The scheme

The new 38km dual carriageway scheme, from the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park to a point approximately 1km west of Inverness, can be divided into two sections:

- Inverness to Gollanfield
- Nairn Bypass.

Inverness to Gollanfield

The current route option has been developed from the alignment presented at public exhibitions in 2012. There are two route options between Smithton and Inverness and between Inverness and Boleskine giving five route options (A1 to D). These options are all on the west Morayston and an alternative office HM14 (MV) being considered for each. A2 (MV) to 1D (MV). The route is split into two sections.

Nairn Bypass

The decision to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has therefore changed the route options under consideration from the options presented at the 2012 public exhibitions. There are two route options being considered on the west side of Nairn, two proposed locations for crossing, the River Nairn, and four locations for crossing, the River Moray. This results in 16 possible route combinations in this section.

Constraints

A thorough review of the existing corridor has been undertaken to determine the present engineering and environmental constraints. These are summarised below:

- existing A96
- local road network and numerous direct accesses onto A96
- Inverness to Aberdeen railway line
- Inverness Airport
- flat low-lying ground
- minor watercourses
- flood plain of Alton Burn
- Tornagrain Development areas
- scattered residential development
- utilities – 132kV transmission lines, oil pipeline, gas pipeline
- active and redundant quarry workings
- flood plain of Alton burn
- active and redundant quarry workings
- flood risk – e.g. River Nairn, Alton Burn, Moray and Nairn Coast (SPA)
- Moray and Nairn Coast (SPA)
- Loch Flemington (SPA)
- Inner Moray Firth (SPA)
- European Protected Sites
- Moray Firth (SAC)
- Inner Moray Firth (SPA)
- Low (SIBP)
- Moray Coast (SPA)
- SSNI – Langman and Castle Stuart Bays and Kildrummie Kames
- ancient and plantation woodland
- protected species – red squirrels, badgers, bats and others
- flood risk – e.g. River Nairn, Alton Burn, Auldearn Burn, Cairnbeuck Burn and Auldearn Burn
- scheduled monuments
- Category A, B and C listed buildings
- Auldearn battlefield (1465)
- development land allocation
- landscape and visual impacts
- outdoor access – e.g. core paths and National Cycle Network.

Impacts on the environment

The impacts of each route option on the following topics are being assessed as part of the on-going environmental assessment:

- Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals)
- Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential area, schools and hospitals)
- Landscape and visual – landscape character and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors
- Habitations and biodiversity – designated habitats and protected species
- Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, historic buildings and places
- Geology and soils – geology, groundwater
- Water environment – water quality, geomorphology, and flood risk
- Materials – material resources and waste
- Development land – land allocation for development or land planning permission
- All travellers – users of core paths, rights of way and the National Cycle Network

What happens next...

Transport Scotland is seeking to reach a position of confirming a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014. The options presented are currently the subject of full engineering, environmental and traffic, and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (3rd assessment – route option assessment)).

Following these assessments, the impacts will be recorded and suitable mitigation will be considered.

Further information

More information is available at the project website: www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a96dualling

You can also post to: A96 Dualling Team, Transport Scotland Buchanan House 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)

November 2013

A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)

a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Transport Scotland is seeking to reach a position of confirming a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014. The options presented are currently the subject of full engineering, environmental and traffic, and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (3rd assessment – route option assessment)).

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A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)

November 2013
Introduction

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published by Transport Scotland in 2008, set out the Scottish Government’s transport investment priorities over the coming decades. Specific trunk road interventions emerging from the review included upgrading the A96 between Inverness and Nairn to dual carriageway and also a bypass at Nairn.

The intention to fully dual the A96 was thereafter announced when Scottish Ministers published their Infrastructure Investment Plan which contained the commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities.

Public exhibitions were held in February 2012 when Transport Scotland presented route options for the Inshes to Nairn scheme, including a Nairn Bypass. Since then, further route option design development and scheme assessment has taken place to take into account public feedback, and the decision to dual the A96. This leaflet provides a summary of the route options under consideration.

Environmental Assessment

There are a number of emerging challenges to the environment that have been identified. For example:

Habitats and biodiversity – all options have the potential to impact on designated sites and protected species including badgers, red squirrels, otters. 1A, 1A(MV), 1B, and 1B(MV) may result in greater fragmentation and disturbance of supporting habitat for wintering birds. 1C and 1C(MV) are likely to result in the greatest loss of woodland at Torngrain Woods. 1D, 1D(MV) may result in greater fragmentation and disturbance of supporting habitat for wintering birds.

1C and 1C(MV) are likely to result in the greatest loss of arable/grassland habitat, whilst 1B, 1B(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) will result in the greatest loss of woodland.

Cultural heritage – all options have the potential to impact on the setting of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) may result in the removal of part of the Lower Cullernie Ring Ditch (scheduled monument).

Landscape and visual – all options have the potential to impact on landscape character and visual amenity. 1C(MV) is expected to have the greatest impact on landscape character, with 1F and 1G expected to have the greatest visual impact.

All travellers – all options have the potential to impact on the core path network, 1C, 1C(MV), 1D, and 1D(MV) are expected to impact on the largest number of core paths through increased journey length and reduced visual amenity.
The scheme

The new 38km dual carriageway scheme, from the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park to a point approximately 3km east of Auldearn, can be divided into two sections:
• Inverness to Gollanfield
• Nairn Bypass.

Inverness to Gollanfield

The current route options have been developed from the alignments presented at public exhibitions in 2012. There are two route options between Smithton and Forres and two between Forres and Bonnyside giving four route options (A to D). These options are all on the A96 road and an alternative office ‘Plunge/Kincraig (P)’ is being considered for each. (MV) to (MV) The route in green possible route combinations in the section.

Nairn Bypass

The decision to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has therefore only nine route combinations are being considered to bypass Nairn (A6 to 28).

Constraints

A thorough review of the existing corridor has been undertaken to determine the engineering and environmental constraints. These are summarised below:

• Engineering constraints
  • existing A96
  • local road network and numerous direct accesses onto A96
  • Inverness to Aberdeen railway line
  • Inverness Airport
  • flat low-lying ground
  • minor watercourses
  • flood plain of Alton burn
  • Transgrass Development areas
  • scattered residential development
  • utilities – 123Kv transmission lines, oil pipeline, gas pipeline
  • active and redundant quarry workings
  • soft ground and areas of peat bog.

• Key environmental constraints
  • European Protected Sites:
    – Moray Firth (SAC)
    – Inner Moray Firth (SPN)
    – Loch Lomond and Clyde Estuaries (SPA)
    – SSSI – Longman and Castle Stuart Bays and Kildrummy Kames
  • ancient and plantation woodland
  • protected species – red squirrels, badgers, bats and others
  • flood-risk – e.g. River Nairn, Aloft Burn, Auldearn Burn, Coffebar Burn and Auldearn Burn
  • scheduled monuments
  • Category A, B and C listed buildings
  • Auldearn battlefield (445)
  • development land allocation
  • landscape and visual impacts
  • outdoor access – e.g. core paths and National Cycle Network.

Impacts on the environment

The impacts of each route option on the following topics are being assessed as part of the on-going environmental assessment:

• Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).
• Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential area, schools and hospitals).
• Water environment – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).
• Landscape and visual – visual character and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors.
• Habitats and biodiversity – e.g. designated habitats and protected species.
• Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, listed buildings and historic landscapes/e.g. scheduled monuments, listed buildings and castles.
• Geology and soils – geology, ground conditions, mineral and contaminated land sites.
• Materials – material resources and waste management.
• Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).
• Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).
• Water environment – water quality, groundwater and flood risk.

Further information

More information is available at the project website: www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a96dualling

If you have any queries or comments on the project, please contact:
A96 Dualling Team
Transport Scotland
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G40 1HF
Email: a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

What happens next...

Transport Scotland is seeking to reach a position of confirming a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014. The options presented are currently the subject of full engineering, environmental and traffic, and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 5 assessment – route option assessment). We have reviewed the options on these route options using the Feedback Toolkit. Please leave them in the comments box provided at the exhibition or email a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Baseline

Impact Assessment

Potential Mitigation

Summary and Residual Impacts

A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)
A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass)

The scheme

The new 38km dual carriageway scheme, from the roundabout for Inverness Retail Park to a point approximately 3km east of Auldearn, can be divided into two sections:

• Inverness to Gollanfield
• Nairn Bypass.

Inverness to Gollanfield The new route scheme has been developed from the alignments presented at public exhibitions in 2012. There are two route options between Altnabreac and Inverness to Gollanfield and Bonarbridge giving four route options (A to D). The New Route Options are all on the A96 North and an alternative off-line Morayston Variant (MV) is being considered for each of the four routes. These two options are shown in the 2012 public exhibitions.

Nairn Bypass The decision to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has therefore changed the route options under consideration from the options shown at the 2012 public exhibitions. There are two route options being considered on the west side of Inverness. These are the New Route Options past Inverness and four options past Nairn. Not every combination of these is feasible, therefore only nine route combinations are being considered to bypass Nairn (A4 to 2B).

Constrains A thorough review of the existing corridor has been undertaken to determine the present engineering and environmental constraints. These are summarised below:

Engineering constraints

• existing A96
• local road network and numerous direct accesses onto A96
• Inverness to Aberdeen railway line
• Inverness Airport
• flat low-lying ground
• minor watercourses
• flood plain of Alton Burn
• Torridge Development areas
• scattered residential development
• utilities – 132kV transmission lines, oil pipeline, gas pipeline
• active and redundant quarry workings
• soft ground and areas of peat bog.

Key environmental constraints

• European Protected Sites:
  - Moray Firth (SAC)
  - Inner Moray Firth (SPB)
  - Loch Flodigarry (SPB)
  - Moray and Nairn Coast (SPA)
  - SSSIs – Langman and Castle Stuart Bays and Kildrummie Kames
  - ancient and plantation woodland
  - protected species – red squirrels, badgers, bats and stoats
  - flood risk – e.g. River Nairn, Altnahre, Aultmore Burn, Cairnver Burn and Auldburn
  - scheduled monuments
  - Category A, B and C listed buildings
  - Auldburn battlefield (1445)
  - development land allocation
  - landscape and visual impacts
  - outdoor access – e.g. core paths and National Cycle Network.

Impacts on the environment

The impacts of each route option on the following topics are being assessed as part of the on-going environmental assessment:

Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospital).
Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential area, schools and hospitals).
Landscape and visual – landscape character and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors.
Habitats and biodiversity – designated habitats and protected species.
Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes (including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and battlefields).
Geology and soils – quarrying, glacial landform and land use.
Community and private assets (including agriculture) – due to land take and possible continuous diversions.

What happens next...

Transport Scotland is seeking to reach a position in coming months on confirming a preferred route for the A96 Inverness to Nairn (incl. Nairn Bypass) in 2014. The options presented are currently the subject of full engineering, environmental and traffic and economic assessment (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 2 assessment – route option assessment).

We invite your comments on these route options using the feedback form. Please leave them in the comments box or email:
a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

The feedback from this public consultation will be taken into account by 31 January 2014.

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

If you have any queries or any comment on the project, please contact:
www.transportscotland.gov.uk/a96dualling

Further information

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November 2013

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