits for Inverurie traffic in widening the existing A96.

Constructability Issues
Constructing a dual carriageway with a grade-separated junction in such a constrained corridor would be challenging, with associated health, safety and cost implications. It may also require the lengthy diversion of trunk road traffic through the town with the associated impacts this will have on the community.

Existing Inveramsay Rail Bridge

Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line

Cairn Wynd and Bruntwood Tap
Approximately 30-35 metre width available between property boundaries. Tightly constrained with impact on adjacent properties.

Grade-separated junction at Drimmies required.

Approximately 40-45 metre width available between property boundaries. Tightly constrained with impact on adjacent properties.

Potential demolition and replacement of Drimmies Farm Cattle underpass.

Potential demolition and replacement of Conglass Cattle underpass required.

Blackhall Roundabout Area

Demolition and replacement of Upperboat overbridge required.

See enlarged Plan and Cross Section

A grade-separated junction at Blackhall to accommodate Inverurie traffic. Dual carriageway elevated over existing roads and slip roads would require long retaining structures.
(See Plan and Cross Section for details.)

Port Elphinstone
Approximately 35-40 metre width available between property boundaries. Tightly constrained with impacts on adjacent properties.

Grade-separated junction at Inverurie Roundabout required.

Maintain existing Don Crossing for eastbound carriageway. New structure required south of existing Don Crossing for westbound carriageway over River Don.

B9001

B9170

B993

River Urie

River Don

Legend

- Impact or Physical Constraint
- Structure / Retaining Wall
- Cut Slope
- Embankment

A96 DUALLING
EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
COMHDHAIL ALBA

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Non-Motorised User (NMU) provision

Facilitating active travel is one of the objectives of the A96 Dualling Programme. This scheme will seek to improve active travel in the area by providing NMU facilities, which will be segregated from the new dual carriageway wherever possible.

To help understand NMU needs:

- Transport Scotland has established an NMU Forum with national, regional and local interest groups to provide updates on emerging proposals and to seek input and feedback.
- Information has been gathered on the existing and aspirational core paths, cycle and equestrian routes where they could potentially be impacted on by the proposed scheme.
- A series of surveys have been carried out to understand how well these routes are being used.
- An initial assessment to identify opportunities for active travel provision such as where existing NMU facilities could be enhanced by the proposed scheme has been progressed.

Detailed proposals for NMU provision will be developed during the **DMRB Stage 3 Assessment**. Further consultation with the local community, access groups and other interested parties will be carried out as design development progresses.

Cyclist on the A96 west of Inverurie at Drimmies

Cyclists negotiating Blackhall roundabout at Inverurie

What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its design consultants, AmeyArup, will continue to progress the development and assessment of route options for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme.

Detailed assessments of options that consist of a combination of the remaining coloured elements shown on the plans will be carried out to select a preferred option.

These assessments will take into account:

- **Engineering aspects including health and safety**
- **Traffic operation**
- **Economic performance**
- **Environmental impacts.**

Preferred option

Transport Scotland aims to confirm a preferred option for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme by the end of 2019. Further public exhibitions will be held when the preferred option is announced to provide an opportunity for comments and feedback from stakeholders, local communities and members of the public.

Exhibition events held in October 2018

View of the existing A96 at Glens of Foudland

A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Comments and feedback

Transport Scotland welcomes your comments and feedback. Please take time to consider the information presented here today and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by:

12 July 2019


A96 Dualling
East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme
Route options – design update
Public drop-in sessions
Feedback form

Introduction

Your details (optional)

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

I agree to Transport Scotland contacting me with updates about the scheme. (tick box)

PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THIS FORM TO RECORD YOUR COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK

Comments can be made on the feedback forms provided and placed in the feedback box at today's event or sent by email or post.

Please email your comments to:
a96dualling@transport.gov.scot

Or by post to:
A96 Dualling Team, Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

Feedback forms are also available on the Transport Scotland website. Should you have any specific accessibility requirements, this leaflet and the exhibition panels presented here can be made available on request in an appropriate format by contacting the project team.

For further information on the wider A96 Dualling Programme, please visit the Transport Scotland website at:
transport.gov.scot/a96dualling

Contact details

Should you wish to contact **AmeyArup**, details for the stakeholder team are:

Stakeholder Coordinator:
Bonny Pailing Tel: **01467 672516**
Email: **bonny.pailing@arup.com**

Landowner and Communities Manager:
Billy Gordon Tel: **01467 672516**
Email: **billy.gordon@amey.co.uk**

By post: **AmeyArup, Offices 5&6, Thainstone Business Centre, Thainstone, Inverurie AB51 5TB**

All of the information presented at today's exhibition is available on the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme website:
transport.gov.scot/projects/a96-dualling-inverness-to-aberdeen/a96-east-of-huntly-to-aberdeen

Transport Scotland will consider your comments and feedback during further design development and assessment of the scheme, and all submissions will be shared with its consultants. It may also use your submission to inform future reports or public documents related to this scheme.

If you choose to provide contact details with your submission, Transport Scotland will be able to send you updates about the scheme, for example invitations to future public engagement events. If you wish us to do so, please provide your consent when contacting the agency. You can withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the project team.

The provision of contact details is optional and your comments will still be considered if provided anonymously. However, Transport Scotland will be unable to respond to you directly if you choose not to provide these details.