

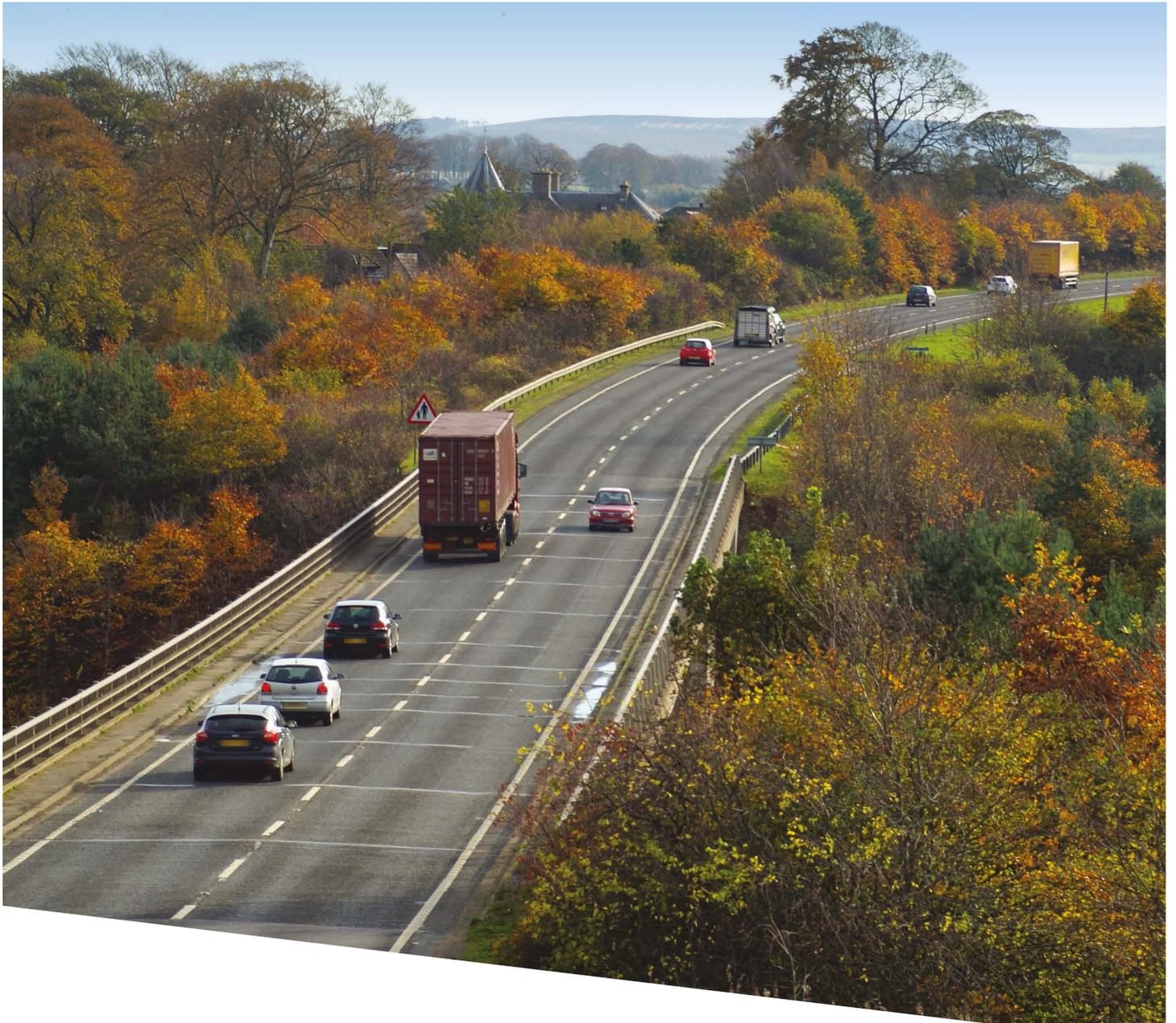
A96 Dualling

East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme

Preferred option

Virtual public exhibition

December 2020



transport.gov.scot/A96EHA



Introduction

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

Following the initial route options public exhibitions in **October 2018**, we held further engagement events in **May 2019** which presented the remaining options being taken forward to the next stage of design. In **October 2020**, a design update taking account of feedback received at these earlier events was circulated to interested parties and made available on the project website.

This summary leaflet provides an overview of the preferred option that has been selected following detailed assessment and which is being taken forward for further design development and what the next steps are. It provides information on how you can provide your comments and feedback on the proposals.



A feedback form is available at the virtual exhibition or from the Transport Scotland website transport.gov.scot/A96EHA

Scheme assessment process

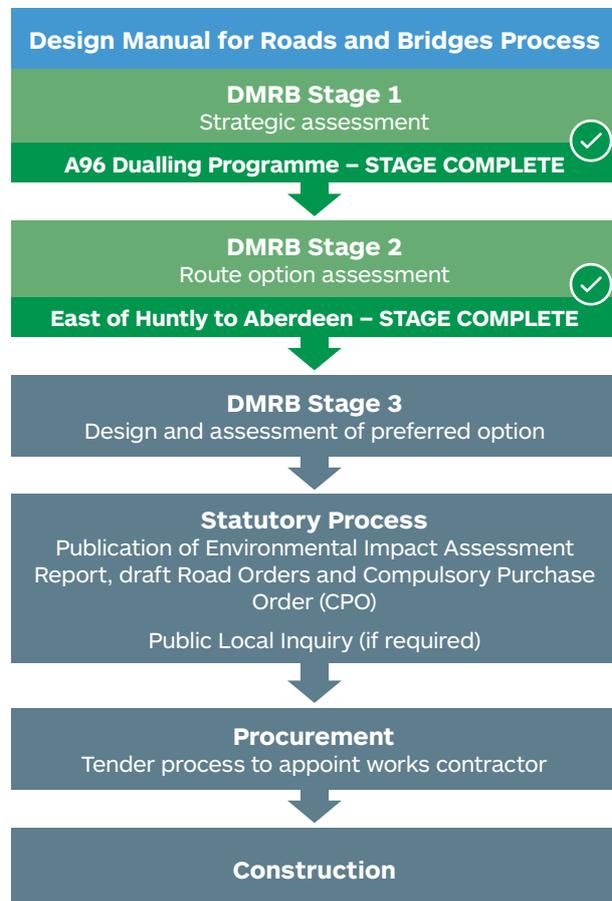
Transport Scotland carries out a rigorous assessment process to establish the preferred option for a trunk road project.

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.

Throughout this assessment 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 East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme is now complete.

The **preferred option** has been announced for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme at this virtual exhibition. The next step is to progress the design development of the preferred option and carry out the **DMRB Stage 3 Assessment** which is anticipated to take two years to complete.



KEY

PREFERRED OPTION

DESELECTED OPTION

Colpy to Pitcaple

Pink Route Option Preferred

The **Pink route option** is preferred as it:

- Results in less adverse effects on the landscape since it is better screened by the surrounding topography and so is less visible from higher elevations such as Bennachie and Meikle Wartle
- Has less adverse effects due to traffic noise and vibration since there are less receptors
- Affects fewer farm units and has less direct impact on prime agricultural land
- Has fewer impacts on local amenity including existing Non-Motorised User (NMU) routes
- Results in slightly less impact on ancient woodland and nature conservation areas including Logie Woodland
- Can be constructed offline with a lower number of significant structures and less extensive earthworks
- Is a shorter route with better journey time savings for all trunk road traffic, removing more strategic traffic from the existing A96.

The **Pink route option** is less expensive than the Brown route option.

Pitcaple to Kintore

Orange Route Option Preferred

The **Orange route option** is preferred as it:

- Has less adverse effects on people and communities since there are fewer impacts on community facilities
- Results in less adverse effects upon the wider landscape since it is more contained within the undulating landscape
- Has less impact upon existing agriculture and forestry with significantly fewer farm units and less prime agricultural land affected
- Results in less adverse effects due to traffic noise and vibration since there are fewer residential receptors i.e. homes
- Provides better integration with future development of Inverurie, particularly to the south of Inverurie at Crichtie
- Has greater opportunity for new Non-Motorised User (NMU) routes connecting more populated areas
- Involves less onerous construction works avoiding the complex crossing of the railway, the River Don and its wide floodplain at Kintore plus the need to reconfigure Tavelty Junction
- Provides better connections with the existing A96 providing improved operational resilience.

The **Orange route option** is slightly more expensive than the Violet route option but provides significantly better value.

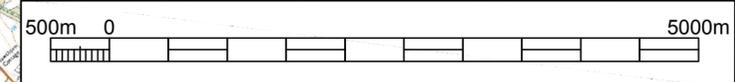
East of Huntly to Colpy

Cyan Route Option Preferred

The **Cyan route option** is preferred as it:

- Results in less adverse effects on the landscape, since it is closer to the existing A96 corridor and avoids the steep topography through Hill of Foudland and Hill of Skares
- Has less impact on local ecology and nature conservation by passing through less undisturbed Wildcat Priority Area habitat
- Avoids a complex rock cutting through the former quarries at the Hill of Foudland
- Offline phased construction can be achieved, although there are interfaces with the existing A96 these can be built safely with disruption to road users kept to a minimum
- Has fewer interfaces with significant utility infrastructure including high pressure gas mains and electricity transmission lines
- Offers greater resilience benefits particularly with regard to winter weather

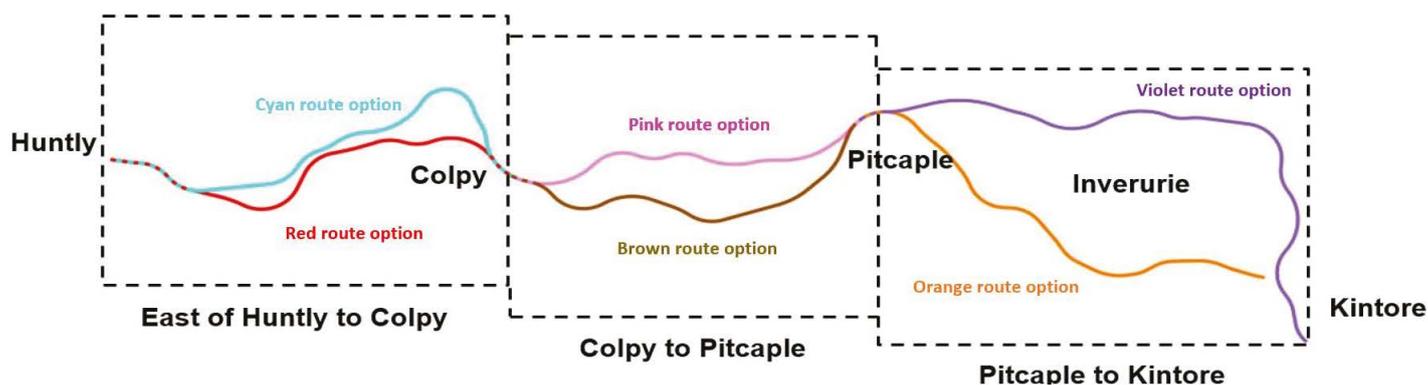
The **Cyan route option** is less expensive than the Red route option.



Shortlisted options assessment

For the purpose of options assessment, the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme has been divided into three geographical sections: East of Huntly to Colpy, Colpy to Pitcaple and Pitcaple to Kintore.

Option colours used in this summary diagram represent the **six route options** exhibited previously. For each geographical section, the performance of a route option has been assessed to determine a preference. **Eight end-to-end assessments** were also undertaken to determine which combination of route options was best performing when compared to the other possible combinations.



Preferred option

The preferred option for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme which you can view overleaf is:

Cyan-Pink-Orange

The drawing indicates the preferred option alignment, the designed layouts for all junctions and alterations to side roads. The location and layout of road drainage basins / ponds is indicative.

These aspects will be subject to further design and development as the scheme progresses.

Environmental mitigation and Non-Motorised User (NMU) facilities will also be incorporated into the scheme design as part of the **DMRB Stage 3 Assessment**.

The design has the following key features:

- 36 km of new dual carriageway
- Six grade-separated junctions
- strategic transport network
- Opportunities to facilitate active travel
- New crossings of the River Urie and River Don
- One crossing of the Aberdeen – Inverness railway line
- Major utility interfaces.

On opening, some of the key benefits the new A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme will provide include:

- Improved journey times and reliability for all trunk road traffic, including freight
- Significantly improved road safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users
- Opportunities to facilitate active travel
- Better transport connections to Aberdeen City and between communities in Aberdeenshire and to the wider strategic transport network
- Supports sustainable economic growth by providing better transport connections and opportunities to grow the regional economy in the corridor.

What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its consultants AmeyArup will develop the preferred option further.

On completion of the DMRB Stage 3 Design Development and Assessment, which is anticipated to take two years, Transport Scotland will publish **draft Orders** and **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme.

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
- Design development of the preferred option.
- Consultation on and design development of Non-Motorised User (NMU) facilities
- Environmental surveys and 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:
 - Appropriate construction management plans
 - Mammal (e.g. badger and otter) underpasses, ledges and fences
 - Landscape planting
 - Noise barriers or environmental bunds.



Exhibition events held in May 2019

Comments and feedback

Transport Scotland welcomes your comments and feedback on the preferred option. Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by: **8 March 2021**

Comments can be made via the online feedback form or can be downloaded from the project website and sent by email or post. Please email your comments to:

a96dualling@transport.gov.scot

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

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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.

Further information

Should you wish to contact the project team, details for their 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

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

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

A96
DUALLING
EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN

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CÒMHDHAIL ALBA