



# **A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)**

## **DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report Volume 1 – Main Report Part 5 – Assessment Summary and Recommendation**

October 2014



# **A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)**

DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report

## **Part 5: Assessment Summary and Recommendation**

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## 21 Assessment Summary

### 21.1 Introduction

21.1.1 Sections 21.2 and 21.3 summarise the main findings of this DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report. A summary is provided of the engineering assessment (Part 2, Chapters 4-6), the environmental assessment (Part 3, Chapters 7-17) and the traffic and economic assessment (Part 4, Chapters 18-20).

### 21.2 Inverness to Gollanfield

#### Engineering Assessment

21.2.1 From the engineering assessment there are no significant factors affecting any of the options.

21.2.2 The construction activities required for this section are conventional civil engineering operations for a road scheme such as this.

21.2.3 One of the key differences between the route options is the length of construction on the line of the existing A96 (online construction) compared to offline construction (see Chapter 5, Section 5.12 Constructability).

21.2.4 The main features of the construction activities for this section are summarised below:

- Road Design and Side Roads – Route Options 1C, 1C (MV), 1D and 1D (MV) are offline and to the south of the existing A96 between Milton of Culloden and Allanfearn. Option 1C (MV) is generally offline with fewer impacts on accesses from the existing A96 to properties, agricultural land and businesses.
- Geotechnics and Earthworks – there are lengths of potentially unfavourable ground conditions affecting the route options, including areas of alluvium and peat. Based on the total route length affected, Route Option 1C (MV) is affected by areas of peat and alluvium over the shortest length of all the route options. In addition, all route options require a significant volume of fill, while providing little acceptable material. Route Option 1C (MV) requires the least material and has the best cut/fill balance.
- Public Utilities – there are a number of major public utilities affected by the route options. There are no significant differences between the number of impacts on the Inverness to Lossiemouth fuel oil pipeline for all the route options, however Route Options 1A and 1B have fewer impacts on the high pressure gas main.
- Constructability – there are three key constructability issues affecting the route options: the online section at Milton of Culloden South; the arrangement of Newton Junction B, which is over the existing A96; and the online section at Mid Coul. Route Options 1C and 1C (MV) have the shortest length of online construction and if the impact of embankment construction on top of the existing A96 at Newton Junction B can be reduced or eliminated, then these route options will have no key constructability issues.

#### Environmental Assessment

21.2.5 There are no potential impacts so significant that an option should be discounted on the basis of any individual environmental criteria. All of the route options have potential for adverse (and some positive) impacts upon the environment.

21.2.6 The main findings of the environmental assessment are summarised as:

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- Noise and Vibration – Route Options 1A, 1A (MV), 1B and 1B (MV) are expected to have a lesser impact overall and in particular on noise at sensitive receptors in the residential areas of Smithton, Culloden and Balloch.
- Landscape and Visual – Route Options 1A, 1A (MV), 1B and 1B (MV) are expected to have a lesser impact on landscape and visual amenity. This is mainly due to the alignment north of Culloden which in comparison to the other route options generally follows the alignment of the existing A96. As such it avoids impacts on the landscape through the severance of open agricultural land and on visual amenity for the built and outdoor receptors within Culloden.
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment – Route Options 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D are expected to have a lesser impact on water quality and fluvial geomorphology, with Route Options 1A and 1C expected to have the least impact overall. This is mainly due to the crossing of Rough Burn by a bridge for these route options as opposed to a culvert for Route Options 1A (MV), 1B (MV), 1C (MV) and 1D (MV).
- Geology and Soils – Route Options 1A and 1A (MV) are expected to have the least impact on geology, hydrogeology, and contaminated land. Route Option 1D is expected to have the greatest impact on geology, hydrogeology, and contaminated land.
- Habitats and Biodiversity – Route Options 1C, 1C (MV), 1D and 1D (MV) are expected to have a lesser impact on designated sites, habitats and protected species, with Route Option 1C expected to have the least impact overall. This is mainly due to these route options avoiding the potential impacts on the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar in relation to disturbance of qualifying species using the SPA supporting habitat. These impacts are as a result of the side road to Alturlie Point which is present on Route Options 1A, 1A (MV), 1B and 1B (MV).
- Cultural Heritage – Route Options 1A, 1A (MV), 1B and 1B (MV) are expected to have a lesser impact on the cultural heritage assets, mainly due to the impact of the proposed Newton Junction C for the other route options on undesignated assets and the Lower Cullernie Ring Ditch scheduled monument.
- Effects on All Travellers – Route Options 1A, 1A (MV), 1C and 1C (MV) are expected to have a lesser impact on NMUs using the path network. This is mainly due to the alignment that these route options have through Tornagrain Wood.
- Materials – Route Option 1C (MV) is expected to require the lowest quantity of materials for construction, closely followed by Route Option 1A (MV).
- Community and Private Assets – Route Options 1C and 1C (MV) are expected to have the least impact on residential, commercial and industrial property and development land. This is mainly due to these route options avoiding a property demolition at Mid Coul, possible acquisition of two properties near Allanfearn and impacts on the development land allocation for Tornagrain New Town. Route Options 1D and 1D (MV) are expected to have the least impact on agricultural and forestry land. This is mainly due to these route options avoiding land-take of prime quality agricultural land associated with the side road to Alturlie Point and the alignment to the east of Culblair.

21.2.7 For air quality and hydrology and flood risk the environmental assessment concludes that the effects of the all the proposed route options is broadly similar.

#### Traffic and Economic Assessment

21.2.8 From the traffic and economic assessment, under the Low Growth Scenario, six of the eight route options present a positive Net Present Value (expressed in 2010 prices and values), demonstrating value for money. Route Option 1D has the highest Net Present Value of

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£24.8m and a marginally higher Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.2. This is a result of Route Option 1D having the highest level of present value benefits (£185.7m) and present value of costs towards the lower end of the range (£160.9m). However, the uncertainties in traffic modelling and forecasting make it more difficult to differentiate between and to rank the route options when the economic performance of all the route options is so similar.

- 21.2.9 In general terms, the route options with least engineering complexity are those with the lowest estimated scheme cost and route options with higher complexity tend to have higher scheme costs.
- 21.2.10 Route Option 1B (MV) has the highest estimated cost of £216.1m (Q1 2014 prices, excluding VAT). Route Option 1C (MV) has the lowest estimated cost of all the route options of £192.0m (Q1 2014 prices, excluding VAT).

## 21.3 Nairn Bypass

### Engineering Assessment

- 21.3.1 From the engineering assessment there are no significant factors affecting any of the options.
- 21.3.2 The construction activities required for this section are generally conventional civil engineering operations though there are some significant engineering structures required to cross the Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line and the River Nairn. In addition, some route options require diversion of extra-high voltage 132kV overhead power lines.
- 21.3.3 The main features of the construction activities for this section are summarised below:
- Geotechnics and Earthworks – there are lengths of potentially unfavourable ground conditions affecting the route options, including areas of alluvium and peat. Based on the total route length affected, Route Option 2C is affected by areas of peat and alluvium over the shortest length of all the route options. In addition, all route options require a significant volume of imported fill material, while providing little acceptable material. Route Option 2E has the best cut/fill balance, with the second lowest fill requirement and the highest acceptable material generated.
  - River Nairn viaduct and extra-high voltage power line diversion – there are a number of major public utilities affected by the route options. Route Options 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F and 2G cross the River Nairn on a viaduct approximately 200m long in the vicinity of the extra-high voltage 132kV power lines which would need to be diverted. Route Options 2D, 2H and 2I cross the River Nairn on a viaduct approximately 215-240m long further south and would not require a diversion of the 132kV power lines.
  - Railway structures – all route options have two dual carriageway structures over the Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line. Route Options 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H and 2I have an additional railway structure for realignment of the C1163 Delnies – Kildrummie – Howford Road.
  - Constructability – the following constructability issues affect the route options: the online section of all route options from Gollanfield to the Nairn West junction; the online section of Route Options 2B and 2F between Auldearn and Boath House; construction of Nairn West Junction for Route Options 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D, and; the A939 Junction for Route Options 2C and 2G.
  - Route Option 2E can be constructed with less disruption or impact during construction to road users and the local community since the route is further away from the existing A96 and the communities at the west of Nairn and Auldearn.

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- Quarrying operations are complete over a large part of Blackcastle Quarry and the dual carriageway and Nairn West Junction under Route Options 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H and 2I can be located in the former quarry site.

#### Environmental Assessment

21.3.4 There are no potential impacts so significant that an option should be discounted on the basis of any individual environmental criteria. All of the route options have potential for adverse (and some positive) impacts upon the environment.

21.3.1 The main findings of the environmental assessment are summarised as:

- Noise and Vibration – all route options are expected to benefit a large number of sensitive receptors as in general road traffic is being relocated from the densely populated town of Nairn to less populated rural areas. Overall, Route Options 2H and 2I are expected to offer the greatest net benefits, closely followed by Route Options 2E and 2G.
- Landscape and Visual – Route Options 2A and 2B are expected to have a lesser impact on the landscape and visual amenity. This is mainly because these route options avoid the following areas along the proposed route options which are expected to have significant impacts; open agricultural landscape south of Moss-side and to the south-east of Auldearn and the sensitive landscape near the Howford Bridge and Kinsteary House. Route Option 2B also most closely follows the route of the existing A96 and would benefit most from the screening provided by existing established woodlands along its route.
- Habitats and Biodiversity – Route Options 2D and 2I are expected to have a lesser impact on designated sites, habitats and protected species. This is mainly due to these route options avoiding impacts which are present on the other route options in relation to red squirrels, badgers and the supporting habitat of the Moray and Nairn Coast SPA.
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment – Route Options 2A, 2B, 2E, 2F and 2H are expected to have a lesser impact on water quality and fluvial geomorphology, with Route Options 2A and 2E expected to have the least impact overall. This is mainly due to these route options avoiding additional impacts associated with the main alignment on watercourses located near Newton of Park and Bognafuaran Wood and Nairn East Junction D for Route Options 2C, 2D, 2G and 2I. Route Options 2G and 2I are expected to have the least impact on areas of flood risk when taking into account the expected impacts on both the Alton Burn and the Auldearn Burn.
- Geology and Soils – Route Options 2E and 2G are expected to have the least impact on geology, hydrogeology, and contaminated land. Route Options 2B and 2D are expected to have the greatest impact on geology, hydrogeology, and contaminated land. Route Options 2D, 2H and 2I are expected to have an impact on the Kildrummie Kames SSSI.
- Cultural Heritage – Route Options 2C, 2D, 2G and 2I are expected to have a lesser impact on cultural heritage assets which include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and the Auldearn Battlefield which is a Historic Landscape Type. This is mainly due to the additional impacts for the other route options on these assets in relation to Nairn East Junction A, B or C.
- Effects on All Travellers – Route Options 2E and 2G are expected to have the least impact on NMUs using the path network. This is mainly due to these route options avoiding impacts on the path network within Delnies Wood and the Crook Plantation and on paths within close proximity to Auldearn.

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- Materials – Route Option 2F is expected to require the lowest quantity of materials for construction, closely followed by Route Option 2A.
- Community and Private Assets – Route Options 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H and 2I are expected to have the least impact on residential, commercial and industrial property and this is mainly due to a significant proportion of their land-take associated with the previously quarried land of Blackcastle Quarry. Route Options 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D have a significant proportion of the land-take associated with Delnies Wood Caravan Park. This is currently an operational business and impacts in relation to its future viability are expected as a result of these route options. Route Options 2D, 2H and 2I are expected to have the least impact on development land and this is mainly due to these route options avoiding the impacts on the development land allocations to the south of Nairn. Route Options 2B and 2F are expected to have the least impact on agricultural and forestry land and this is mainly due to the alignment at their eastern end which closely follows the alignment of the existing A96.

21.3.2 For air quality the environmental assessment concludes that the effects of the all the proposed route options is similar.

#### Traffic and Economic Assessment

21.3.3 The Nairn Bypass offers significant benefits to the town by removing trunk road traffic from the existing A96. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) in Nairn town centre is expected to reduce from 17,000 AADT to 7,000 AADT in future year 2031.

21.3.4 From the traffic and economic assessment, under the Low Growth Scenario, five of the nine route options present a positive Net Present Value (expressed in 2010 prices and values), demonstrating value for money. Route Option 2G has the highest NPV of £23.6m and a marginally better BCR of 1.1 (similar to the BCR for Route Options 2C and 2I). Route Option 2G has one of the highest levels of present value benefits (£194.6m) and one of the lowest present value of costs (£171.0m). However the uncertainties in traffic modelling and forecasting make it more difficult to differentiate between and to rank the route options when the economic performance of all the route options is so similar.

21.3.5 Route Option 2E has the lowest estimated cost of all the route options (£202.4m at quarter 1 2014 prices, excluding VAT).

## 22 Preferred Option Recommendation

### 22.1 Introduction

22.1.1 This section describes the route option selection process and recommends the preferred option to be taken forward for DMRB Stage 3 assessment. The preferred option recommendation takes into account the scheme objectives and the Scottish Government's appraisal criteria, together with the findings of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment. Feedback following the exhibitions held in November 2013 has also been considered during the route option assessment process.

### 22.2 Stage 2 Value for Money Workshop

22.2.1 A Stage 2 Scheme Options Assessment Value for Money Workshop was held on 7 May 2014, facilitated by Capital Value and Risk. At this workshop, the project team reported the assessment outcomes from the DMRB Stage 2 work using the Government's appraisal criteria for the assessment of trunk road schemes:

- Economy – supporting sustainable economic activity in appropriate locations and getting good value for money;
- Safety – to improve safety for all road users;
- Environment – protecting the built and natural environment;
- Integration – ensuring that all decisions are taken in the context of the integrated transport policy; and
- Accessibility & Social Inclusion – improving access to everyday facilities for those without a car, and reducing community severance.

22.2.2 The scheme objectives set out in Part 1, Chapter 1 (Scheme Background) of this report were considered.

22.2.3 A copy of the Stage 2 Scheme Options Assessment Value for Money Workshop Report is included as Part 6, Appendix A22.1 of this report.

22.2.4 At the route option assessment workshop each option was scored against the assessment criteria as identified in the Workshop Report. The Utility Score is the overall total assessment score for each option. The Utility Score for each option divided by the estimated cost for each option provides a Value Index measure. Route options with a higher Value Index score are considered to be better since it represents a better ratio of Utility to Cost.

22.2.5 At the Workshop the options were ranked and the ranking is shown in Table 22.1 and Table 22.2. Further details on the Value for Money Workshop assessment process and output are contained in Part 6, Appendix A22.1 of this report.

**Table 22.1: Inverness to Gollanfield – Route Option Ranking**

Ranking	1A	1A (MV)	1B	1B (MV)	1C	1C (MV)	1D	1D (MV)
Utility	4	3	8	7	2	1	6	5
Cost	5	3	7	8	2	1	4	6
Value Index	4	3	8	7	2	1	5	6
BCR	5=	5=	5=	8	2=	2=	1	2=

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**Table 22.2: Nairn Bypass – Route Option Ranking**

Ranking	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H	2I
Utility	6	9	7	8	1	5	2	3	4
Cost	4	4	7	9	1	2	3	8	6
Value Index	6	8	7	8	1	3	2	5	4
BCR	5=	5=	2=	5=	2=	5=	1	9	2=

22.2.6 The workshop identified a number of actions and the actions relevant to the route option assessment process were addressed as follows:

**Table 22.3: Workshop actions and outcomes**

Workshop Action	Outcome
<b>Inverness to Gollanfield</b>	
a. Review of Newton Junction to minimise impacts on cultural heritage.	The design of Newton Junction will be developed further at the next stage of design development and this will include changes to avoid the direct impact on the Lower Cullernie ring ditch.
b. Conduct sensitivity test on Utility score, where noted in 'Comments' column.	The sensitivity test was completed with the results included as Appendix B of the workshop report included as Part 6, Appendix A22.1 of this report. The result of the sensitivity test showed that the overall ranking of the options shown in Table 22.1 and 22.2 was unchanged.
<b>Nairn Bypass</b>	
a. Give further consideration to impact on Auldearn Battlefield site and consult Historic Scotland to better understand impact and risk.	Historic Scotland was consulted further following the workshop with no change Cultural Heritage assessment outcomes.
b. Review impact of potential flood risk in area of Nairn East Junction.	The design of Nairn East Junction will be developed further at the next stage of design development and this will include changes to avoid or minimise the impact on flood risk at Nairn East Junction.
c. Review BCR calculation and consider further improvement.	The BCR calculations have been further reviewed and no changes were made.
d. Consult further with bus companies.	Further consultations were undertaken with bus companies and additional information on school bus services has been added into this assessment report.
e. Conduct sensitivity test on Utility score, where noted in 'Comments' column, including assessment of structures material quantities in environmental materials assessment criteria ENV8.	The sensitivity test was completed with the results included as Appendix B of the workshop report included as Part 6, Appendix A22.1 of this report. The result of the sensitivity test showed that the overall ranking of the options shown in Table 22.1 and 22.2 was unchanged.

### 22.3 Preferred Option Assessment

#### Inverness to Gollanfield

22.3.1 On the basis of the DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment, the outcome of the Value for Money Workshop and subsequent actions to address the workshop actions, the outcome of the route option assessment process is that the preferred option for the Inverness to Gollanfield section is Route Option 1C (MV) and is preferred for the following reasons:

- It is generally offline with fewer impacts on accesses from the existing A96 to property, agricultural land and businesses.
- Overall, the extent of the construction work (in terms of total quantity of earthworks materials and plan area of new road construction) is less than the other route options resulting in reduced material volumes and reduced costs.
- It can be constructed with less disruption or impact during construction to road users and the local community.
- Safety benefits will occur on the existing A96 for both motorised and non-motorised users (NMUs) due to the significant reduction in traffic.
- It offers benefits for public transport through use of the existing A96 single carriageway between Smithton and Brackley which will have significantly reduced traffic on it.
- It has the lowest estimated scheme cost, a positive Net Present Value of £8.7m and a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.1 under the low growth scenario.
- While there are differences between the options at individual topic level, the conclusion of the overall environmental assessment is much more finely balanced, with no option substantially and materially better than the others. Option 1C (MV) is expected to have some of the lowest impacts in relation to habitats and biodiversity, geology and soils, effects of all travellers (e.g. path network), resource use and waste, residential and commercial assets and development land.
- It avoids the demolition of one property at Mid Coul and the potential acquisition of two further properties near Allanfearn. It also avoids impacts on the development capacity of the development land allocations for Inverness Airport and Tornagrain new town.

22.3.2 Route Option 1C (MV) performs less favourably in the following assessment areas:

- Noise and vibration impacts are expected to be slightly greater than some of the other route options since the route is closer to the communities of Smithton, Culloden and Balloch.
- Landscape impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options since the route is introduced into an open agricultural landscape to the north of Culloden, south of Morayston Farm and east of Culblair. Visual impacts are also expected to be greater due to its close proximity to residential properties in Culloden, Culblair and Milton of Gollanfield.
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options mainly due to the culverted crossing of Rough Burn.

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- Cultural Heritage impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options as a result of the Newton Junction C and its impacts on a number of undesignated cultural heritage assets and the Lower Cullernie scheduled monument.
- Agriculture and forestry impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options due to the alignment to the east of Tornagrain through prime quality agricultural land.

22.3.3 The above will be considered further during the DMRB Stage 3 assessment, to seek to reduce the potential impact of the scheme, through further design development supported by the ongoing EIA process, and stakeholder, public and landowner consultation, including development of appropriate mitigation measures.

#### Nairn Bypass

22.3.4 On the basis of the DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment, the outcome of the Value for Money Workshop and subsequent actions to address the workshop actions, the outcome of the route option assessment process is that the preferred option for the Nairn Bypass section is Route Option 2E and is preferred for the following reasons:

- Quarrying operations are complete over a large part of Blackcastle Quarry and the proposed dual carriageway and Nairn West Junction can be located in the former quarry site.
- The River Nairn crossing at Broadley is preferred to the crossing at Howford since it is shorter and the lower cost of the structure more than offsets the cost of diversion of the 132kV overhead electricity transmission lines.
- All options require using a significant volume of imported material, while providing little acceptable material. Option 2E has the best earthworks balance, hence lowest volume of required imported material.
- It can be constructed with less disruption or impact during construction to road users and the local community since the route is further away from the existing A96 and the communities at the west of Nairn and Auldearn.
- The significant reduction in traffic using the A96 should reduce the number of accidents in Nairn. Option 2E offers greater safety benefits than other options - route options south of Auldearn have an additional junction with the A939 which would increase traffic entering Nairn on this route with the potential for increased conflicts with NMUs. Route Options 2B/2F would have greater NMU conflicts in the vicinity of Auldearn.
- It has the lowest estimated scheme cost, a positive Net Present Value of £5.8m and a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.0 under the low growth scenario.
- The junction locations provide opportunities to grow the regional economy through improved access to the wider strategic transport network. Nairn West Junction located at Blackcastle Quarry maintains direct access from the trunk road to Port of Ardersier. Nairn East Junction located between Nairn and Auldearn provides better strategic access than options south of Auldearn.
- The reduction in traffic passing through Nairn should provide benefits to public transport and active travel e.g. walking and cycling in the town. Under Option 2E existing bus routes through Auldearn can be maintained.
- It is expected to have some of the lowest impacts on all travellers (e.g. path network) than other options.

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- While there are differences between the options at individual topic level, the conclusion of the overall environmental assessment is much more finely balanced, with no one option substantially and materially better than the others. Option 2E is expected to have some of the lowest impacts in relation to noise and vibration, geology and soils, water quality, materials, residential and commercial assets and development land.
- It avoids impacts at Delnies Wood relating to habitats and biodiversity (woodland habitat and red squirrels) and the path network throughout the woodland.
- It is located further from receptors (e.g. properties) at Moss-side reducing the potential impacts from noise and air pollution and has one of the lowest impacts on the Alton Burn flood plain.
- Impacts associated with the online routes 2B/2F past Auldearn are avoided specifically relating to noise, cultural heritage, path network and disruption during construction.
- Impacts associated with the more southern routes, 2C/2G and 2D/2I are avoided relating to landscape and visual impacts particularly around the A939 junction, Nairn East Junction D, Newmill and at Kinstearry House.

22.3.5 It should be noted that Route Option 2E performs less favourably in the following assessment areas:

- Landscape impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options since the route is introduced into an open agricultural landscape to the south of Moss-side. Visual impacts are also expected to be greater due to Nairn West Junction B and the associated over bridge which would be visible to properties in the vicinity.
- Habitats and biodiversity impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options due to the impacts in relation to loss and fragmentation of supporting habitat of the Moray and Nairn Coast SPA and potential impacts on great crested newt (south of Moss-side) and red squirrels (woodland south of Crook, the woodland on the A939 near Skene Park and Russell's Wood).
- Cultural Heritage impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options due to impacts on the following designated assets; a Category B Listed Building (Boath Dovecot), Scheduled Monument (Castle of Auldearn) and the Auldearn Battlefield.
- Agricultural and forestry impacts are expected to be greater than some of the other route options as this route takes a greater area of prime agricultural land to the north-east of Auldearn.

22.3.6 The above would be considered further during the DMRB Stage 3 assessment, with the view to reduce these impacts either through a review of the developing design or through implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. Further consultation will also be undertaken with Historic Scotland in relation to the potential impacts on the Auldearn Battlefield.

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#### **22.4 DMRB Stage 2 Preferred Option Recommendation**

- 22.4.1 On the basis of the DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment, the outcome of the Value for Money Workshop and subsequent work to address the workshop actions it is recommended that Route Option 1C (MV) is taken forward as the preferred option for the Inverness to Gollanfield section and Route Option 2E is taken forward as the preferred option for the Nairn Bypass section of the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme.
- 22.4.2 At the next stage of the assessment process, the preferred option will be developed further including, where appropriate, refinement of the alignment, junction location and layout, local roads and private means of access. It will also include development of sustainable drainage proposals and the 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, and; noise barriers or environmental bunds.
- 22.4.3 The design development of the preferred option will be informed by consultation with affected parties, statutory bodies, Community Councils and other relevant interest groups. Ground investigation works will be undertaken as well as further environmental surveys as part of the environmental impact assessment.

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## DUALLING

### INVERNESS TO NAIRN

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