

**A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen
Preliminary Engineering Services**

Non-Motorised User Strategy
May 2016

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The existing A96 Trunk Road runs between Raigmore Interchange at Inverness and Haudagain Roundabout at Aberdeen, is approximately 160 kilometres long, and passes through, or close to, various towns and villages along the route including Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Fochabers, Keith, Huntly and Inverurie. It comprises both single carriageway and dual carriageway cross-sections. The Scottish Government has committed in its 2011 Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) to fully dual the A96 by 2030.

The existing A96 has numerous at-grade junctions, crossings and major/minor accesses onto the local road and Non-Motorised User (NMU) network.

As part of the Preliminary Engineering Services commission there is a requirement to undertake development of baseline NMU accessibility plans and develop and report on a programme wide strategy for NMU provision.

NMUs include pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

1.2 Scope

The main objective of this paper is to develop a strategy for NMUs, by outlining high level principles and a hierarchy of provision considering potential usage and type. The strategy should ensure the needs of the most vulnerable users are fully considered.

This strategy will be in line with the A96 Dualling Programme objective to improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users through reduced accident rates and severity, and reduced driver stress as well as the objective to facilitate active travel in the corridor. In addition, the strategy will be in line with the Scottish Government's vision to promote active travel in A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel 2030¹, their Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013² and the Trunk Road Cycling Initiative³. The strategy will demonstrate how the A96 Dualling Programme can enhance and promote walking and cycling initiatives.

The strategy shall be shared with relevant local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and key NMU interest groups and organisations. The stakeholders' views and recommendations will be considered following consultation and through project team agreement will be incorporated into the strategy where considered appropriate.

The strategy will be utilised throughout the development of the dualling programme as it progresses through the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stages 1, 2 and 3.

¹http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/554346_334708_Active_Travel_210m_m_p9_HR_20141126103050.pdf

²<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/report/j0002-00.htm>

³<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/report/j0002-13.htm>

2.1 General Principles

The NMU Strategy focuses on existing active travel policies and guidance as a basis for determining the over-arching general NMU principles to be adopted for the A96 Dualling Programme. Programme wide design objectives and scheme specific design objectives should be developed as part of the Objective Setting & Context Reports, taking cognisance of the general NMU principles laid out in the NMU strategy.

In 2010 the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) was launched with the ambitious vision that by 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike. The Action Plan set out what the Scottish Government would do, what it expected others to do and what outcomes the actions expect to achieve.

CAPS was updated in 2013 based on recommendations in the Cycling Scotland Progress Report on CAPS (November 2012). The Action Plan drew on the experience of delivery since 2010 and takes account of the contributions received from stakeholders during the refresh exercise in 2013. It set out what more needs to be done and the delivery roles sought. The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland have obvious roles in providing resources and showing leadership; local authorities, communities, public, private and third sectors all need to participate too.

Of the six key themes CAPS stakeholders identified as priorities in moving towards the 2020 vision, the A96 Dualling Programme can assist to deliver on:

- **Leadership and Partnership**
- **Infrastructure, Integration and Road Safety**

2.1.1 Leadership and Partnership

The Scottish Government recognises that most active travel journeys are local journeys, on local authority roads and therefore the role of joint leadership and partnership through working with local authorities is essential to deliver more cycling facilities as well as promoting cycling to everyone. The Scottish Government is taking an active leadership role in a number of ways including providing resources, establishing an annual cycling summit, promoting the integration of cycling into the broader road safety agenda and supporting national partnerships through the CAPS Delivery Forum.

CAPS outlines the significant leadership roles that Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities have to play in relation to active travel through the development of regional and local transport strategies, local development plans and local cycling strategies.

Through the A96 Dualling Programme, Transport Scotland will work in partnership with the Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities with the aim of delivering improved connectivity between communities along the corridor.

The establishment of an NMU forum for the A96 Dualling Programme will promote this partnership approach through regular engagement with key stakeholders

including Regional Transport Partnerships, local authorities, NMU interest groups and organisations. Through the forum, Transport Scotland will:

- **provide regular updates to forum members on emerging strategies and design proposals;**
- **provide a platform for forum members to provide advice and highlight relevant issues regarding NMU access; and**
- **allow the opportunity for conflicting aspirations / views regarding NMU accessibility to be identified and discussed between forum members, to enable the early resolution of potential problems and the identification of workable solutions.**

2.1.2 Infrastructure, Integration and Road Safety

The Scottish Government, through Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020, is committed to the outcome of safer road travel in Scotland for all road users. The Road Safety Framework⁴ describes the road safety vision for Scotland, aims and commitments, and the Scottish targets for reductions in road deaths and serious injuries to 2020. The Framework enables local partners to address specific local issues in conjunction with national action to make an optimum contribution to reducing fatalities and casualties on Scotland's roads.

With respect to the Trunk Road network, CAPS identifies the 1996 Trunk Road Cycling Initiative, which as its basis, supported the National Cycle Network (NCN) in addition to promoting road safety for cyclists around the interface of the NCN with trunk roads. The principle of the Initiative has been to promote alternative local roads for cyclists rather than mixing cyclists and heavy vehicles on the busier trunk road network. As the NCN provides significant provision for long distance cycle-touring, the outcome of the Trunk Road Cycling Initiative is not to develop comprehensive cycling facilities on trunk roads.

Transport Scotland and their appointed consultants, in partnership with the Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities, will seek to identify opportunities to provide high quality local infrastructure within the A96 Dualling Programme for NMUs with the aim of improving connectivity between communities along the corridor and integrating with public transport facilities.

The Trunk Road Cycling Initiative, a precursor to the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013, sets out special consideration for cyclists in all new trunk road schemes and within improvements of existing trunk roads. Generally speaking the considerations fall into three general principles:

- ***to ensure that there are no hazards to cyclists built into schemes;***
- ***to ensure that the opportunities for cyclists within the scheme are recognised and exploited; and***
- ***to ensure that the opportunities for cyclists on the surrounding networks, including the National Cycle Network and superseded sections of trunk road, are recognised and exploited.***

These considerations shall be adopted as over-arching general principles for the NMU Strategy for each scheme within the dualling programme but shall be expanded to include for all NMUs.

⁴ www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/274552/0082161.pdf

In addition to the three general Trunk Road Cycling Initiative principles above, the A96 Dualling Programme will also ensure:

- ***The A96 Dualling Programme will be developed taking into account the dualling programme objective (and the Scottish Government's aim) of promoting active travel; and***
- ***The needs of everyone regardless of age or disability will be taken into account (i.e. any new NMU facilities will be developed taking into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Transport Scotland's Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads).***

With respect to NMUs crossing the new dual carriageway, the general principles are:

- ***There will be no NMU at-grade crossings of the proposed A96 dual carriageway as all NMU crossing points will be grade separated;***
- ***Where practicable, NMU crossing points in close proximity will be combined and NMU crossing points will make use of other grade separated crossing facilities such as junction overbridges / underpasses and accommodation works overbridges / underpasses; and***
- ***Crossing points solely for the use of NMUs will only be provided where site specific requirements can be demonstrated.***

There may be circumstances where an exception is encountered and a route or crossing cannot satisfy the high level principles above. In such cases, these should be fully documented and justification provided to Transport Scotland.

In addition, the above principles refer to making use of other grade separated crossing facilities such as junction overbridges. There is therefore an overlap with a number of other strategies such as the Junction Strategy, the Lay-by Strategy, which includes the provision of bus lay-bys and the Rest Area Strategy.

2.2 NMU Objective Setting & Context Report

In accordance with the Cycle Audit requirements laid out in 'Cycling by Design' 2010, a Cycling Objective Setting & Context Report should be produced for the dualling programme and each scheme within the programme. As no similar audit process exists for other forms of NMUs such as pedestrians and equestrians, and to ensure a consistent approach is adopted, the Objective Setting & Context Report will include all types of non-motorised users.

An NMU Objective Setting & Context Report details current and potential issues relevant to NMUs and ensures that the design team have all the necessary information to make design decisions that may affect NMUs. It provides a summary of all available information relevant to existing and potential patterns of use by NMUs within the design life of the scheme as well as setting out opportunities and objectives to improve conditions for NMUs. The report also sets out a list of design objectives which should meet the local needs of present and future NMUs using the scheme. The objectives are utilised by designers to aid in the decision making process.

A requirement of the NMU Objective Setting & Context Report relates to the collation of pertinent data on existing NMUs to properly assess the needs of current and potential NMUs that may be affected by the scheme.

The background data should include:

- *Government, Regional and Local Policies;*
- *Existing site characteristics including traffic and NMU flows, accident data and speeds;*
- *Trip generators and desire lines;*
- *User needs (demographic of users and trip purpose);*
- *Constraints; and*
- *Opportunities.*

The views of stakeholders shall be sought, including representative user groups. This list would include but is not limited to:

- *Local authority and/or Transport Scotland Cycling Officer;*
- *Local authority Safe Routes to Schools Officer;*
- *Disability groups;*
- *Local cycling groups;*
- *Local walking groups;*
- *British Horse Society Scotland;*
- *Sustrans (where NCN or disused railway is affected); and*
- *Public transport operators.*

Based on the above, the NMU Objective Setting & Context Report aims to produce the following outputs:

- *Details of the existing and proposed opportunities (through consultation);*
- *Details of key trip generators and desire lines;*
- *Summary of user and stakeholder needs;*
- *Summary of constraints and opportunities within the study area; and*
- *Design Objectives.*

2.3 Design and Audit Process

The infrastructure required for implementing safe cycling routes and crossings is often complex and requires careful consideration during the design and assessment process. Figure 2-A overleaf illustrates the Cycle Audit Process to be followed in parallel with the DMRB Design Process.

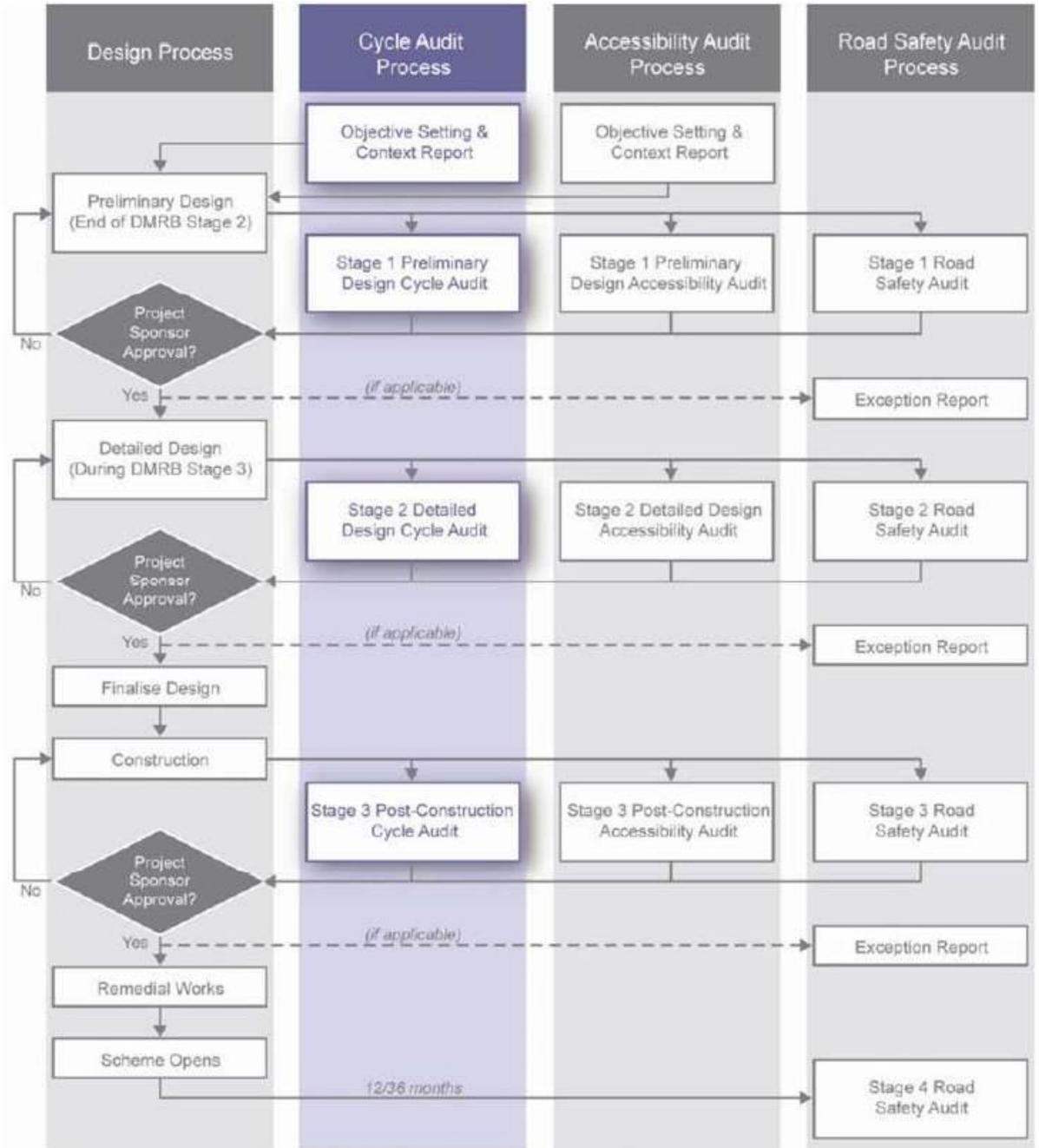


Figure 2-A Design and Audit Process diagram (extract from Cycling by Design 2010)

2.4 Categories of Provision

The NMU provision has been grouped and categorised into four types:

- *Group 1 – Existing Core Paths / National Cycle Routes;*
- *Group 2 – Existing Rights of Way (RoW);*
- *Group 3 – Existing Other Routes - (Paths or Roads); and*
- *Group 4 – Future aspirational paths / routes*

The groupings are for administrative purposes only as part of the assessment process. An assessment matrix has been developed to help determine the impact of the scheme on the existing NMU provision, to record potential options to minimise the impact and the recommendations. The assessment matrix can be found in Appendix A.

2.5 Summary of the Assessment Process for the A96 Dualling Programme

In respect of the A96 Dualling Programme the process begins with the NMU Strategy which identifies the over-arching general principles to be adopted for each individual scheme. The general principles are taken from existing guidance and the dualling programme objectives, as previously described. The NMU Strategy also includes the assessment matrix to be used for the NMU Audits.

The next stage is to develop a high level NMU Objective Setting and Context Report for the dualling programme. This document provides a report structure to be used for each individual scheme NMU Objective Setting and Context Reports. The high level report also outlines the Design Objectives to be adopted for the dualling programme.

The next step in the process is to prepare the individual scheme NMU Objective Setting and Context Reports. The reports will provide details on local NMU policies, trip generators and desire lines as well as potential opportunities. Input should be sought from stakeholders in the development of the reports. Each report will also recommend additional scheme specific Design Objectives to be adopted.

A stage 1 NMU Audit should be carried out on the preferred option for each individual scheme. The audit should make use of the assessment matrix included in the NMU Strategy to assess the impact of the preferred option on the NMU provision within the scheme boundaries. The audit should include every path or route crossed by the preferred option and where possible assess the impact on future aspirational paths / routes (Group 4). Recommendations should be made as part of the audit as to how the Design Objectives, including scheme specific Design Objectives could be met at the next stage of design.

At the beginning of the next stage of design development the design team should consider how best to meet the objectives, including taking on board the recommendations included in the stage 1 NMU Audit.

The developing NMU design for each scheme should be presented at the NMU Forum to seek vital feedback on emerging proposals.

A stage 2 NMU Audit should be carried out on the proposed NMU design to ensure the Design Objectives have been met. If all the objectives haven't been met then

either further changes are required to the design or justification must be provided to Transport Scotland.

The process to follow is shown graphically below in Figure 2-B.

2.6 Testing and Consultation

The A96 Dualling Programme will aim to test the strategy with a selected group of stakeholders such as local authorities (including Access Officers), NMU interest groups and organisations.

An NMU Forum will be formed to assist with the testing and consultation. The objective will be to assess the resilience of the strategy, to invite comments and gather opinion towards the approach. The stakeholder's views and recommendations will be considered following consultation, and through project team agreement, will be incorporated into the strategy where considered appropriate.

When sections of the A96 Dualling Programme progress to DMRB Stages 2 and 3, stakeholder consultation and community engagement⁵ will be undertaken on an individual scheme by scheme basis.

⁵ [http://www.transport.gov.scot/system/files/documents/tsc-basic-pages/A96%20Dualling%20Engaging%20with%20Communities%202015%20\(online\).pdf](http://www.transport.gov.scot/system/files/documents/tsc-basic-pages/A96%20Dualling%20Engaging%20with%20Communities%202015%20(online).pdf)

NMU Provision Assessment Flowchart

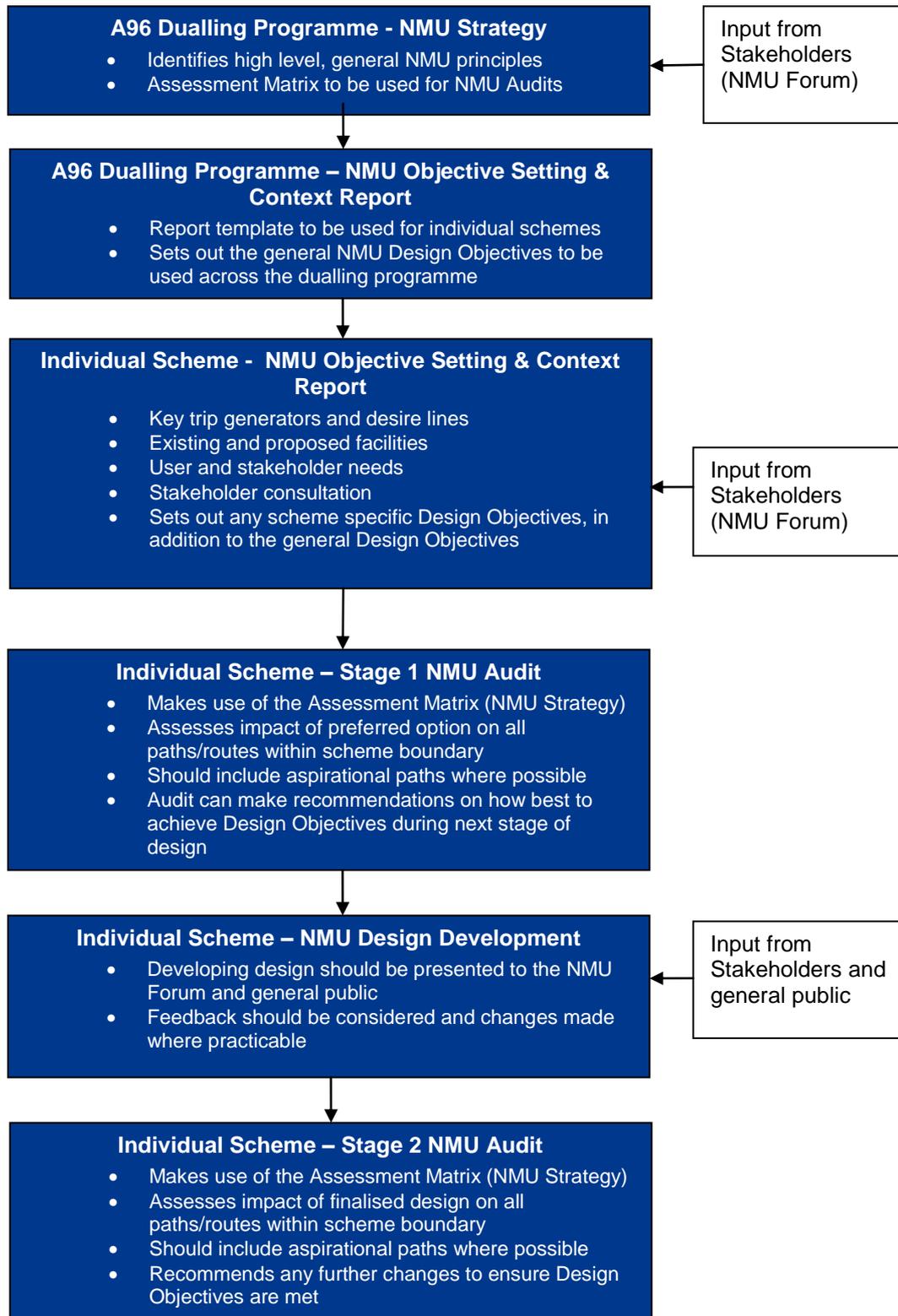


Figure 2-B NMU Provision Assessment Flowchart

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Appendix A Assessment Matrix

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A96 NMU Strategy Assessment Matrix	
Group Category:	
Location of Existing NMU path/route:	
Summary of impact due to scheme:	
Summary of potential options to mitigate impact:	
Engineering and Economics Issues	Assessment Comments
Shared Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the existing NMU path/route used by more than one NMU user group type? 	
Level of Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the current level of usage if known? What is the anticipated level of usage? What facilities does the existing route connect? 	
Length of Diversion/Journey time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely impact on journey time? (Criteria applies predominantly to pedestrians although also some deterrence to cyclists/ equestrians). Severance impact based on Slight/Moderate/Severe impact for new severance in accordance with DMRB Vol 11 Section 3 Part 8 	
Economics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any specific features at the crossing location/potential option which may lead to a significant increase in the cost? 	
Other Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any other engineering issues related to the provision of a connection at the location? 	
Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a summary of the key engineering and economic assessment issues. 	
Environmental Issues	Assessment Comments
Landscape and Visual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider proximity to adjacent housing or other sensitive visual receptors. 	
Cultural Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the impact of the potential options on recorded sites. 	
Property / Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the impact of the location of the potential options on land take. 	

<p>Drainage and Water Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the potential options impact with any flood plains or watercourses? • Are the ground conditions suitable for sufficient level of drainage provision? 	
<p>Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the potential options impact directly or indirectly on any designated sites? • Other known issues relating to flora/fauna/habitat? 	
<p>Other Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other environment issues related to the provision of the potential options at the location? 	
<p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a summary of the key environmental impacts assessment. • Consider the effect of mitigation and/or local re-siting where environmental impacts are potentially unacceptable 	
<p>Stakeholder Consultation</p>	<p>Assessment Comments</p>
<p>Stakeholder View</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of potential reasons for objection/acceptance of the potential options by stakeholders 	
<p>Recommendations</p>	

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