

# Welcome

The A96 is the trunk road linking the cities of Inverness and Aberdeen. The 160 kilometre-long road runs from Raigmore Interchange at Inverness to Haudagain Roundabout at Aberdeen and passes through various towns and villages along the route, including Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Keith and Inverurie.



The intention to fully dual the A96 was announced in December 2011, when Scottish Ministers published their Infrastructure Investment Plan which contained the commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030.

This is supported by the Scottish Government's Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland which focused on developing and promoting economic growth through the key assets of Scotland's cities and their regions including the improvement of interurban connectivity and reduced journey time between cities.

Given the length of the road and the many challenges posed by the route, this project will require detailed and robust engineering and environmental appraisal work.

This exhibition seeks to highlight the key steps which must be completed in order to produce a suitable design for the road. Today is your chance to comment on the early stages of the development work for the project.

**A96**  
**DUALLING**  
INVERNESS TO ABERDEEN



**TRANSPORT  
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# Purpose of the exhibition

The purpose of this exhibition is to explain the process for the examination of the strategic aspects of dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen through the preliminary engineering assessment (PES) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA).

It also highlights the key steps in the planning, design and statutory process Transport Scotland follows during the development of a trunk road scheme.

In addition, following the previous exhibitions in 2012, this exhibition presents the latest route option assessment work on the section of the A96 from Inverness to Nairn including the Nairn Bypass.

Finally, this exhibition also provides a progress update on the A9/A96 Connections Study and the Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvements Project.

Dualling this vital road in the North of Scotland is a significant undertaking which requires careful in-depth planning and design to ensure we deliver the right scheme. This exhibition gives you the opportunity to comment on the early stages of the A96 dualling programme which will enable us to take account of your important feedback.

We welcome your comments and feedback. Please take your time to consider the information presented and provide any feedback you may have on the form provided. The form can either be filled in and returned at the exhibition in the comments box or you can return to Transport Scotland by the deadline date of 31 January 2014. If you have any questions please ask one of the exhibition staff.







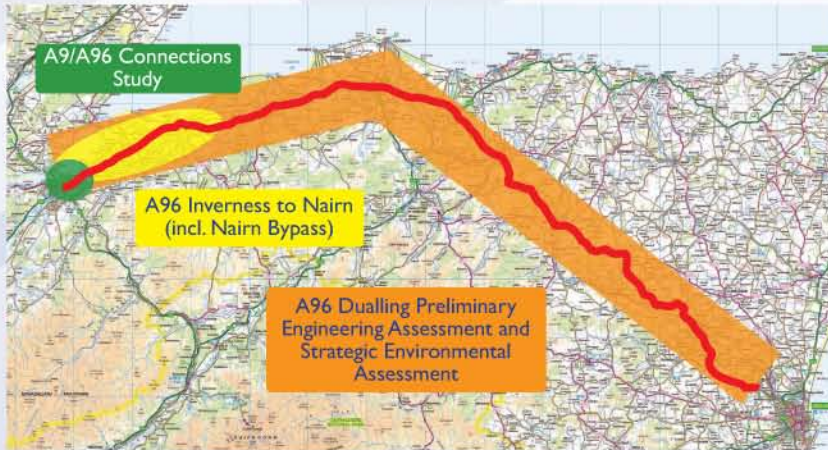


# Format of the exhibition

Each section of the exhibition is colour coded and if you have a query relating to a particular section you should approach a member of staff with a matching colour coded badge.

The following colour scheme has been used:

-  **General**
-  **A96 Dualling Preliminary Engineering Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment**
-  **A96 Inverness to Nairn (Incl. Nairn Bypass)**
-  **A9/A96 Connections Study**



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# Dualling the A96 and A9

The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) detailed plans for up to £60 billion of spending up to 2030. The IIP contains a commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen and the A9 between Perth and Inverness.

It also confirmed the intention to complete the dualling of the A96 by 2030, thus ensuring the road network between all Scottish cities is full dual carriageway standard.

Dualling the A96 and the A9 will:

- **support sustainable economic growth**
- **improve road safety**
- **reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability**
- **bring environmental relief and reduce severance for communities**
- **support access to tourist and recreation sites**
- **provide better links to pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities.**





# The A96 dualling programme



On 9 May 2013 the Minister for Transport and Veterans set out how the A96 dualling programme would be taken forward. This announcement identified packages of design and development work to be progressed over the next few years, with the objective of completing full dualling between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030.

The initial work packages to be taken forward are:

- preliminary engineering and strategic environmental assessment work along the A96 corridor (Stage 1 Assessment)
- on-going route option design work between Inverness and Nairn, including the Nairn Bypass (Stage 2 Assessment)
- assessment of possible route options for bypasses around Forres, Elgin, Keith and Inverurie. This work package will be progressed following completion of the preliminary engineering and strategic environmental assessment work in approximately 12-18 months' time.



# Benefits of dualling the A96

Dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen will improve the operational performance and level of service by:

- reducing journey times
- improving journey time reliability.

It will also improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users by:

- reducing accident rate and severity
- reducing driver stress.

In addition, dualling the A96 will benefit the towns to be bypassed by:

- reducing severance
- improving environmental conditions.

The programme also seeks to facilitate active travel, for example walking and cycling in the corridor, and to enhance integration with public transport facilities.





# Opportunities

The dualling of the A96 provides a number of opportunities for businesses, motorists and local communities:

- it offers the potential to shape existing business practices and promote sustainable economic growth across key sectors such as food and drink, renewable energy and life sciences



- connectivity, business productivity and access to wider markets will be improved, commuting and delivery times will be more reliable
- increased sense of place by removing traffic from towns, improving the environment of these towns and reducing community severance
- the potential to enhance tourist and recreational areas
- improved lay-bys and consideration of rest areas
- potential for improved access to rail and active travel networks, for example walking and cycling
- a consistent road standard which includes a review of the existing dual carriageway sections
- enhancement to the operational and winter resilience of the route.

# Key facts

Dualling the A96 will be complex and challenging and will require careful planning and design to ensure the right scheme is in place before construction even starts.



Project key facts include:

- the length of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen is approximately 160km (99 miles)
- the combined total of the existing dual carriageway sections between Inverness and Aberdeen is approximately 18 kilometres (11 miles)
- the sections to be dualled total approximately 142 kilometres (88 miles).

The length to be dualled is 17 times the length of the M74 Completion, nine times the length of the M80 Steps to Haggis project and over three times the length of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

**A96**  
**DUALLING**  
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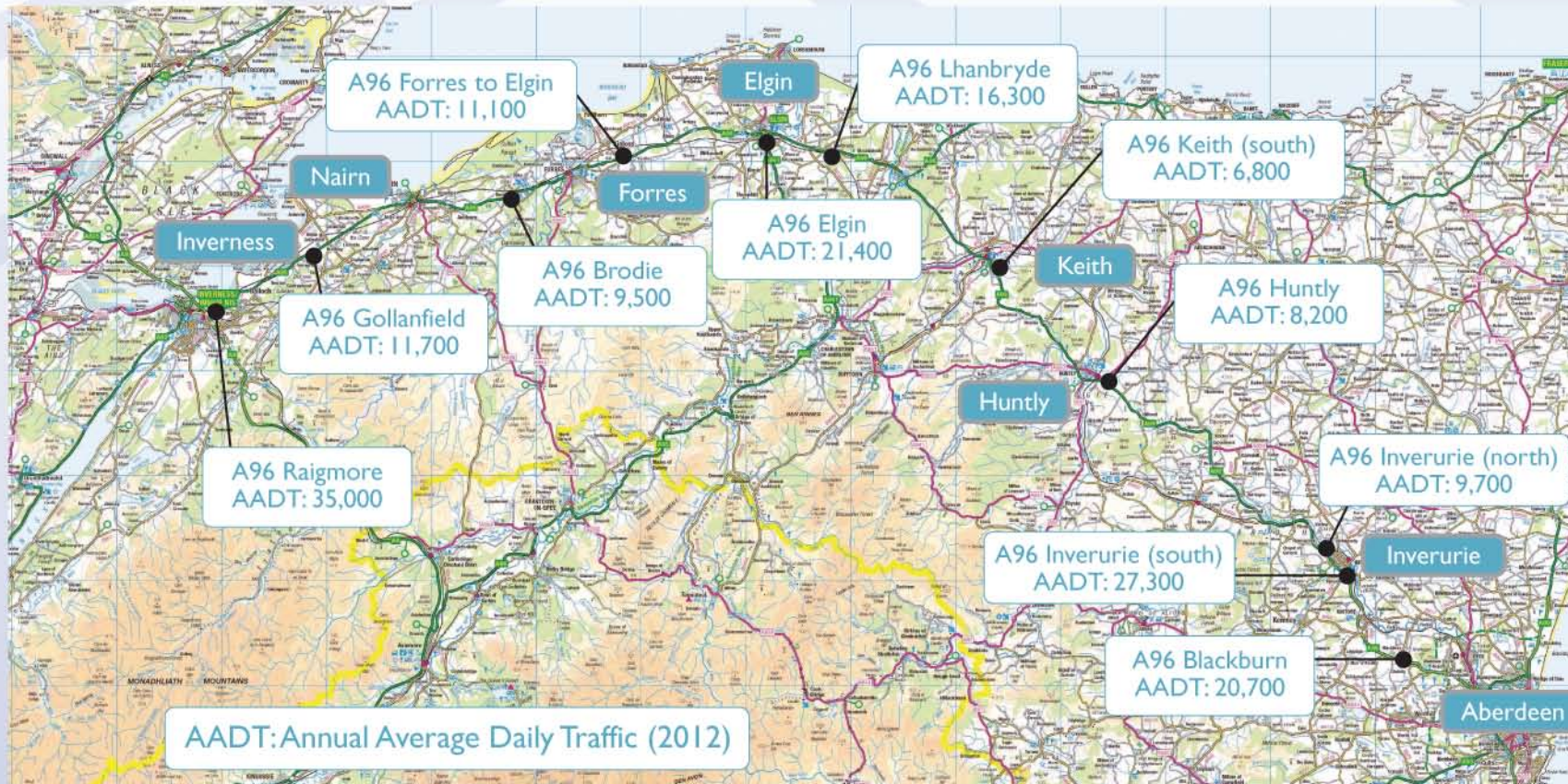
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# Traffic

The A96 is used by a variety of different road users. The diagram below provides a snapshot of the existing vehicle flows (Annual Average Daily Traffic) at different points on the A96.

Light Goods Vehicles and rigid Heavy Goods Vehicles comprise between 7 to 12% of traffic on the A96 with articulated Heavy Goods Vehicles comprising an additional 1 to 9%.





# The planning process (I)

Transport Scotland carries out a rigorous assessment process to establish the preferred line for a trunk road improvement. The three-stage assessment process covers traffic and economics, engineering and environment. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults with a large number of people and interested bodies.

Following Stage 1 it is likely that the scheme will be divided into sections for further assessment at Stage 2 and 3. Further details on the three stage assessment process is given on the following panels.

The Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland, has an excellent record of delivering major, complex transport infrastructure projects on time and budget.

## Stage 1 (Strategic Assessment)

- undertaking strategic planning and development of improved transport links between Inverness and Aberdeen
- identify the economic, engineering, traffic and environmental advantages and disadvantages and constraints associated with broadly defined improvement strategies
- a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report will be published for comment.

## Stage 2 (Route Options Assessment)

- development and assessment of route options for upgrading the A96 from single to dual carriageway. This includes an engineering, traffic, economic and environmental assessment of the potential impacts of each option to inform the route choice
- at the end of this stage the options will be made available for public consultation
- following this assessment and public consultation, the preferred option is then selected and taken forward to the detailed stage.





# The planning process (2)

## Stage 3 (Detailed Design and Assessment)

- detailed assessment and definition of the preferred dualling option
- an Environmental Statement is prepared and the land required for the dualling is identified.

## Statutory Process (Publication of Environmental Statement and Orders)

- the draft Compulsory Purchase Order (defining the extent of the proposed land required to deliver the scheme), the draft Roads Orders (defining the line of the proposed infrastructure) and the Environmental Statement are published
- any statutory objections which are lodged during the defined period but remain unresolved are then considered at a Public Local Inquiry (PLI)
- if the objections are upheld following the PLI, the scheme may have to be amended and taken through the statutory process again. If the objections are resolved or dismissed, then the draft orders are finalised and made
- after this point the legal permissions have been obtained and the preferred option can proceed with the necessary acquisition of land.

Following the completion of the planning stages, the process to procure a works contractor for the construction begins. Suppliers are invited to express an interest in the procurement and then a prequalification

process is used to shortlist suppliers that will be invited to tender. Through the tender process, a supplier is selected and the contract is awarded. The preferred dualling option can then move to the construction phase.



# Surveying the corridor

To help us deliver our plans, a significant amount of survey work will take place along the A96 corridor.

Transport Scotland and its consultants will be engaging with specialist groups and landowners and will continue to visit the area to collect data. This is helping to identify constraints and assess potential impacts on a wide range of environmental factors such as ecology, land use, archaeology, geology and drainage.

Extensive traffic surveys have already been carried out along the route to improve the understanding of traffic volumes and patterns.

Aerial topographical surveys in conjunction with land surveys are currently on site, the data from which, will be used to generate computer ground models of the corridor.





# Assessing the engineering challenge



The preliminary engineering assessment process will consider options to improve the route which meet the objectives of the scheme. It will identify the engineering, environmental, traffic and economic constraints, advantages and disadvantages of broadly defined route corridors.

Existing information is being collated and, where this is deemed inadequate, surveys will be undertaken to ensure the results of this assessment are comprehensively reported.

## Corridor options

Factors to be considered when looking at ways to improve the existing route and develop a full dual carriageway include:

- applying the appropriate design standards for options to ensure safe and efficient proposals are developed
- environmental constraints

- the overall condition and feasibility of improving the existing road, including structures and pavement condition, drainage and alignment geometry
- opportunities to provide environmental enhancement through the removal of strategic traffic from town centres
- topography of the area
- problems associated with drainage and ground conditions
- junction and access provision
- lay-bys and rest area requirements.

Preliminary constraints mapping has begun and early plans are available at this exhibition for your consideration and comments.



# Environmental challenges

The A96 passes through, or close to, outstanding areas of wildlife, scenic and historic significance, with a wide range of nationally and internationally designated sites, including:

- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** areas that best represent Scotland's natural heritage, including the diversity of plants, animals and habitats, soils, rocks and landforms, or a combination of features
- **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA):** sites designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives as internationally important for rare or threatened habitats and species
- **Ramsar sites:** wetland areas of international importance, supporting large populations of birds, invertebrates and other species

- **Scheduled Monuments/ Battlefields:** sites and features protected for their cultural and historic significance

A96 dualling-related effects in and around such areas must be carefully considered through early design phases, and sensitively managed through construction phases.

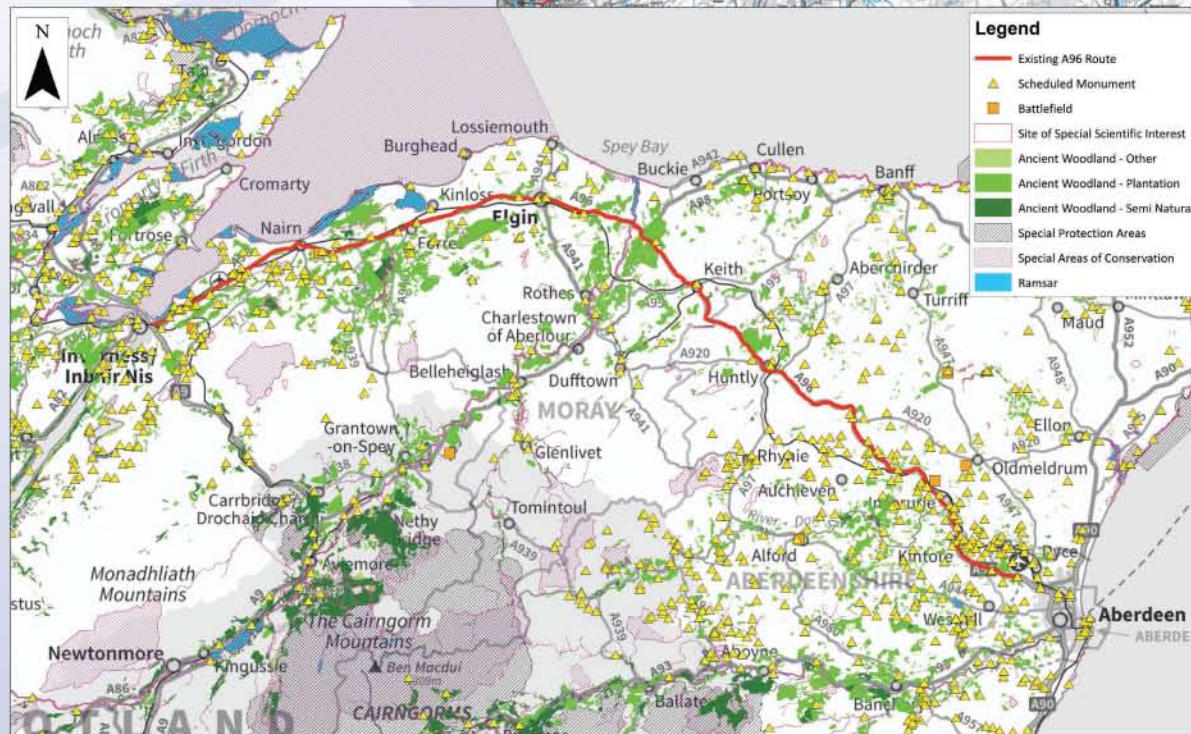
It is extremely important that this built and natural heritage is conserved, not only for its inherent beauty and value, but also for its contribution to the tourist industry.

Transport Scotland engages with key statutory authorities including Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Scotland to determine effective solutions to these environmental challenges.



# Environmental challenges

## Preliminary environmental constraints mapping



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# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)



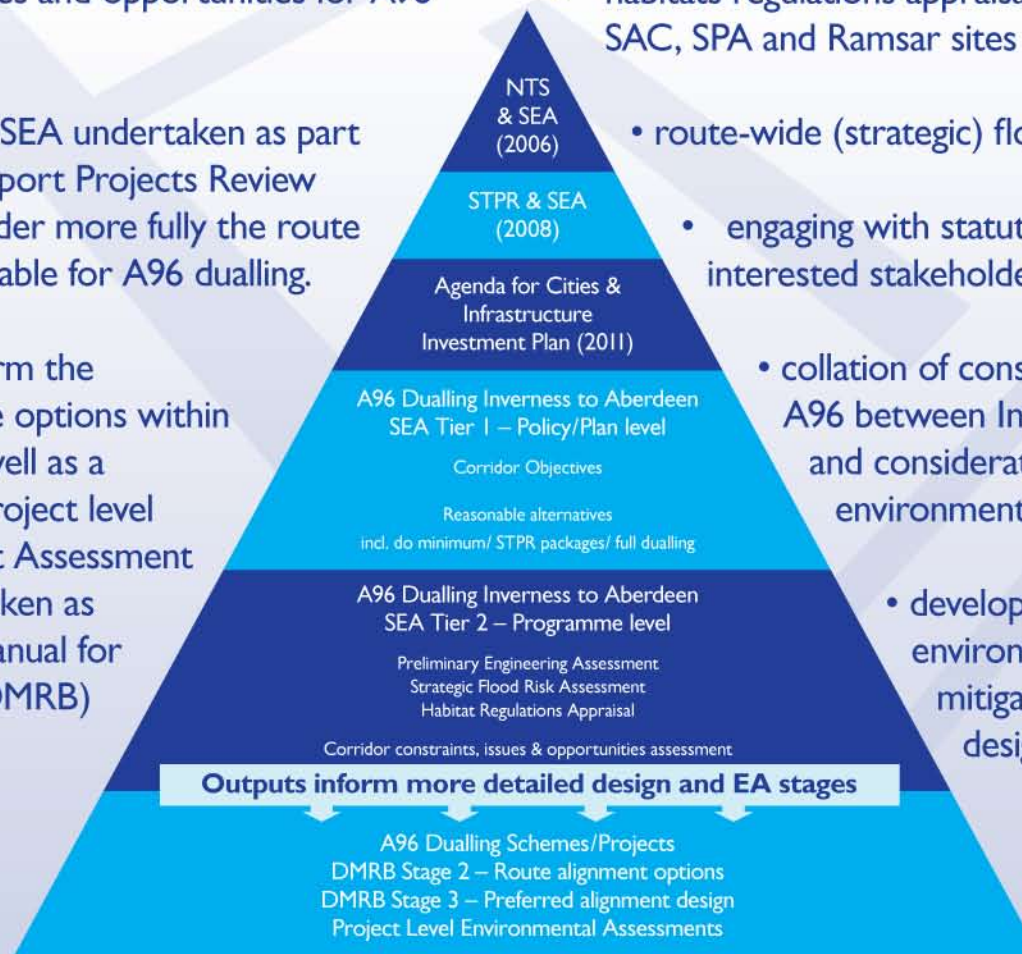
Transport Scotland is undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the route-wide constraints, issues and opportunities for A96 dualling.

This will build on the SEA undertaken as part of the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) and will consider more fully the route corridor options available for A96 dualling.

SEA outputs will inform the development of route options within a route corridor, as well as a detailed design and project level Environmental Impact Assessment which will be undertaken as part of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) assessment process.

Activities being undertaken as part of the SEA include:

- habitats regulations appraisal to consider effects on SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites
- route-wide (strategic) flood risk assessment
- engaging with statutory bodies and other interested stakeholders
- collation of constraints around the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen and consideration of significant environmental issues and risks
- development of strategic environmental principles and mitigation guidance for later design stages.



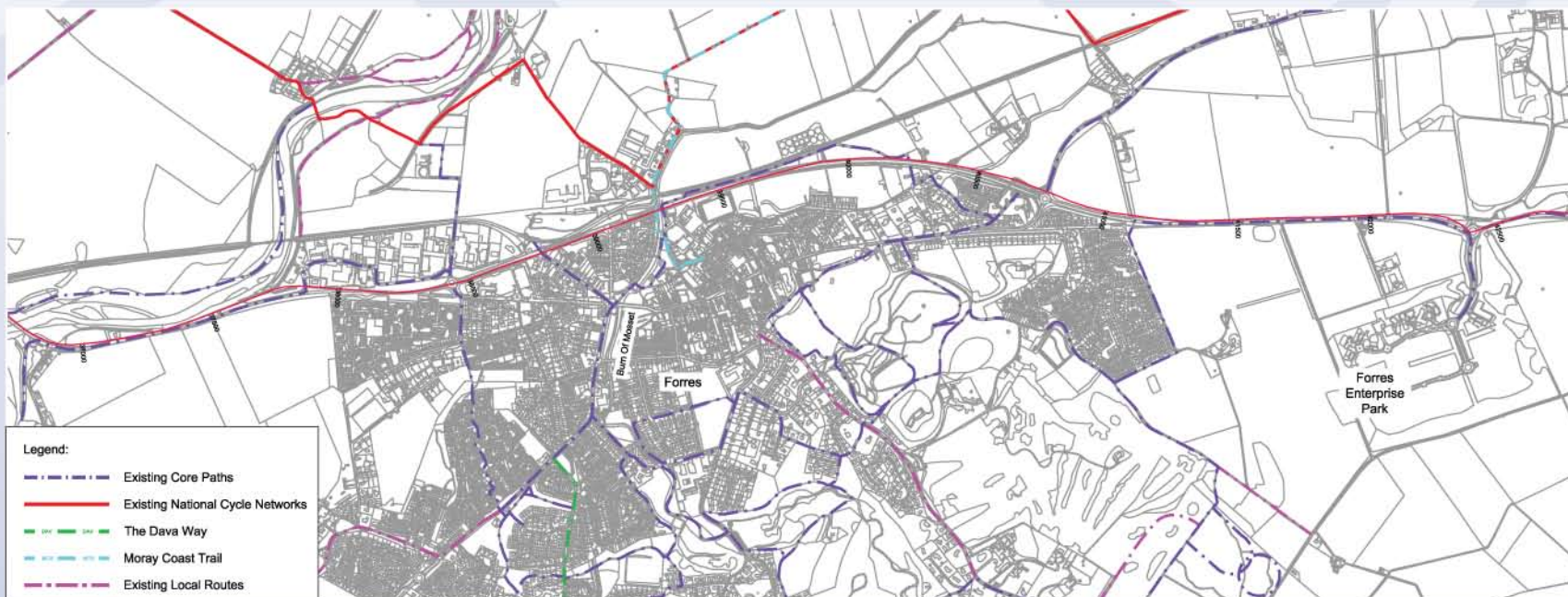


# Accessibility – existing active travel routes/core path plan

Transport Scotland has already met with local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships. It will hold future meetings with organisations such as Sustrans, Cycling Touring Club (CTC) Scotland, The British Horse Society, Ramblers Scotland and ScotWays to maximise the opportunities the dualling of the A96 presents for cyclists, ramblers, equestrians and other non motorised road users.

Data on existing active travel, for example walking and cycling, and recreational routes is being collated at present and your suggestions on the location of any local transport links are welcome.

Please take this opportunity to provide any information you have on active travel and recreational routes in your area on the maps provided.



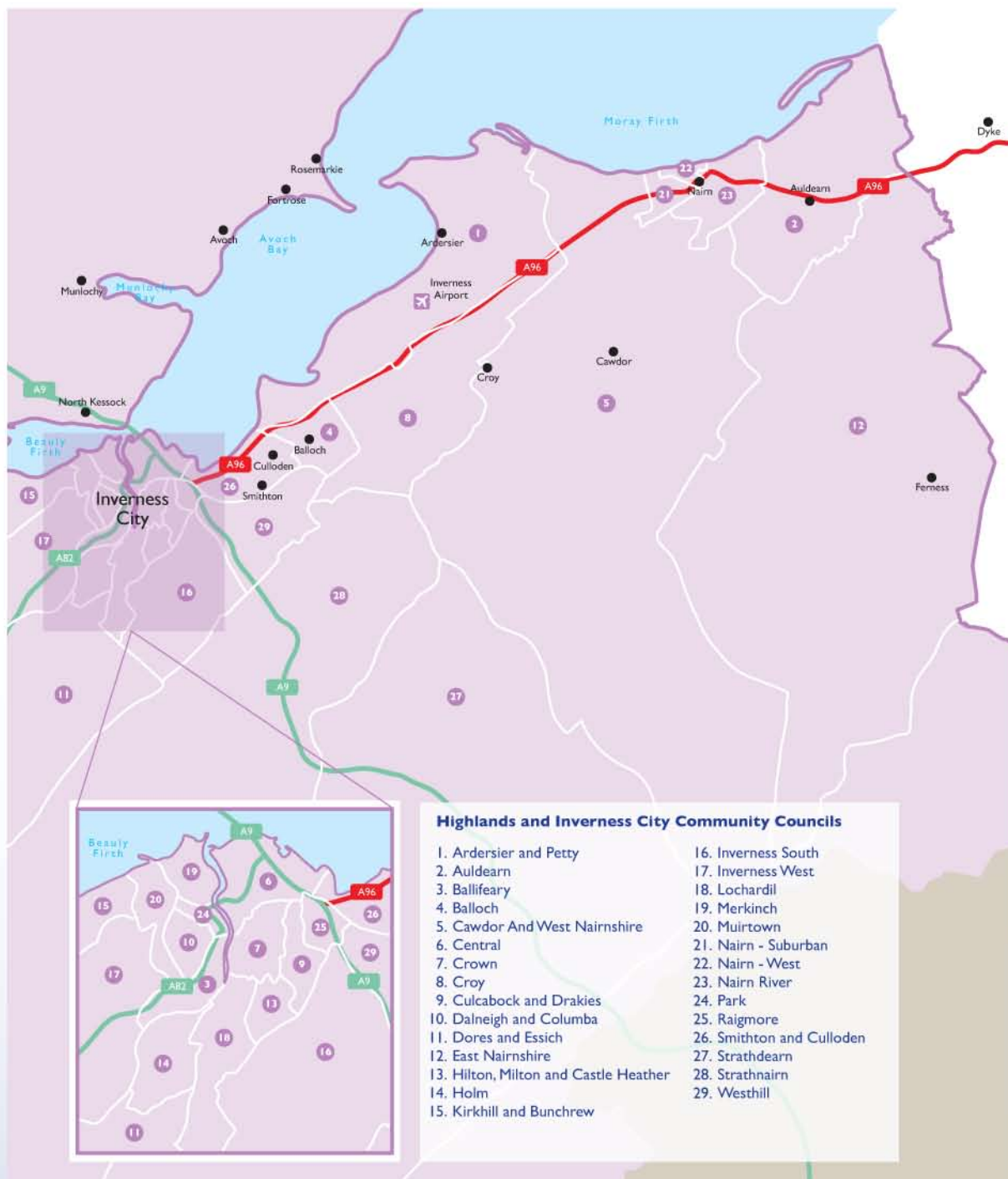


# Engaging with communities

A rolling programme of regular public engagement from Inverness to Aberdeen will be undertaken to ensure businesses, communities and individuals affected by the work are kept fully informed. This will ensure important feedback is taken into account as the project is designed, procured and constructed. As well as bringing benefits, road construction comes with impacts for those living along the

route, which is why communities lie at the heart of Transport Scotland's project planning.

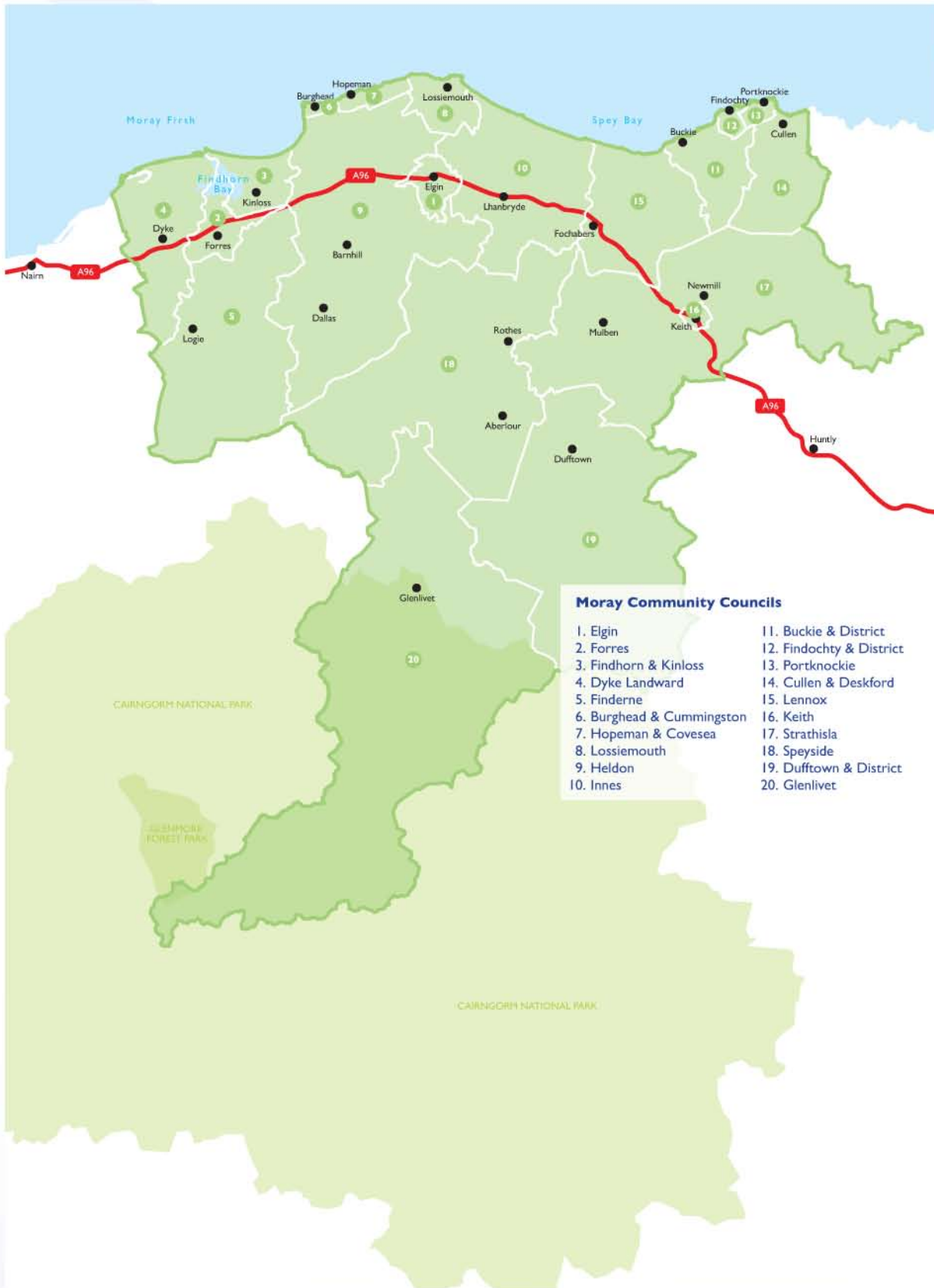
The local perspective on the main risks and opportunities for the A96 dualling is not only welcome, but absolutely vital. Transport Scotland invites you to submit any comments you have on the comment forms provided.



### Highlands and Inverness City Community Councils

- |                                       |                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Ardersier and Petty                | 16. Inverness South       |
| 2. Auldearn                           | 17. Inverness West        |
| 3. Ballifeary                         | 18. Locharilil            |
| 4. Balloch                            | 19. Merkinch              |
| 5. Cawdor And West Nairnshire         | 20. Muirtown              |
| 6. Central                            | 21. Nairn - Suburban      |
| 7. Crown                              | 22. Nairn - West          |
| 8. Croy                               | 23. Nairn River           |
| 9. Culcabock and Drakies              | 24. Park                  |
| 10. Dalneigh and Columba              | 25. Raigmore              |
| 11. Dores and Essich                  | 26. Smithton and Culloden |
| 12. East Nairnshire                   | 27. Strathdearn           |
| 13. Hilton, Milton and Castle Heather | 28. Strathnairn           |
| 14. Holm                              | 29. Westhill              |
| 15. Kirkhill and Bunchrew             |                           |





**Moray Community Councils**

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Elgin                 | 11. Buckie & District    |
| 2. Forres                | 12. Findochty & District |
| 3. Findhorn & Kinloss    | 13. Portknockie          |
| 4. Dyke Landward         | 14. Cullen & Deskford    |
| 5. Finnerne              | 15. Lennox               |
| 6. Burghead & Cummington | 16. Keith                |
| 7. Hopeman & Coveasa     | 17. Strathisla           |
| 8. Lossiemouth           | 18. Speyside             |
| 9. Heldon                | 19. Dufftown & District  |
| 10. Innes                | 20. Glenlivet            |





### Aberdeenshire Community Councils

- |                                |                                    |  |                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Auchterless & Inverkeithny  | 19. Rosehearty                     | 37. Fintray & Kinellar                 | 55. Royal Burgh of Inverbervie |
| 2. Banchory                    | 20. Echt & Skene                   | 38. Kemnay                             | 56. Ballater & Crathie         |
| 3. Banff & Macduff             | 21. Tarves                         | 39. Kintore                            | 57. Braemar                    |
| 4. Cluny, Midmar & Monymusk    | 22. Ythan                          | 40. Newmachar                          | 58. Cromar                     |
| 5. Fordyce & Sandend           | 23. Collieston Amenities Committee | 41. Udn                                | 59. Lumphanan                  |
| 6. East Garioch                | 24. Mintlaw & District             | 42. Meldrum, Bourtie & Daviot          | 60. Torphins                   |
| 7. Portsoy & District          | 25. Strichen & District            | 43. Inverurie                          | 61. Donside                    |
| 8. Turriff & District          | 26. Deer                           | 44. Foveran                            | 62. Strathbogie                |
| 9. Bennachie                   | 27. Cruden                         | 45. Ellon                              | 63. Tap o' Noth                |
| 10. Sandhaven & Pitullie       | 28. Longside & District            | 46. Westhill & Elrick                  | 64. Aberchirder & Marnoch      |
| 11. St Cyrus                   | 29. Aberdour & Tyrie               | 47. Gourdon                            | 65. Alvah & Forglen            |
| 12. Feughdee West              | 30. Methlick                       | 48. Stonehaven & District              | 66. Cornhill - Ordiquhill      |
| 13. Rathen, Memsie & District  | 31. New Pitsligo                   | 49. Catterline, Kineff & Dunnottar     | 67. Whitehills & District      |
| 14. King Edward & Gamrie       | 32. Buchan East                    | 50. North Kincardine Rural             | 68. Huntly                     |
| 15. Fyvie, Rothie, Monquhitter | 33. Invercairn                     | 51. Portlethen & District              | 69. Mid Deeside                |
| 16. Mearns                     | 34. Peterhead                      | 52. Newtonhill, Muchalls & Cammachmore | 70. Birse & Ballogie           |
| 17. Crathes, Drumoak & Durris  | 35. Boddam & District              | 53. Arbuthnott                         | 71. Finzean                    |
| 18. Fraserburgh                | 36. Belhelvie                      | 54. Benholm & Johnshaven               |                                |







**Aberdeen City Community Councils**

- |                                |   |                                      |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ashley and Broomhill        | 11. Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber       | 21. Northfield                       |
| 2. Braeside and Mannofield     | 12. Dyce and Stoneywood                   | 22. Old Aberdeen                     |
| 3. Bridge of Don               | 13. Ferryhill and Ruthrieston             | 23. Queens Cross and Harlaw          |
| 4. Bucksburn and Newhills      | 14. Froghall, Powis and Sunnybank         | 24. Rosemount and Mile End           |
| 5. Castlehill and Pittodrie    | 15. Garthdee                              | 25. Seaton, Linksfield and Pittodrie |
| 6. Cattofield                  | 16. George Street                         | 26. Summerfield                      |
| 7. City Centre                 | 17. Kincorth and Leggart                  | 27. Tillydrone                       |
| 8. Cove and Altens             | 18. Kingswells                            | 28. Torry                            |
| 9. Craigiebuckler and Seafield | 19. Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill | 29. Westburn and Berryden            |
| 10. Culter                     | 20. Nigg                                  | 30. Woodside                         |

# What happens next?

The information collected through survey work and these public information exhibitions will be used to inform the preliminary engineering and strategic environmental assessment work. We will share the outcome of this work with you during public consultation in 2014.

There will be further opportunities for public consultation throughout the design and development process and Transport Scotland will consider points raised during consultation and act upon them where reasonable and appropriate.

**We welcome your comments on the preliminary assessment of dualling the A96 between Inverness to Aberdeen. Please leave them in the comments box provided or e-mail:**

**[a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:a96dualling@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Or post your feedback form to us at:**

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

**by 31 January 2014**

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**For further information:**



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