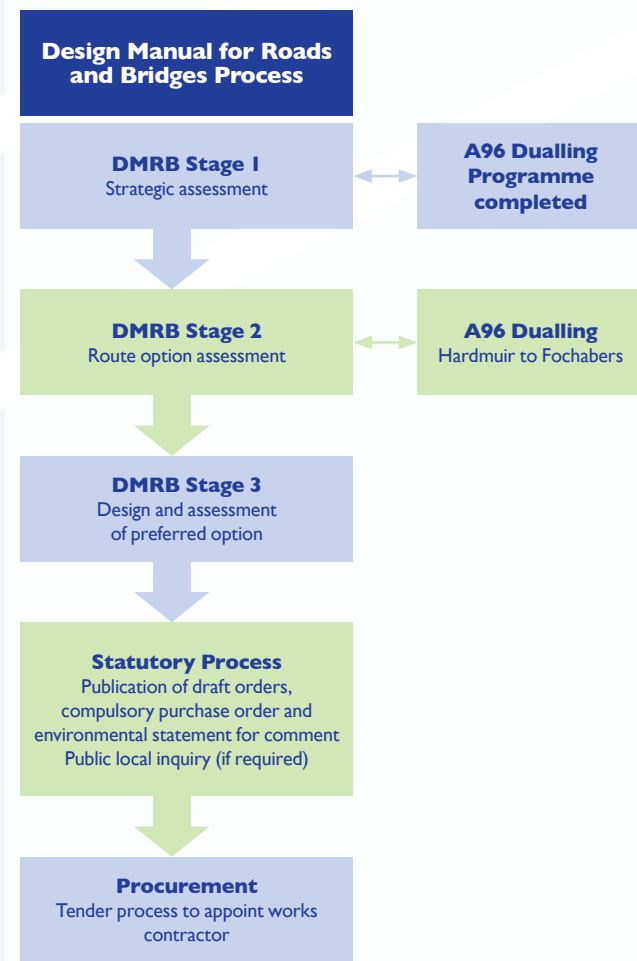


Scheme Assessment Process

Transport Scotland carries out a well-established assessment process to determine the preferred route for a trunk road improvement project.

The three-stage assessment process, based on the standard of good practice set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), covers environmental, engineering, traffic and economic considerations. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland will continue to consult with a large number of stakeholders and interested parties.

The DMRB Stage 1 (Strategic Assessment) of the A96 Dualling east of Nairn to Aberdeen has already been completed, with the outcome presented at a series of public exhibitions in May 2015.



DMRB Stage 2 Assessment

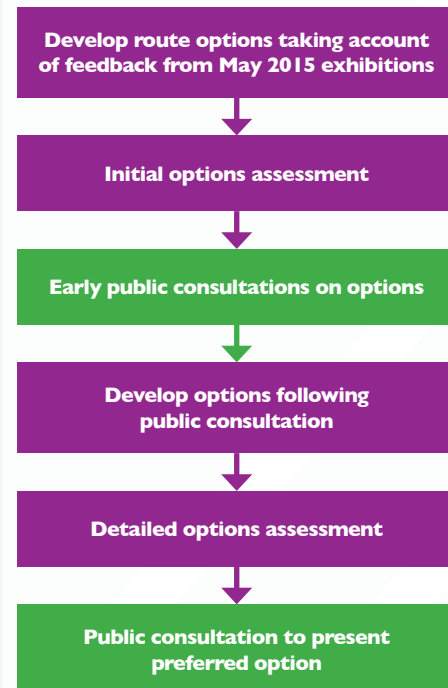
MMS is taking forward the route options stage of assessment during which they will develop and assess route options for dualling the A96 between Hardmuir and Fochabers.

This will include an engineering, traffic, economic and environmental assessment of the potential impacts of each option to inform a preferred option choice. During this stage of assessment the route options under consideration will also be presented to members of the public for their feedback prior to the selection of a preferred option. It is expected that it will take approximately 18–24 months of assessment to identify the preferred option for the scheme.

We will use local feedback received following the series of exhibitions held in May 2015 to inform the development of route options. As part of the assessment process, we will consult with members of the local community, stakeholders, landowners and members of the public to seek their vital feedback on the route options.

The feedback received on the route options will be considered, along with the engineering, traffic, economic and environmental assessment of the potential impacts of each option. These factors will inform the choice of the preferred option.

To inform the design development and environmental assessment of route options, MMS will gather information over the coming months about the current state of the natural environment in the area. This will include non-intrusive walkover surveys which will help increase the team's understanding of existing conditions.



DMRB Stage 3 Assessment

Following selection of the preferred option, the design will be further developed and assessed with an Environmental Statement prepared and the land required for the dualling identified.

During this stage of assessment, the preferred option will also be developed to take account of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other Non-Motorised Users (NMsUs). The draft Statutory Orders will be prepared for publication at the same time as the Environmental Statement.

To inform the design development and environmental assessment of the scheme, MMS will gather information over the coming months about the current state of the natural environment in the area. This will include non-intrusive walkover surveys which will help increase their understanding of existing conditions. In the coming years they will also carry out other surveys like ground investigation surveys which will inform the preliminary design of new earthworks and structures such as retaining walls and bridges. During these ground investigation surveys, boreholes and trial pits will be used to investigate both soils, and the underlying rock.



Contact details

Should you wish to contact MMS, details for the community engagement team are:

Stakeholder Coordinator: Keri Stewart

Tel: 0141 414 1747

Email: keri.stewart@sweco.co.uk

Landowner & Communities Manager: Dave Gowans

Tel: 01309 250 380

Email: dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk

By post: **MMS, Unit 9, Horizon Scotland, The Enterprise Park, Forres IV36 2AB**

Further information

For further information on the A96 Dualling Programme please visit www.transport.gov.scot/a96dualling

By post: **A96 Dualling team, Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF**

Email: a96dualling@transport.gov.scot

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

A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers



Meet the Team

October 2016



TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
COMHDHAIL ALBA



Welcome

As Transport Scotland's Programme Manager for the A96 Inverness to Aberdeen Dualling Programme, I am delighted to introduce our design team for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

This scheme involves the construction of a new 46km (28 mile) dual carriageway between Hardmuir and Fochabers. It is part of an ambitious programme that will see the full length of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen upgraded to dual carriageway by 2030.

Preliminary Engineering and Strategic Environmental Assessment work has been carried out along the route east of Nairn to Aberdeen. The outcome of this preliminary work was presented at a series of public information exhibitions in May 2015.

In June this year, we appointed Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture (MMS) to take forward route options development and assessment work on the section of the A96 between Hardmuir and Fochabers. In this leaflet, we introduce you to the MMS team and highlight what you may see happening on the ground over the coming months and years. This includes route options design and assessment, environmental surveys and landowner meetings.

Keeping members of the public informed and giving you the opportunity to comment on our plans is an essential and integral part of the design process. Feedback received following the exhibitions held in 2015 will be taken into account as we move forward to the route options stage of assessment. Throughout the scheme development process, we will continue to provide updates to the local community and hold public events to allow you to have your say.

These 'Meet the Team' events provide an opportunity for you to meet the Transport Scotland and MMS teams working on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme and find out more about the design and assessment process that will be followed.

Alasdair Graham
A96 Programme Manager



Introducing the MMS management team

MMS has a large team of specialists working on the scheme. This includes roads, traffic, geotechnical and structures engineers, as well as environmental and landscape specialists.

Since being appointed, MMS has been mobilising their design and assessment team. The team is led by Contract Director Iain Scott; Contract Manager Mike Hodgson; and Roads Managers Steve Wallace and David Webster.

MMS Contract Director Iain Scott commented: "We are thrilled to be working with Transport Scotland to deliver this important piece of infrastructure. We are considering the outcome of the preliminary work completed on the A96 Dualling Programme, including the feedback received following the exhibitions held in 2015, to assist with the development and assessment of route options. We are all committed to ensuring that we take account of the impacts on local communities and the environment while developing the scheme design."



Introducing the community engagement team

Transport Scotland is committed to placing public engagement and meaningful dialogue with directly affected communities and other stakeholders at the heart of the development and delivery of its projects.

The work Transport Scotland is progressing along the A96 includes a rolling programme of engagement with local communities and other stakeholders to ensure that communities, businesses and individuals potentially affected by the work are kept fully informed and their vital feedback is taken into account.

Managing and coordinating this public engagement and ongoing dialogue on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme will be the responsibility of MMS' Stakeholder Coordinator Keri Stewart. Keri is committed to ensuring that Transport Scotland's principles for community engagement are followed throughout the lifetime of the scheme. Keri commented: "We will build on the consultation that has already taken place for the A96 Dualling preliminary work and will ensure that landowners and other members of the community are kept informed and have the



Keri Stewart

opportunity to comment on the route options to be developed, as well as during subsequent stages of design."

Keri will be supported by a team with experience of engaging with the local community and stakeholders in the area. Dave Gowans is the Landowner and Communities Manager and is based in the MMS local office near Forres. He will undertake consultation with landowners and tenants throughout the design process, including agreeing access arrangements for surveys. He will be assisted in this process by Fiona Drever.



Dave Gowans and Fiona Drever

Introducing the environmental team



One of the critical elements in the development of a new road scheme is the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and landscape design. MMS' environmental team is responsible for ensuring that the environmental impacts of the scheme are identified and properly assessed.

The environmental management team consists of Environmental and Landscaping Manager Annie Say; assisted by Henry Collin and EIA Coordinators, Rebecca McClenaghan and Jon Moore. Annie, Henry, Rebecca and Jon will oversee teams of specialists in environmental topics including:

- air quality
- cultural heritage
- landscape and visual
- nature conservation
- geology, soils, contaminated land and groundwater
- materials
- noise and vibration
- people and communities (including agriculture)
- road drainage and the water environment
- policies and plans.

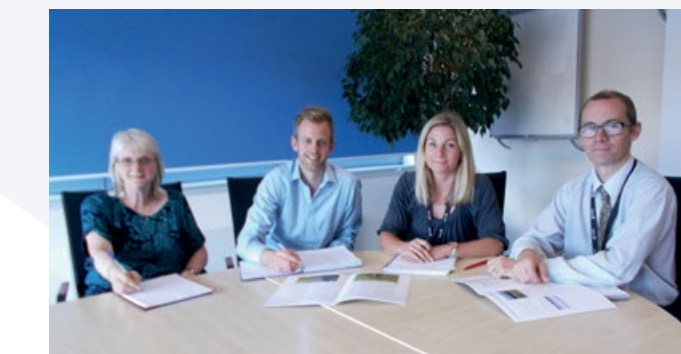


River Findhorn crossing

Throughout the EIA process a common approach will be used for the assessment of each environmental topic. This will include:

- establishing the baseline conditions through a combination of desk-top review, consultations and site surveys
- identifying potential environmental impacts which could result from development of the proposals (route options in DMRB Stage 2 and the preferred option in Stage 3)
- identification of mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any impacts which could (either by themselves, or in combination with other impacts) have an adverse effect.

A key part of the environmental assessment process is to carry out ecological and environmental surveys throughout the corridor, taking into account seasonal restrictions, in order to identify key environmental constraints which will inform future assessments.



Pictured left: Annie Say, Jon Moore, Rebecca McClenaghan and Henry Collin