



TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

A96
DUALLING
HARDMUIR TO FOCHABERS

A96 Dualling

Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme

Design update drop-in sessions

transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers

Welcome

As part of the Scottish Government's ambitious A96 Dualling Programme, Transport Scotland has been taking forward option assessment and detailed design work for the **46km A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme**.

As part of our rolling programme of public engagement, consultation events have been held throughout the options assessment process. In **December 2018**, the preferred option for the scheme was published and exhibitions were held to seek feedback on the scheme from members of the local community.

The purpose of today's drop-in session is to show design updates which have been made following further design development and consideration of feedback received since the announcement of the preferred option. We also present the developing proposals for active travel facilities.

Transport Scotland staff and their consultants, **Mott MacDonald Sweco**, will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have.

Mott MacDonald
Sweco



A96 at Brodie looking west

 A summary overview leaflet is available for you to take away. There is also a feedback form where we would welcome your feedback and comments.

Further information can be found on the project website:

transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers

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.

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 development 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.

2016

In June 2016, Transport Scotland appointed [Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture](#) to progress the design and assessment of the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme (the Western section). A series of [“Meet the Team”](#) events were held in October 2016.

2017

Since being appointed, Mott MacDonald Sweco has progressed the [DMRB Stage 2 Assessment](#). Following initial options assessment, route options were presented at a series of [public information exhibitions](#) held at Elgin, Forres and Fochabers in June 2017.

2018

[Public drop-in sessions](#) were held in February and March 2018, providing a route options design update. A further [design update](#) was provided in August 2018, highlighting de-selected options, providing information on further design development, and displaying the shortlisted options that remained for assessment. Following this, the [preferred option](#) was announced in December 2018 and presented at a series of [public information exhibitions](#).



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 assessment process set out in the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\)](#).

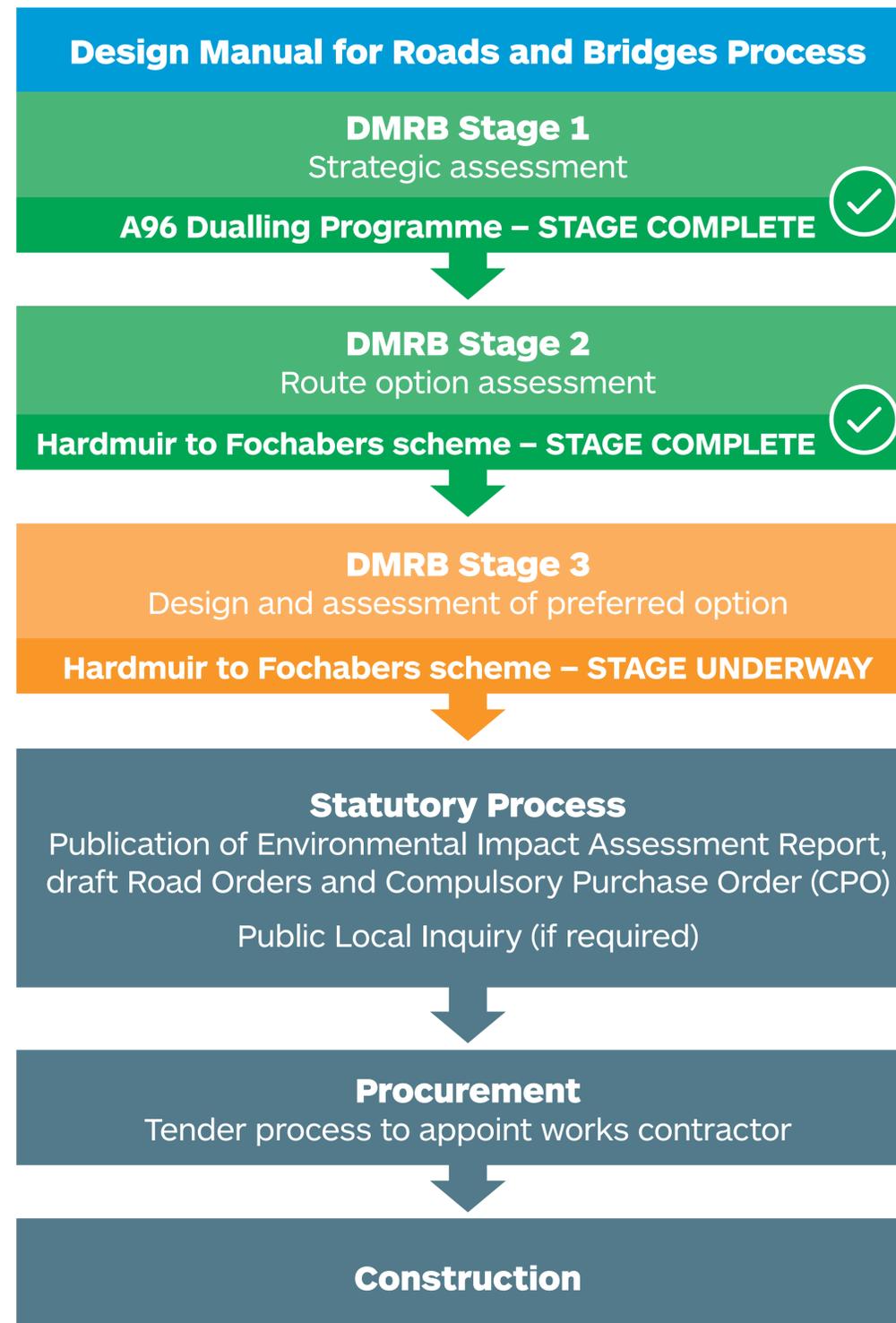
This is a three-stage assessment process that covers [engineering](#), [environmental](#), [traffic and economic considerations](#).

Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults with a diverse range of stakeholders, local communities and interested parties, including heritage, environmental and Non-Motorised User (NMU) groups such as pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

The [DMRB Stage 1 Assessment](#) of the A96 Dualling Programme was completed in 2015 and the [DMRB Stage 2 Assessment](#) for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme is now complete.

The [preferred option](#) was announced for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme in December 2018 and is now being developed and assessed in further detail as part of the next stage of development, the [DMRB Stage 3 Assessment](#).

The DMRB Stage 3 Design and Assessment process is currently underway.



Scheme objectives

The assessment process takes 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 and strategic journeys
- To improve safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) 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 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.

Scheme update

Since announcing the preferred option, we have been further developing the scheme using public feedback to inform more design and assessment work.

Design development has included refinement of the dual carriageway alignment, the layout of grade-separated junctions and consideration of local access.

Emerging proposals for **active travel facilities** for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) such as pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians have been developed, including the provision of over 40 kilometres of shared-use path facilities.

The following additional considerations have also contributed to the development of the scheme design:

- Consideration of local alignment changes to minimise environmental and land-use impacts
- Development of the road drainage design, including pollution control measures such as drainage ponds
- Further development of the side roads and private accesses to provide suitable local connections.



Existing A96 route approaching River Spey looking east

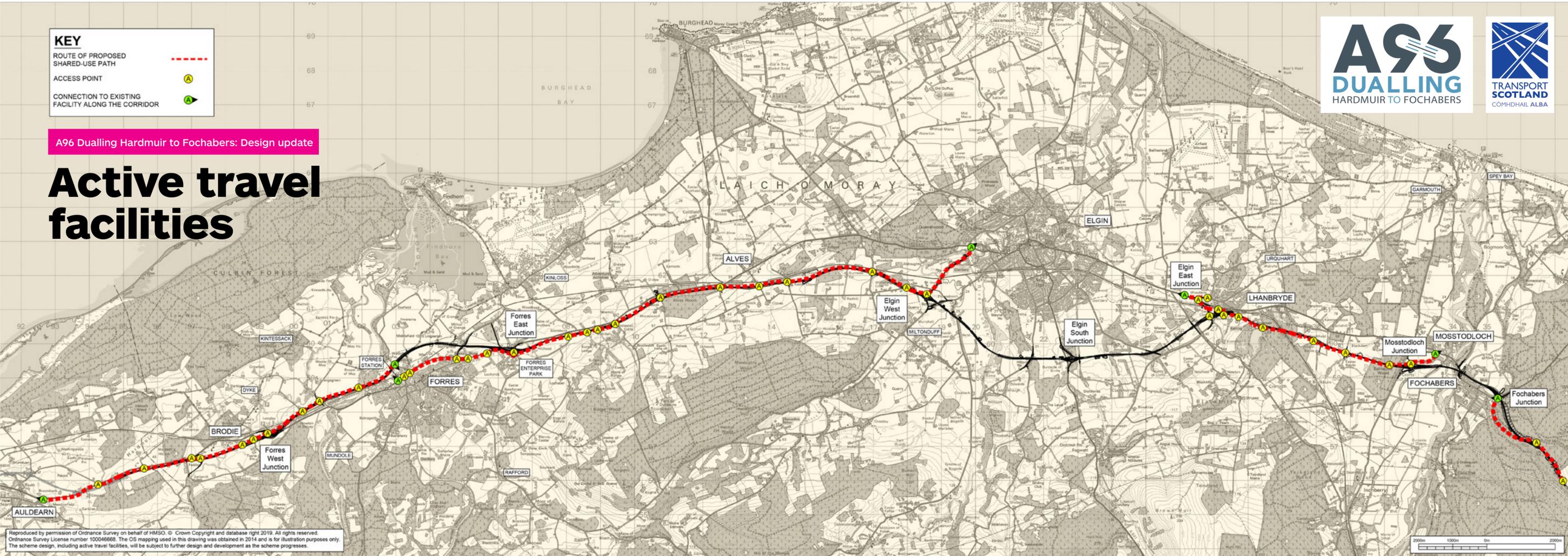
i The following panels include details of the design development work that has taken place to date, including the emerging active travel facilities. The design will continue to be developed further. In particular, environmental mitigation will be added to the scheme design.

KEY

- ROUTE OF PROPOSED SHARED-USE PATH
- ACCESS POINT
- CONNECTION TO EXISTING FACILITY ALONG THE CORRIDOR

A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers: Design update

Active travel facilities



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Design objectives

The scheme design objectives for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs), e.g. pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, have been developed so that we consider their specific needs within the extent of the scheme. These are to:

- Improve connectivity between the communities along the new corridor
- Maintain connectivity between communities separated by the new corridor.

The shared-use path proposals seek to address the overall scheme objective of facilitating active travel.

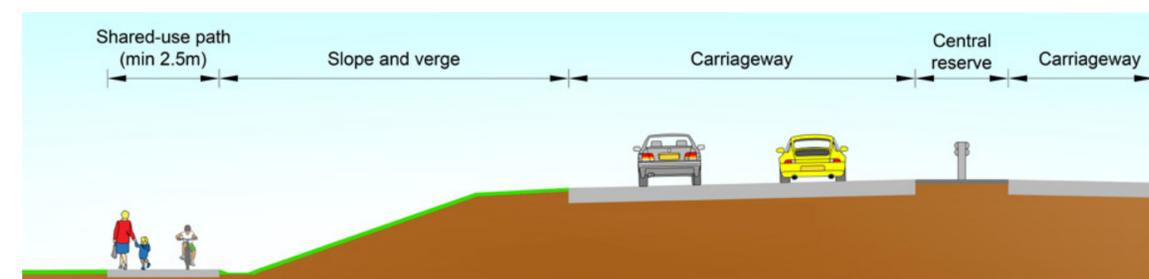
Emerging proposed facilities

The scheme design incorporates over 40 kilometres of shared-use path facilities. These will be constructed as part of the scheme to connect the following communities:

- **Auldearn**
- **Brodie**
- **Forres**
- **Alves**
- **Elgin**
- **Lhanbryde**
- **Mosstodloch/ Fochabers.**

The proposed path will be located mainly in the new road corridor and will integrate with other existing NMu facilities such as the National Cycle Network (NCN). Where local roads will be bridged to cross the new dual carriageway, the bridges will be designed to incorporate localised shared-use paths, in order to maintain local connections.

Illustrative cross-section showing shared-use path (dual carriageway on embankment)



Illustrative cross-section showing shared-use path (dual carriageway in cutting)



Please note the cross-sections above are for illustrative purposes and the active travel facilities will continue to be developed further. Other example cross-sections are available to view for further information – just speak to a member of the team.

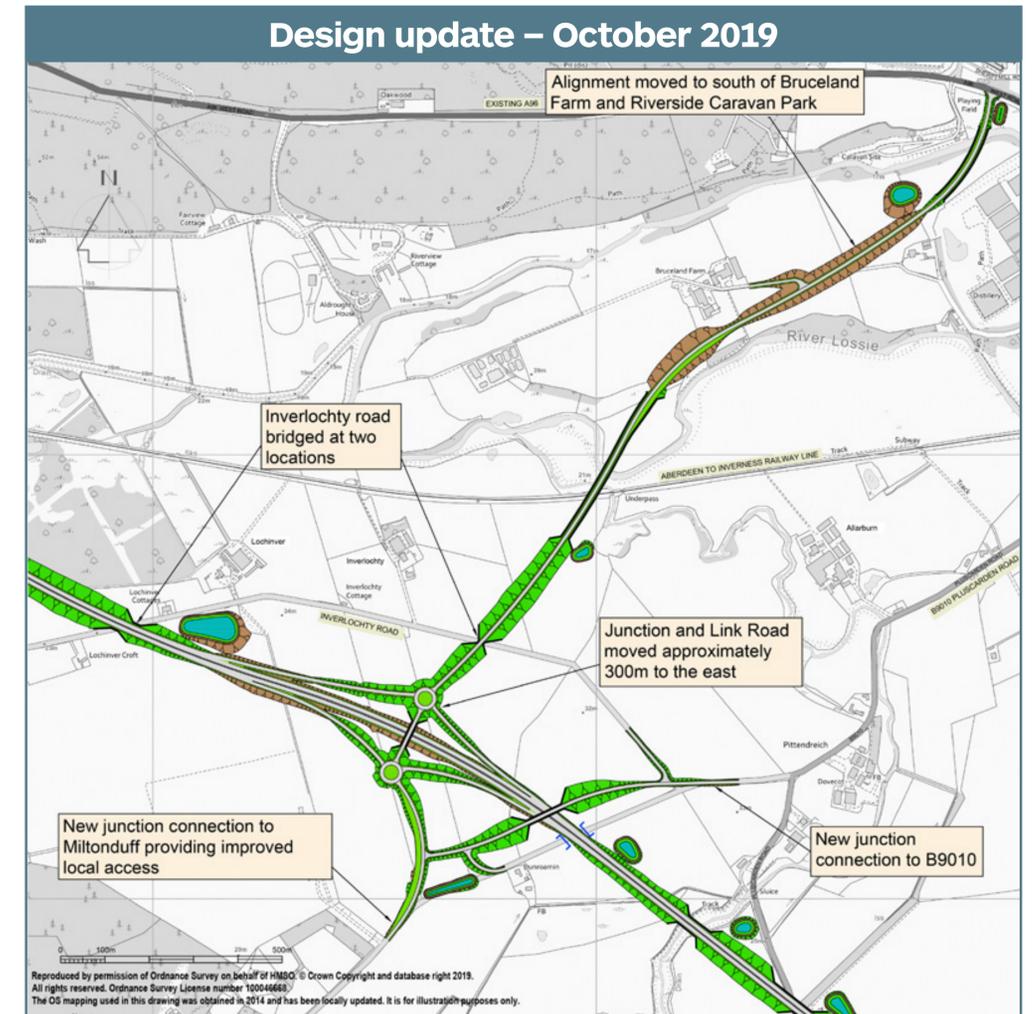
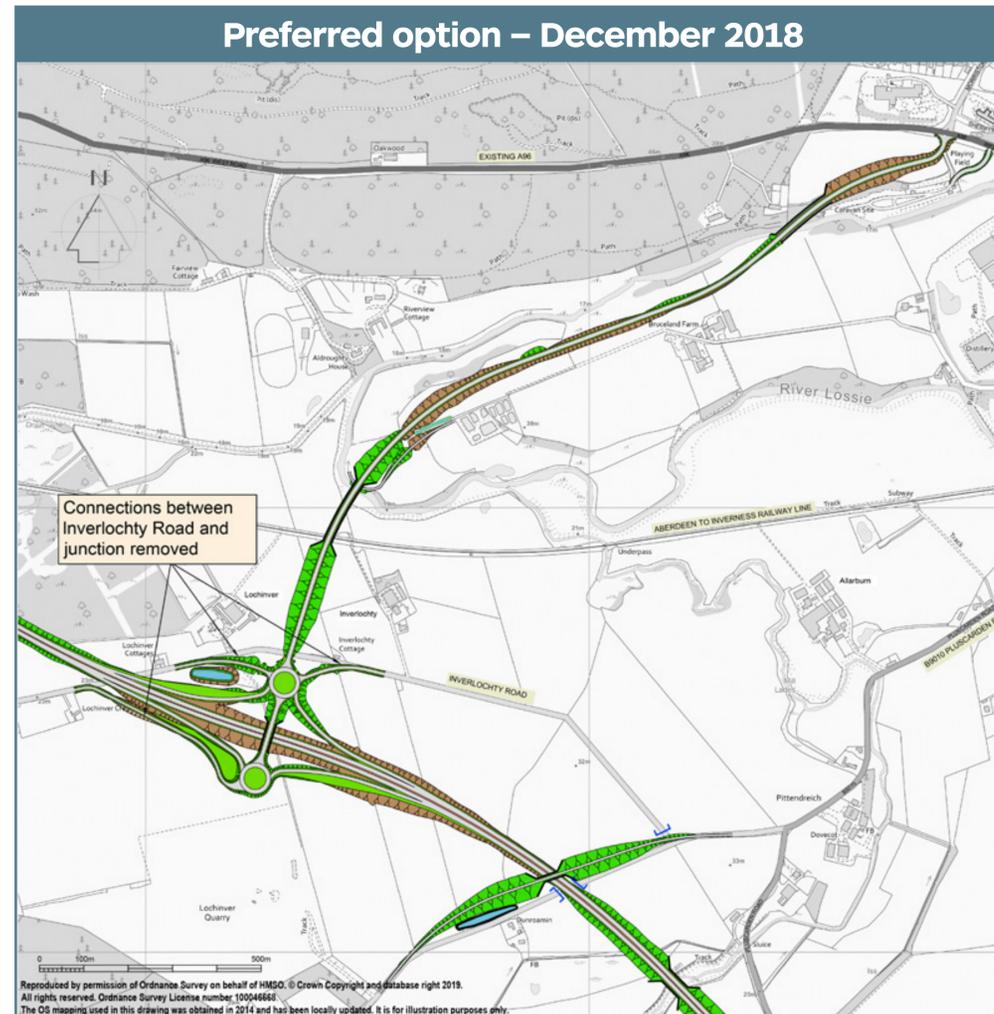
**Strip plan map
(4550mm x 1000mm)**

Elgin West Junction and link road

Layout changes

The layout of Elgin West Junction and link road has been developed with the following proposed changes:

- Junction and link road moved approximately 300 metres to the east
- New junction connection to Miltonduff and B9010 Pluscarden Road
- Connections between Inverlochty Road and junction removed. Local access maintained with introduction of two bridges.



OVERVIEW: The updated design has improved local connections, reduced agricultural land loss, resulting in less farm fragmentation, significantly reduces effects on residential visual receptors, the grade-separated junction location fits better within the landform and provides greater value-for-money.

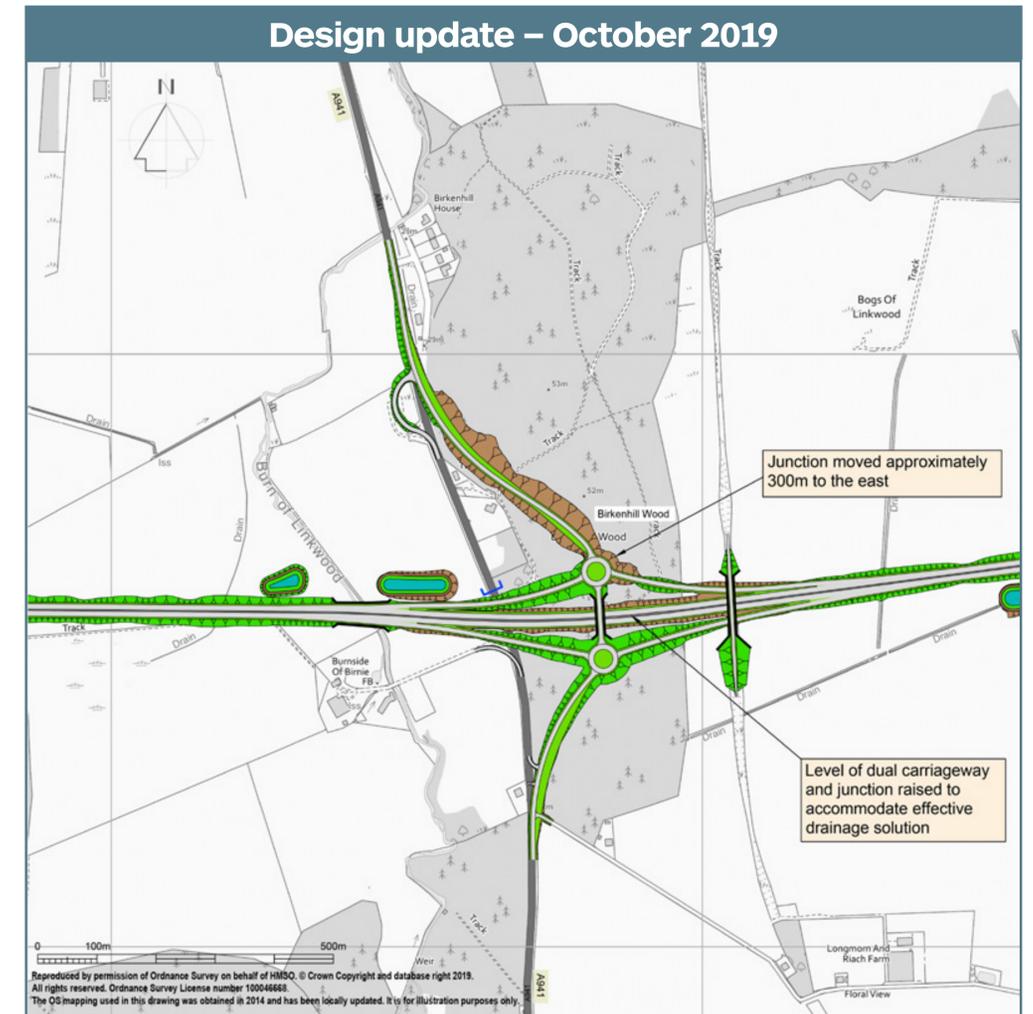
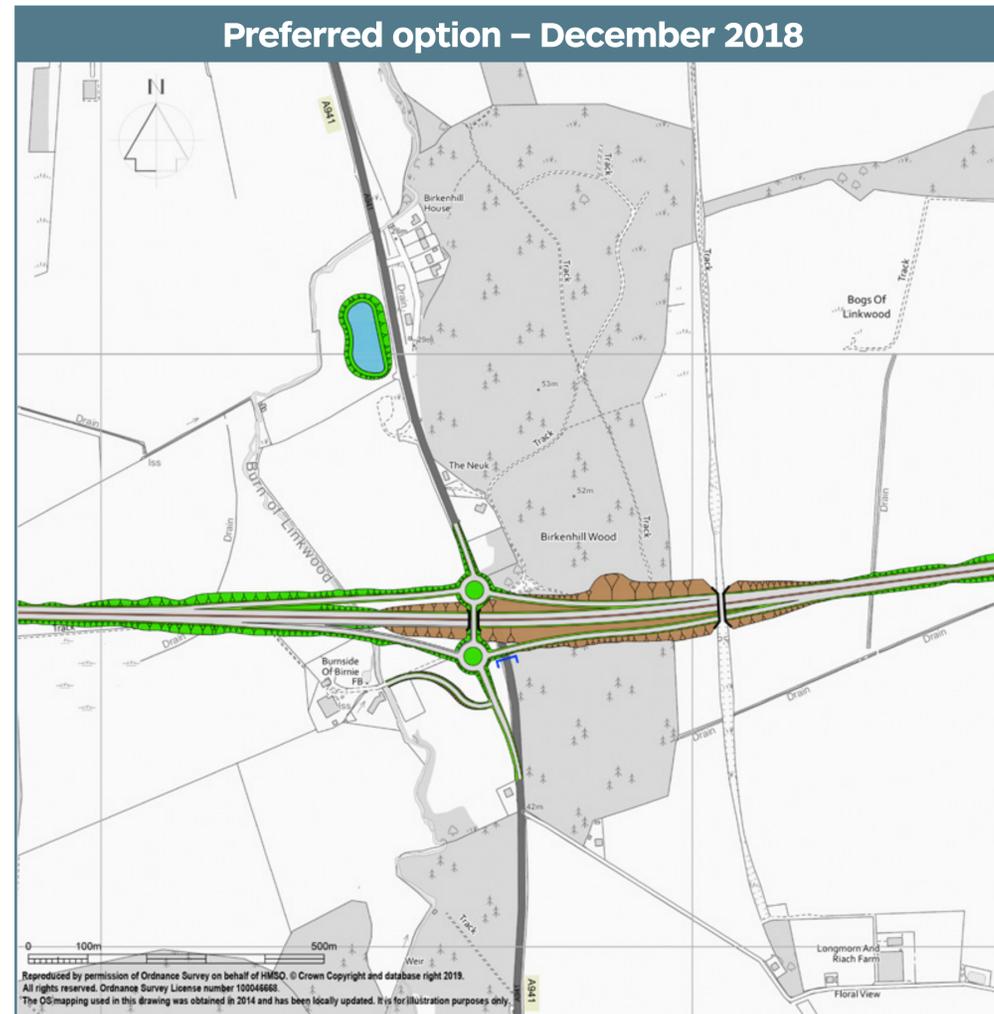
KEY	
CUTTING	
EMBANKMENT	
INDICATIVE ROAD DRAINAGE BASIN/POND	
STRUCTURE	
EXISTING ROAD TO BE STOPPED UP	

Elgin South Junction

Layout changes

The layout of Elgin South Junction has been developed with the following proposed changes:

- Junction moved approximately 300 metres to the east into Birkenhill Wood
- Level of dual carriageway and junction raised to accommodate effective drainage solution.



OVERVIEW: The updated design has fewer significant visual effects on local residential receptors, reduced agricultural impacts, less material requirements for earthworks, provides more opportunity to mitigate environmental impacts and provides greater value-for-money. However, this layout would have a greater impact on nature conservation through the removal of a larger area of ancient woodland. Areas for compensatory woodland planting will be identified as we progress further with the scheme design and assessment process.

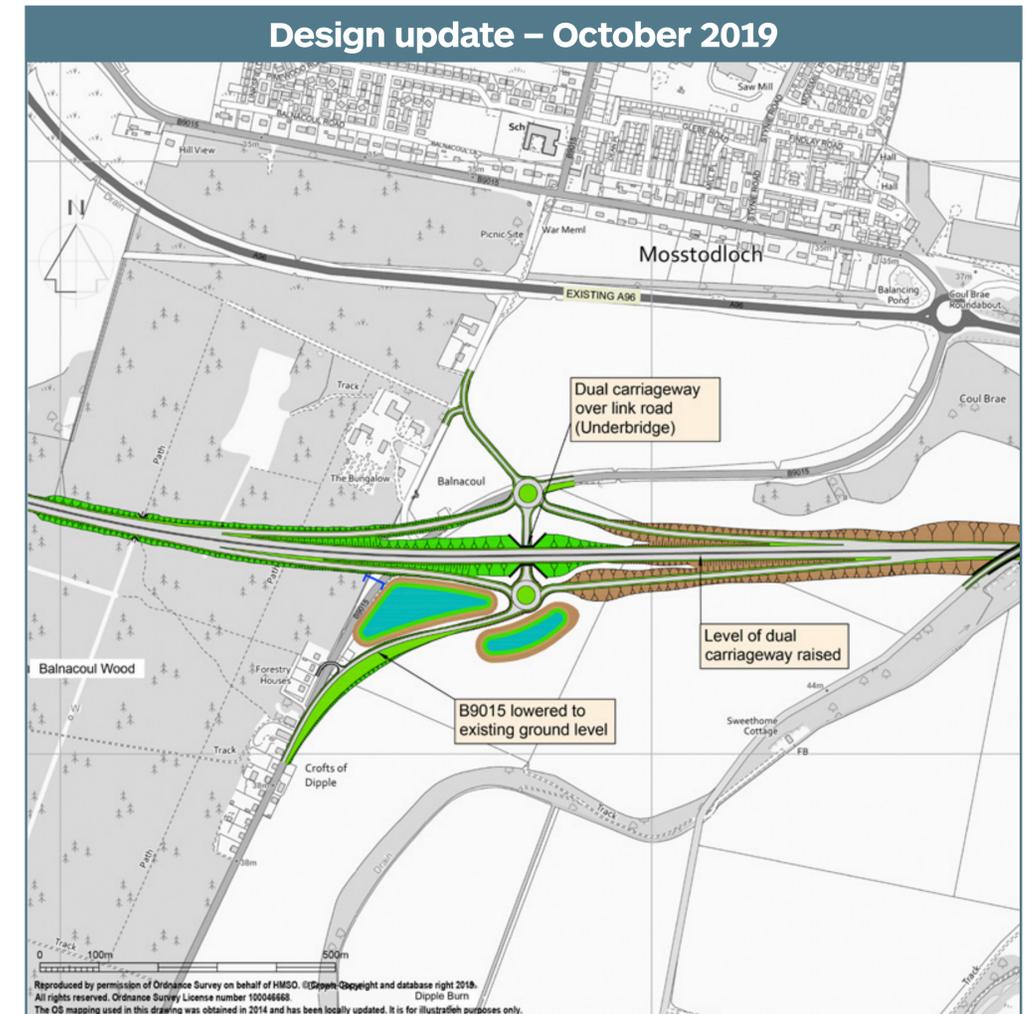
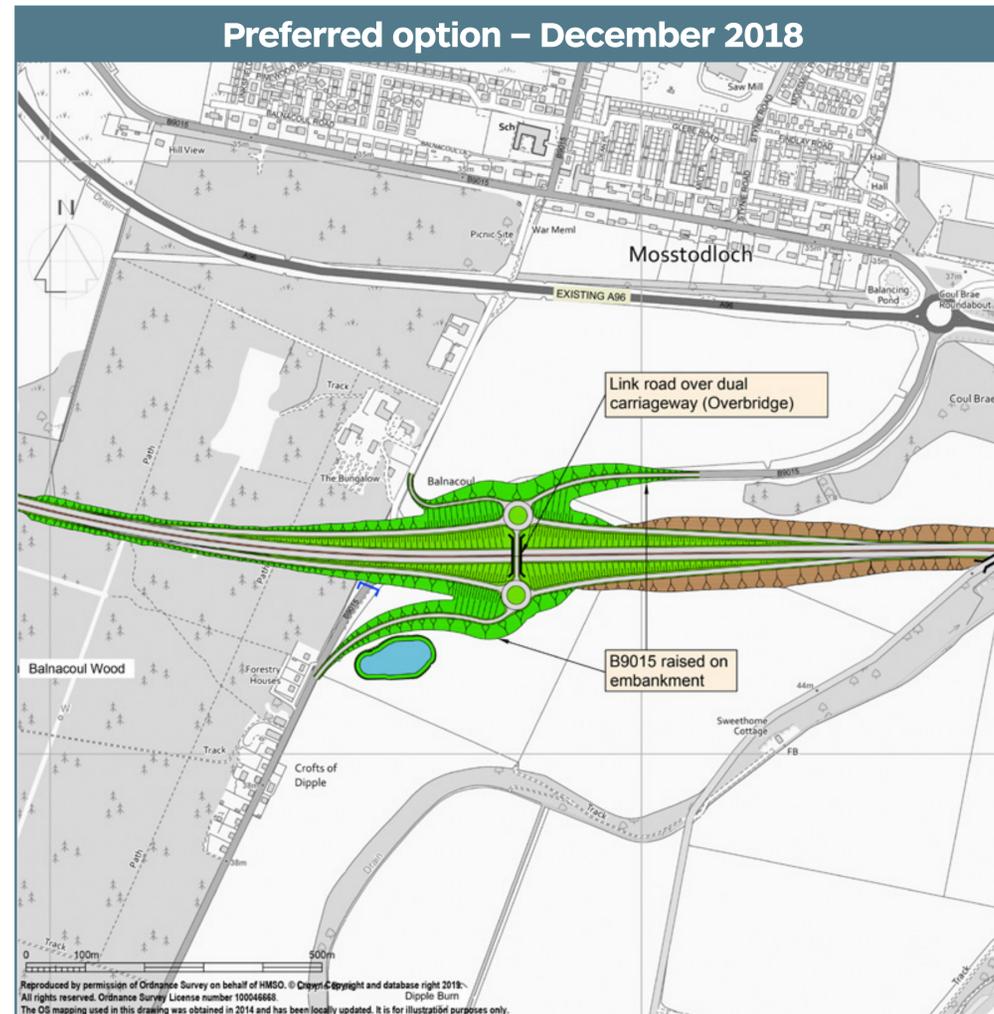
KEY	
CUTTING	
EMBANKMENT	
INDICATIVE ROAD DRAINAGE BASIN/POND	
STRUCTURE	
EXISTING ROAD TO BE STOPPED UP	

Mosstodloch Junction

Layout changes

The layout of Mosstodloch Junction has been developed with the following proposed changes:

- Level of dual carriageway raised, link roads and roundabouts lowered to existing ground levels
- Overbridge changed to underbridge.



OVERVIEW: The updated design junction and link road earthworks have less impact on open spaces and landscape pattern. Slip roads and link roads would be less prominent in the view from local residential receptors and have a lower material requirement. The updated design also provides greater value-for-money.

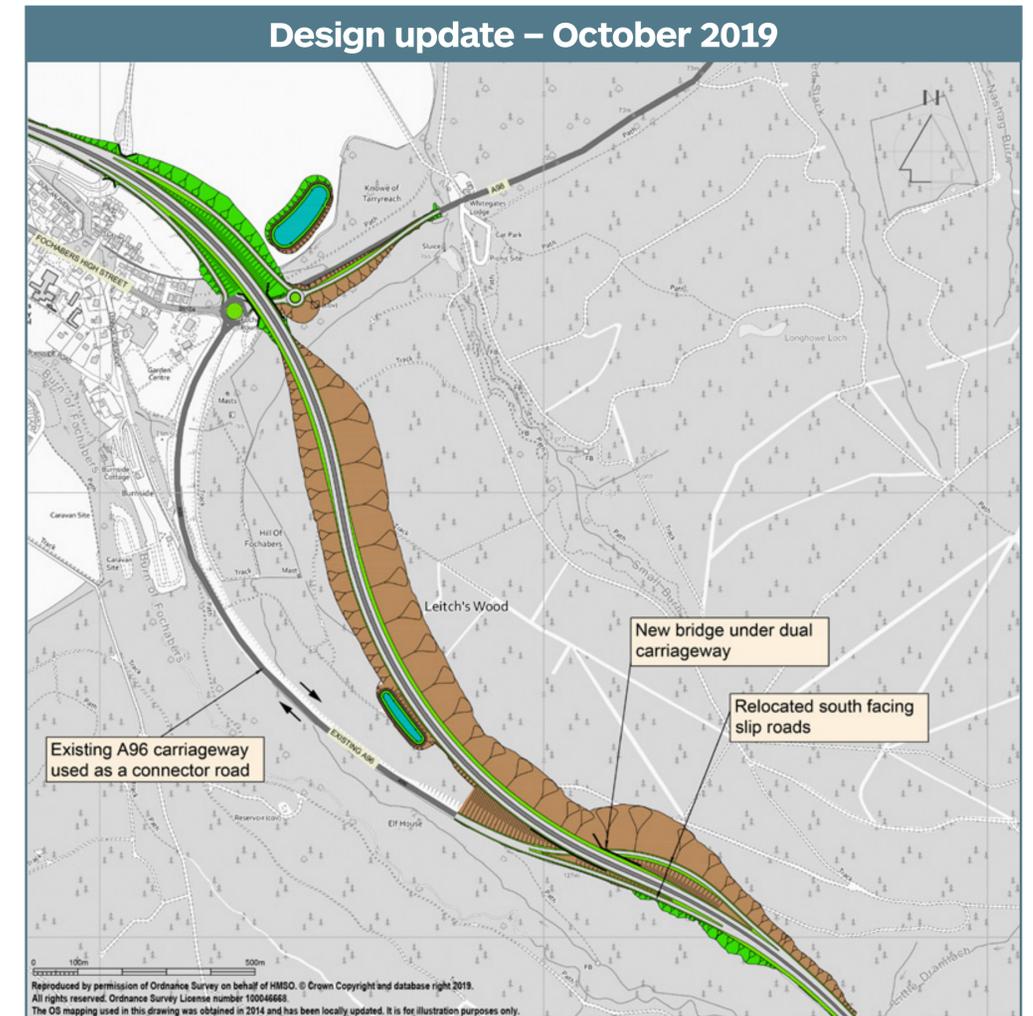
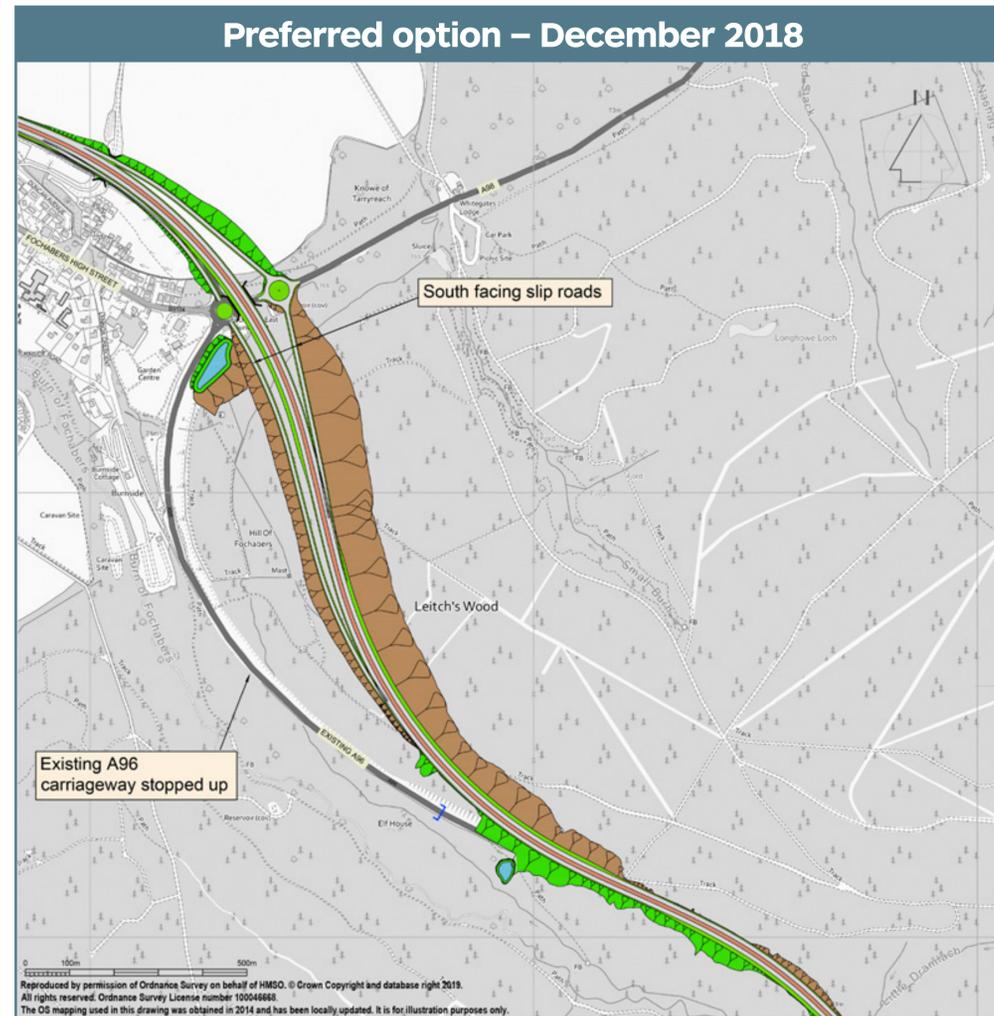
KEY	
CUTTING	
EMBANKMENT	
INDICATIVE ROAD DRAINAGE BASIN/POND	
STRUCTURE	
EXISTING ROAD TO BE STOPPED UP	

Fochabers Junction

Layout changes

The layout of Fochabers Junction has been developed with the following proposed changes:

- South facing slip roads relocated
- Existing A96 carriageway used as a two-way connector road
- New bridge under dual carriageway incorporated into updated design.



OVERVIEW: The updated design has reduced landscape and visual effects due to the omission of slip roads and associated narrower cutting through the Hill of Fochabers. There is also a reduction in habitat loss with less woodland directly affected. The updated design makes better use of existing road infrastructure and has less material requirements.

KEY	
CUTTING	
EMBANKMENT	
INDICATIVE ROAD DRAINAGE BASIN/POND	
STRUCTURE	
EXISTING ROAD TO BE STOPPED UP	

Aerial view of proposed A96 dual carriageway at Forres looking north-east



This visualisation has been developed to help give an appreciation of how the proposed scheme fits into the local landscape. The scheme design will be developed further during the DMRB Stage 3 Assessment. This includes refinement of alignment, drainage design, provision for active travel facilities, local and private accesses and the development of suitable mitigation measures.

Aerial view of proposed River Spey Crossing and Fochabers Bypass looking east



This visualisation has been developed to help give an appreciation of how the proposed scheme fits into the local landscape. The scheme design will be developed further during the DMRB Stage 3 Assessment. This includes refinement of alignment, drainage design, provision for active travel facilities, local and private accesses and the development of suitable mitigation measures.

What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its design consultants, Mott MacDonald Sweco, are taking forward the development, assessment and promotion of the preferred option for the scheme, known as a Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 3 Assessment.

Transport Scotland will look to publish **draft Orders** and an **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme by the end of 2020 for formal comment.

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, operate and maintain the scheme.

The next stage of the assessment process will include:

- Consultation with affected parties
- Further consultation with statutory bodies, community councils and other relevant interest groups
- Further design development of the preferred option
- Design development of active travel facilities
- Ground investigation works
- Identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of draft Orders
- Environmental assessment of the developed preferred option and preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report



A96 at Elgin looking east

- Development of suitable mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environment. For example:
 - Landscaping and compensatory woodland planting
 - Noise barriers or environmental bunds
 - Mammal (e.g. badger and otter) underpasses, ledges and fences
 - Appropriate construction management plans.

Comments and feedback

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

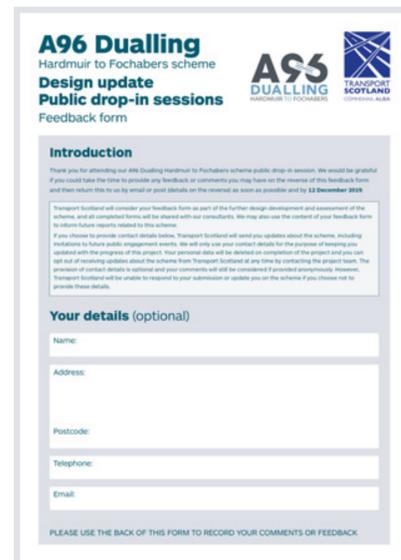
12 December 2019

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, the summary leaflet and information panels presented at today's event can be made available in an appropriate format on request by contacting the project team.



A96 Dualling
Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme
Design update
Public drop-in sessions
Feedback form

Introduction

Thank you for attending our A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme public drop-in session. We would be grateful if you could take the time to provide any feedback or comments you may have on the reverse of this feedback form and then return this to us by email or post (details on the reverse) as soon as possible and by **12 December 2019**.

Transport Scotland will consider your feedback form as part of the further design development and assessment of the scheme, and all completed forms will be shared with our consultants. We may also use the content of your feedback form to inform future reports or public documents related to the scheme.

If you choose to provide contact details below, Transport Scotland will send you updates about the scheme, including invitations to future public engagement events. We will only use your contact details for the purpose of keeping you updated with the progress of this project. Your personal data will be deleted on completion of the project and you can opt out of receiving updates about the scheme from Transport Scotland 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 your submission or update you on the scheme if you choose not to provide these details.

Your details (optional)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

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

Contact details

Should you wish to contact **Mott MacDonald Sweco**, details for the stakeholder team are:

Stakeholder Manager:

Dave Gowans Tel: **01309 250 380**

Email: **dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk**

By post: **Mott MacDonald Sweco, Unit 16, Horizon Scotland, The Enterprise Park, Forres IV36 2AB**

All of the information presented at today's event is available on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers project website: **transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers**

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

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