



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

A96
DUALLING
HARDMUIR TO FOCHABERS

A96 Dualling

Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme

Design update
Public drop-in sessions

October 2019

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

INTRODUCTION

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 the 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.

This leaflet provides a summary of the design updates for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

A feedback form is available at the drop-in events or on the project website: transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers

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, announced in December 2018, 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.

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Process

DMRB Stage 1

Strategic assessment

A96 Dualling Programme – STAGE COMPLETE



DMRB Stage 2

Route option assessment

Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme – STAGE COMPLETE



DMRB Stage 3

Design and assessment of preferred option

Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme – STAGE UNDERWAY

Statutory Process

Publication of Environmental Impact Assessment Report,
draft Road Orders and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

Public Local Inquiry (if required)

Procurement

Tender process to appoint works contractor

Construction

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.

ACTIVE TRAVEL FACILITIES

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.

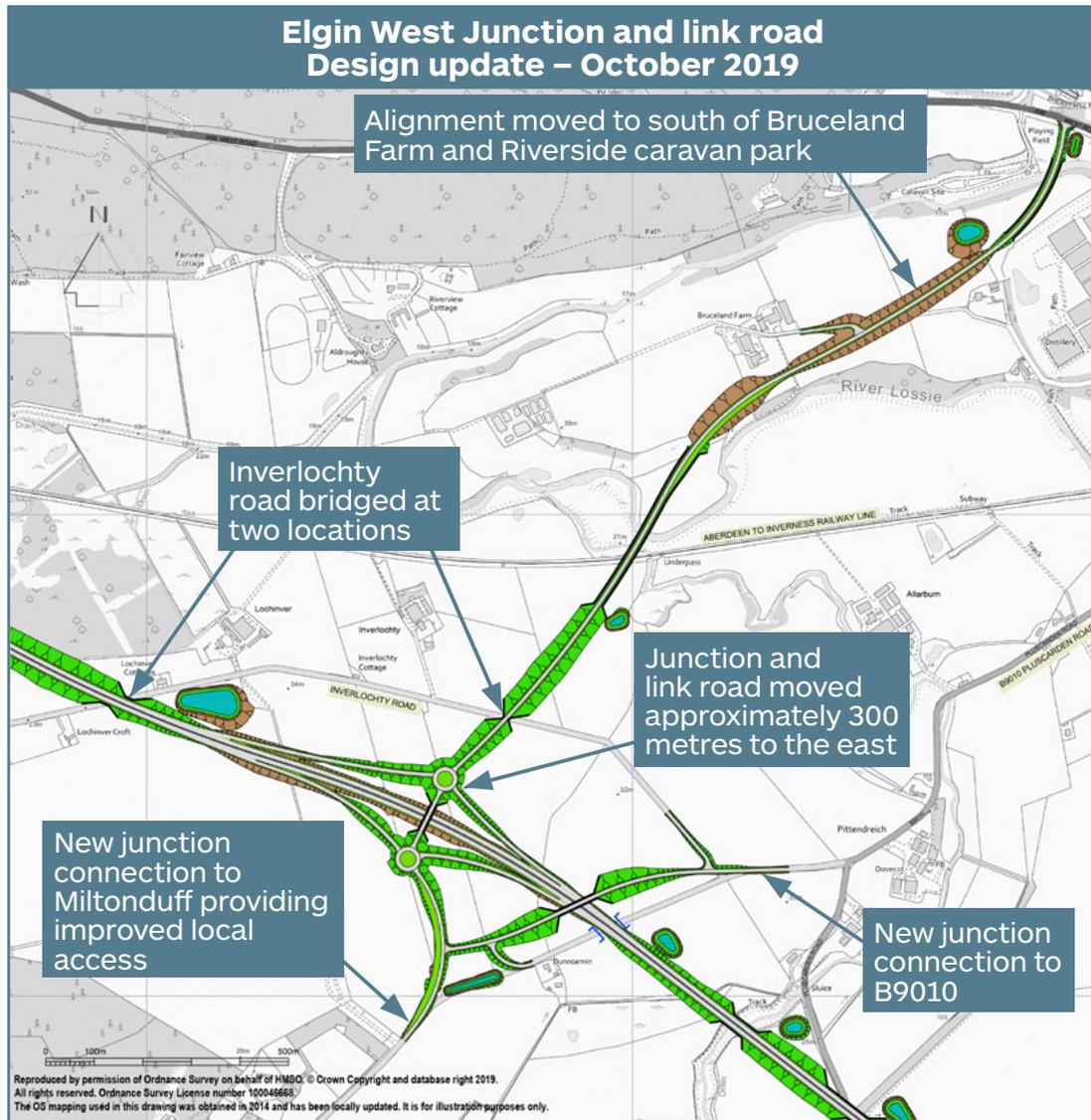
Emerging proposed facilities

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.

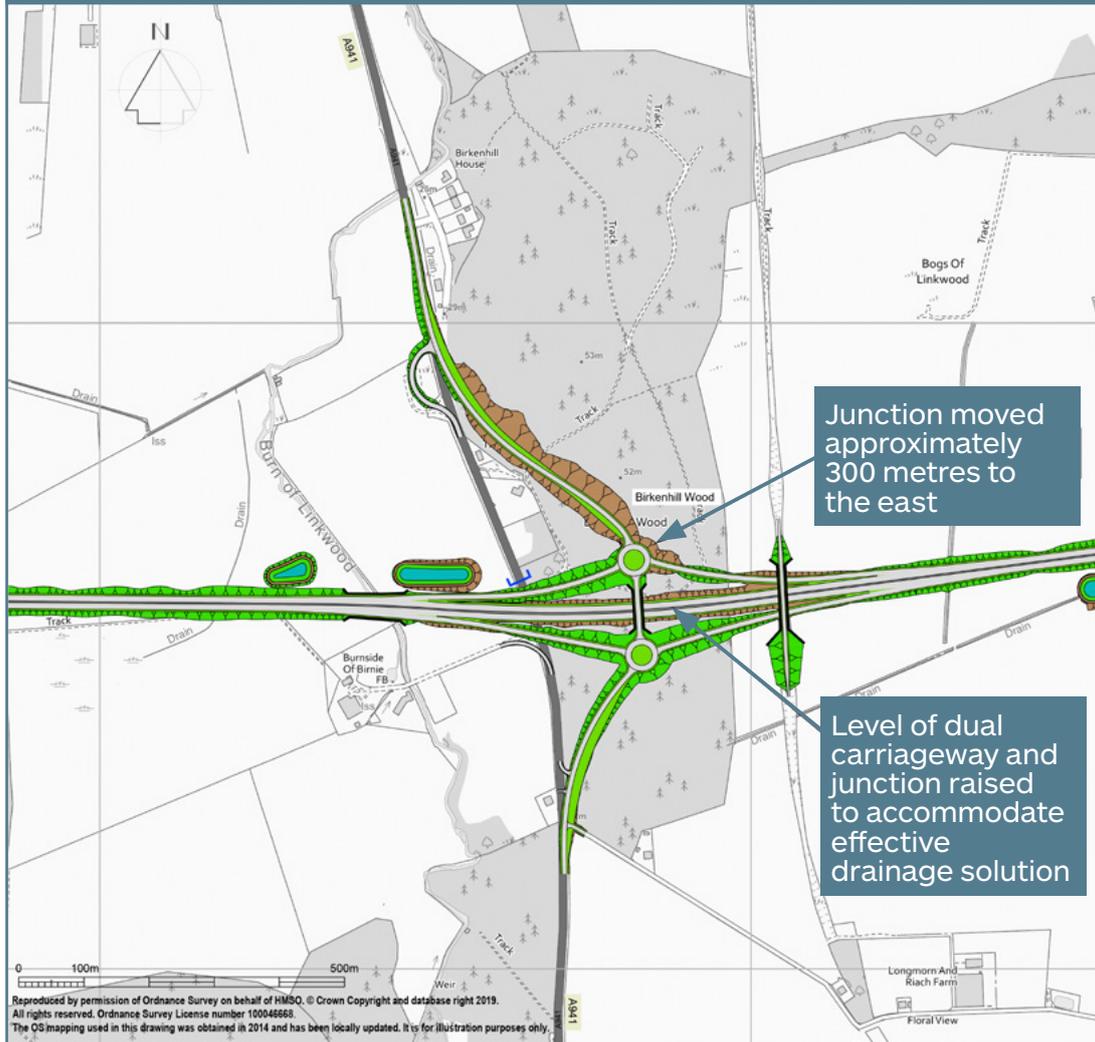
UPDATED DESIGNS FOR JUNCTIONS



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.

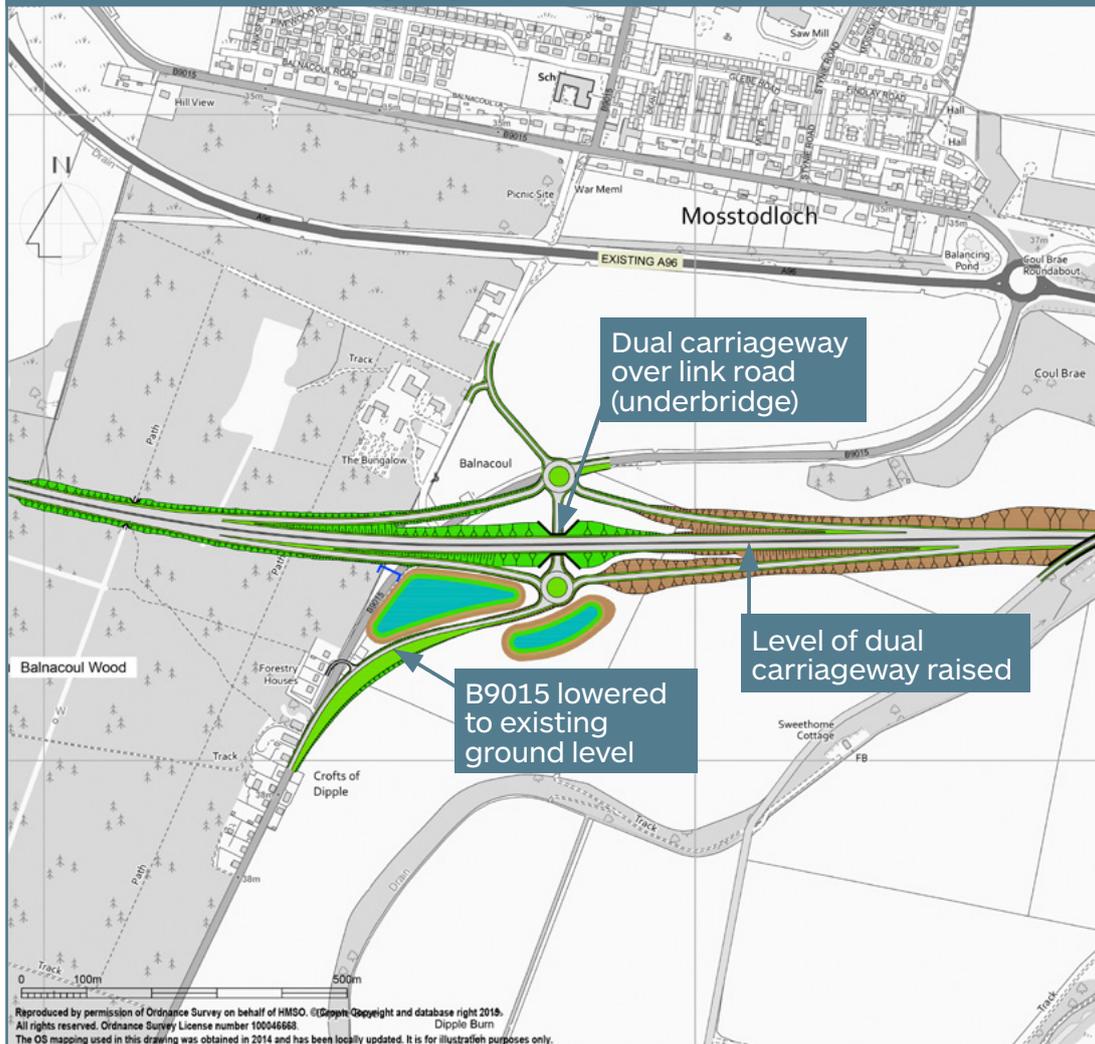
The design will continue to be developed as part of further assessment work. In particular environmental mitigation will be added to the scheme design.

Elgin South Junction Design update – October 2019



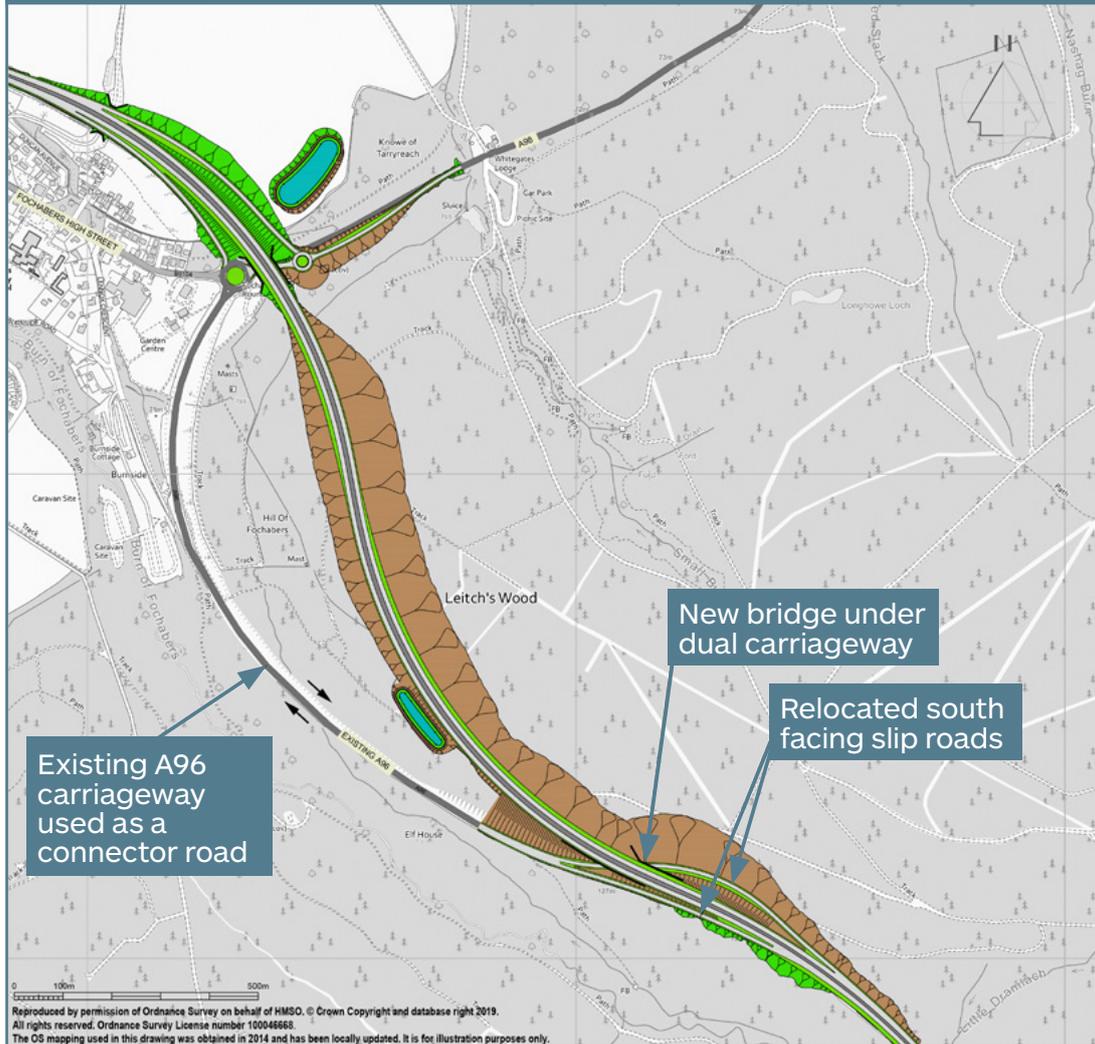
Overview: The updated design has fewer significant visual effects on local residential receptors, reduced agricultural impacts, less material requirements for earthworks, provides more opportunity to mitigate environmental impacts and provides greater value-for-money. However, this layout would have 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.

Mosstodloch Junction Design update – October 2019



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.

Fochabers Junction Design update – October 2019



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.

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
- 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.

Comments can be made on the feedback forms provided and placed in the feedback box at the drop-in session, or sent by email or post. Feedback forms are also available on the Transport Scotland website.

Email to: a96dualling@transport.gov.scot

Or by post to:

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

Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by 12 December 2019.

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

Transport Scotland will consider your comments and feedback as part of the further design development and assessment of the scheme, and all submissions will be shared with our design consultant for the project.

We 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 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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 the drop-in session is available on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers project website: transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers

Should you have any specific accessibility requirements, the contents of this leaflet and information on the project website can be made available in an appropriate format on request 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

Or email: a96dualling@transport.gov.scot



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KEY

ROUTE OF PROPOSED SHARED-USE PATH



ACCESS POINT



CONNECTION TO EXISTING FACILITY ALONG THE CORRIDOR



Active travel facilities

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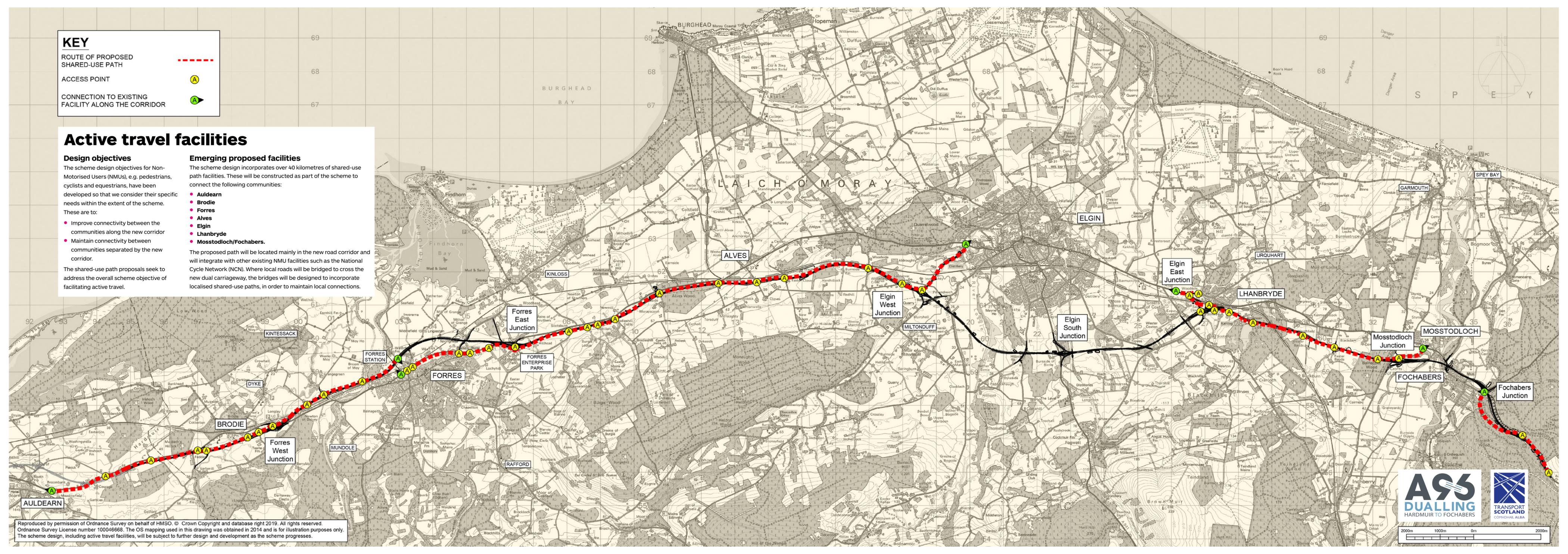
The shared-use path proposals seek to address the overall scheme objective of facilitating active travel.

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.



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