

A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme



Route options
June 2017



Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme

Introduction

Transport Scotland is progressing an ambitious programme that will see the dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. The route is approximately 160km (99 miles) long, of which 138km (86 miles) is currently single carriageway.

The A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme (western section) will create a new A96 dual carriageway from the tie-in of the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme at Hardmuir, to the east of Fochabers – a distance of approximately 46km (28 miles).

Transport Scotland has appointed the Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture team to take forward the scheme and since the October 2016 'Meet the Team' events, route options have been developed.



An overview of the A96 Dualling Programme

Scheme assessment process

We are following the normal trunk road scheme development process and progressing in accordance with guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The three-stage assessment process covers engineering, environment, traffic and economic considerations.

Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults with a diverse range of stakeholders, local communities and interested parties, including heritage, environmental and Non-Motorised User (NMU) groups such as pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists.

DMRB Stage 2 Assessment

Having completed the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment of the A96 Dualling Programme, the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment is underway for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

A range of route options that have been developed as part of this process are shown on the plan overleaf. Transport Scotland is seeking vital feedback from members of the public and other stakeholders to help inform the ongoing design development work.

The feedback we receive on the route options shown overleaf will be considered, as well as the engineering, traffic, economic and environmental assessment of the potential impacts of each option. These factors will inform the choice of a preferred option.

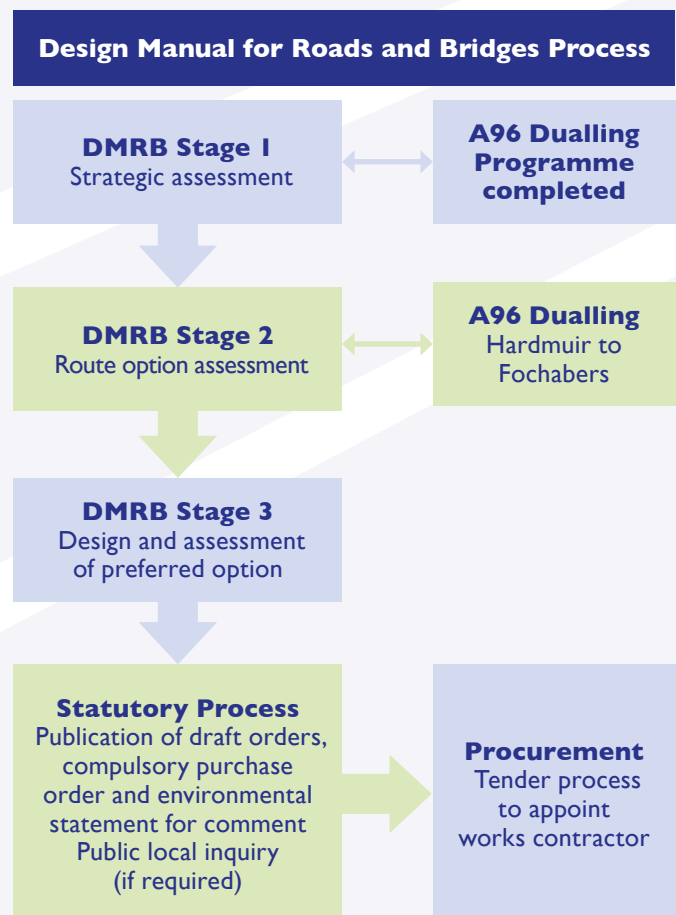
We aim to complete the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment and announce a preferred option for the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme in 2018.

DMRB Stage 3 Assessment

Following selection of a preferred option, the design will be further developed, refined and assessed.

An Environmental Statement will be prepared and the land required for the dualling will be identified.

During this stage of assessment, the preferred option will be developed to take into account the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other Non-Motorised Users (NMUs). Environmental mitigation measures will also be considered and designed during the DMRB Stage 3 process. The draft Road Orders (which show the line of the proposed scheme) will be prepared for publication at the same time as the Environmental Statement.



Route options

- The route options will be subject to development and further assessment during the DMRB Stage 2 process. Several engineering and environmental considerations will influence their development, as will feedback from stakeholders and members of the public
- The options will then be assessed in terms of engineering, environmental, traffic and economic performance in order to determine a preferred option
- The map contained within this leaflet shows a number of coloured elements each with their own reference number. The preferred option will comprise a combination of these elements that will form a continuous route between Hardmuir and east of Fochabers
- The exact positioning of the route options will be subject to development and will depend on further geometric design, including consideration of cuttings and embankments, to provide an alignment that will integrate into the landscape and cross features such as rivers, the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line and local roads
- The location and style of junctions connecting the new dual carriageway to the local road network will be subject to further consideration, design and assessment as the design process continues. These will be grade-separated junctions that will include slip roads and bridges. The drawing overleaf shows potential junction locations. These are indicative only and are

subject to further design and assessment work

- We aim to avoid the potential for property demolition in the development of route options wherever possible
- Initial DMRB Stage 2 Assessment work showed that southerly options, including those in the Pluscarden area, performed poorly against the scheme objectives. These options have been ruled out as a result of this initial assessment and have been removed from further consideration.

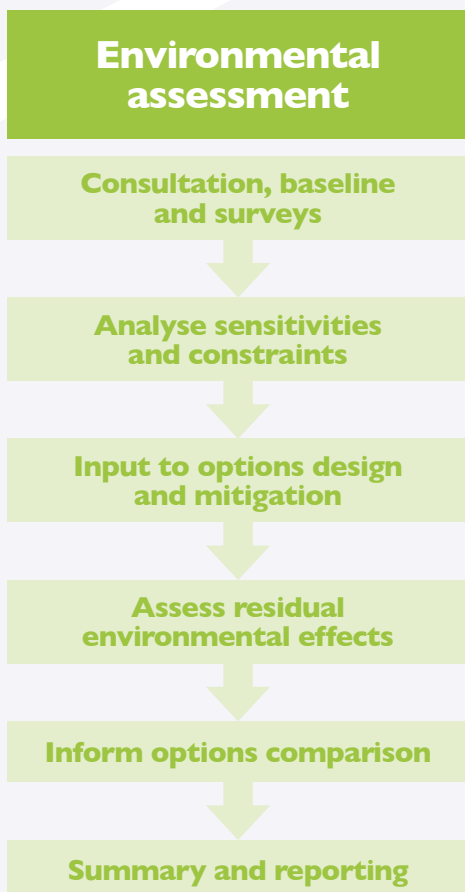
Non-Motorised User (NMU) provision

Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) include pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. They may be recreational users of the route or active travellers and daily commuters.

Suitable provision for NMUs is an important part of the A96 Dualling Programme and the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme. Provision for NMUs will be incorporated as the scheme develops, in consultation with local communities, members of the public and interest groups.

In line with the overall NMU strategy for the A96 Dualling Programme, we are considering NMU needs along the trunk road corridor. This includes an examination of existing facilities and likely future demand, so that potential issues can be identified and associated measures can be taken into account as the scheme develops.

Environmental assessment



The environmental impacts of the route options are being assessed following guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Key topics include:

- **Air quality** – traffic related changes at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas close to roads, schools, hospitals)
- **Noise and vibration** – traffic related changes at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential properties, schools, hospitals)
- **People and communities**
 - Land use changes, agriculture and forestry effects
 - Non-Motorised Users and severance of routes used by the community
 - Travellers using the new road
- **Policy and plans** – land allocations for development, key planning proposals and development plan policy
- **Materials** – material resources and waste management
- **Cultural heritage** – archaeological remains, landscapes and historic buildings (e.g. scheduled monuments and listed buildings)
- **Landscape and visual** – landscape character (including designated areas), effects on topography and potential visual impacts affecting views from properties and on people outdoors
- **Nature conservation** – effects on designated ecological sites, and on important habitats (including rivers and woodlands) and species
- **Geology, soils, hydrogeology and contaminated land** – geological and soil resources, groundwater, private water supplies and other sources of drinking water
- **Road drainage and the water environment** – flooding and flood risk, water quality, drainage and river processes, forms and sediments.

Environmental mitigation measures will be considered and designed after a preferred option has been identified.



River Spey



A96 at Elgin looking east

What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its consultants will continue to progress the development and assessment of route options for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

We will provide updates during the process and further public exhibitions will be held when the preferred option is announced for stakeholder and public comment.

The route options will be subject to further design and development throughout the DMRB Stage 2 process, taking into account:

- feedback from these consultations
- environmental walk-over surveys
- ground investigation works
- consideration of junction locations using traffic modelling

Feedback

Transport Scotland welcomes your comments and feedback on the route options. Your comments will be taken into account during the route options assessment process.

Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by **4 August 2017**.

Comments can be made on feedback forms or sent by email or post.

Email to: a96dualling@transport.gov.scot

Alternatively post to:

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

- further design work on route options and junctions
- preliminary earthworks and drainage design
- flood modelling to identify the type of structures required at major river crossings
- consideration of the needs of Non-Motorised Users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Comparative assessments will be carried out to select a preferred option. These will take into account:

- engineering aspects
- traffic operation
- economic performance
- environmental impacts.

Transport Scotland aims to confirm a preferred option for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme in 2018.

For further information

Should you wish to contact Mott MacDonald Sweco, details for the stakeholder team are:

Stakeholder Coordinator: **Keri Stewart**

Tel: **0141 414 1747**

Email: keri.stewart@sweco.co.uk

Landowner and Communities Manager: **Dave Gowans**

Tel: **01309 250 380**

Email: dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk

By post: **Mott MacDonald Sweco, Unit 16, Horizon Scotland, The Enterprise Park, Forres IV36 2AB**

All of the information presented at the route options exhibitions is available on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers project website:

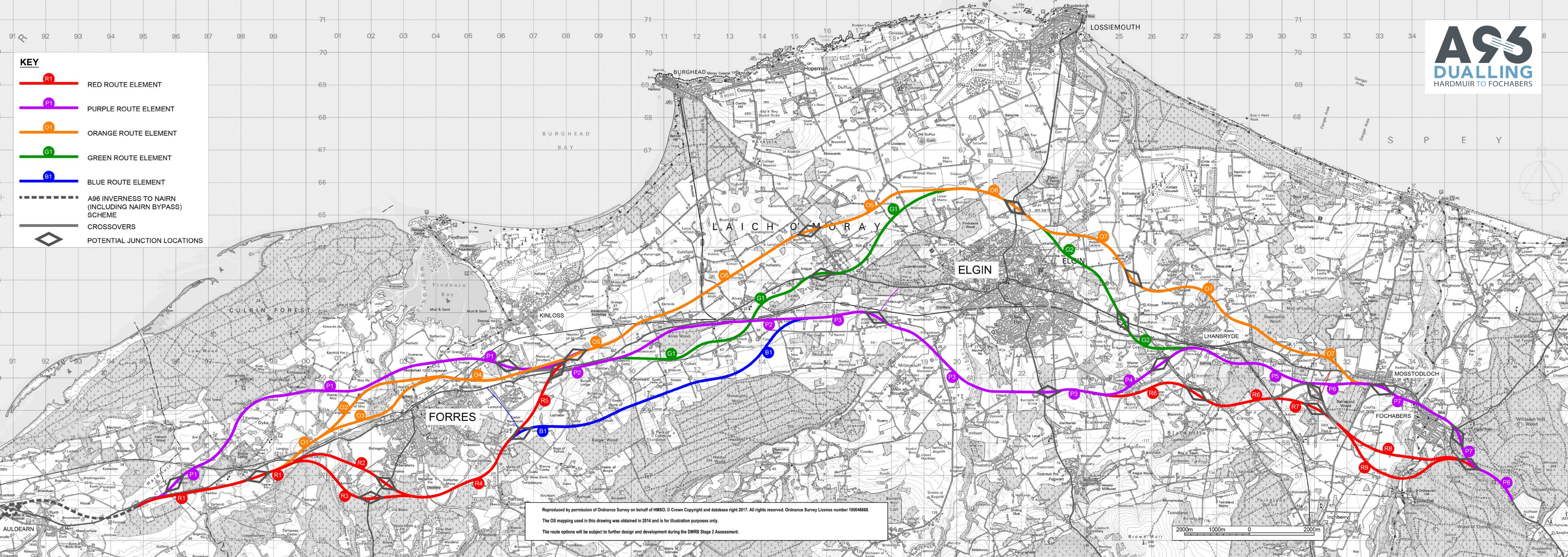
www.transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers

For further information on the wider A96 Dualling Programme, please visit the Transport Scotland website at:

www.transport.gov.scot/a96dualling

KEY

- RED ROUTE ELEMENT
- PURPLE ROUTE ELEMENT
- ORANGE ROUTE ELEMENT
- GREEN ROUTE ELEMENT
- BLUE ROUTE ELEMENT
- A96 INVERNESS TO NAIRN (INCLUDING NAIRN BYPASS) SCHEME
- CROSSOVERS
- POTENTIAL JUNCTION LOCATIONS



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 The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in 2014 and is for illustration purposes only.
 The route options will be subject to further design and development during the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment.

