



TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

A9 / A96

Inshes to Smithton scheme

Draft Orders public exhibitions

transport.gov.scot/projects/a9a96-inshes-to-smithton

Welcome

As part of the Scottish Government's commitment within the £315 million **Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal**, Transport Scotland is progressing plans for a new single carriageway road connecting Inshes to Smithton in Inverness.

This exhibition presents the **draft Orders** and **Environmental Impact Assessment** for the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme.

Information on the following panels includes details of the proposed scheme and an explanation of the statutory process that is being followed.

Copies of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Report Non-Technical Summary** are available for you to take away.

Transport Scotland staff and their design consultants, Jacobs, will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have in relation to the proposed scheme.

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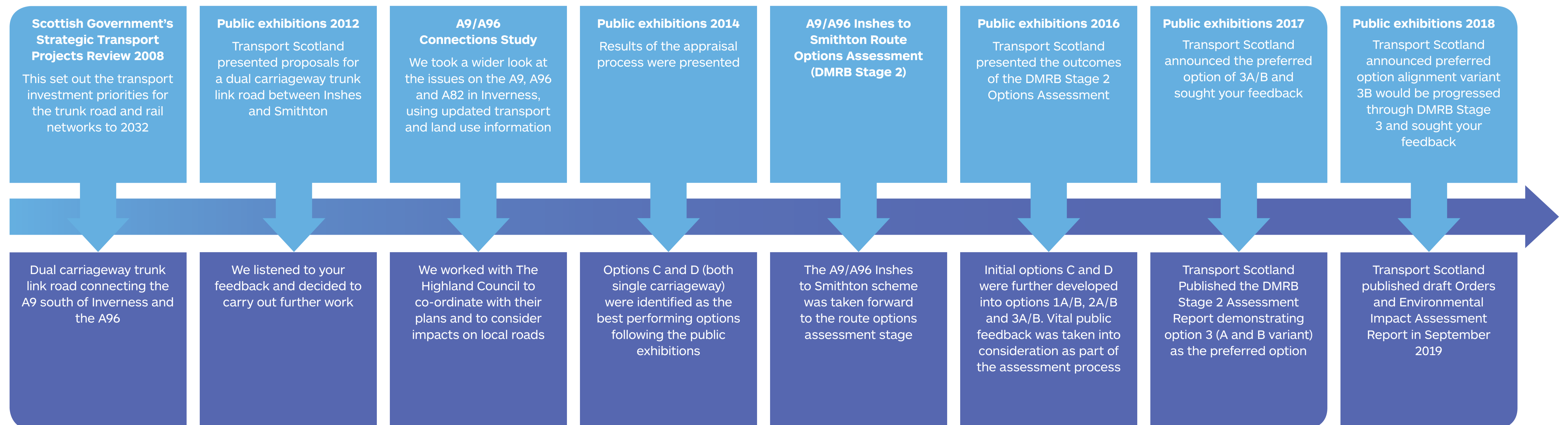
The information presented on these panels is available in full on the project website:
transport.gov.scot/projects/a9a96-inshes-to-smithton

Background

In January 2017, the £315 million **Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal** was signed. Central to the Deal is improving access to and within communities. The Deal will improve connectivity through investment in transport including the development of the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme.

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme is interdependent with other projects and plans being progressed by The Highland Council, as well as being dependent on the proposed **A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme**.

As part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal, The Highland Council will improve the local road network at Inshes to provide the infrastructure needed to support development in the local area.



Need for the scheme

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme is specifically supported within the [Strategic Transport Projects Review \(STPR\) 2008](#) and contributes towards the Scottish Government's overall objectives to provide an efficient, safe and integrated transport system to act as a key enabler for sustainable economic growth.

The [Highland-wide Local Development Plan](#) and the [Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan](#) reflect national policy in relation to delivering sustainable economic growth and developing an efficient, safe and integrated transport system.

The [Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal](#) represents an important delivery mechanism for the region's economic vision and for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The Deal specifically supports the proposed scheme to improve the operation of the network for longer distances and local journeys, providing relief to the A96 east of Inverness and the Raigmore junction.

The proposed scheme will improve the strategic road network in the area, improving its operation for longer distance and local journeys. The proposed scheme will complement the increased capacity of the A96 when the proposed dualling is complete and will improve efficiency of journey times on the local road network.



Existing A9 Southbound Inshes Junction diverge (looking north)



Existing Caufield Road North (looking north)

Scheme assessment process

Transport Scotland carries out a rigorous assessment process to develop the preferred option for a trunk road improvement scheme.

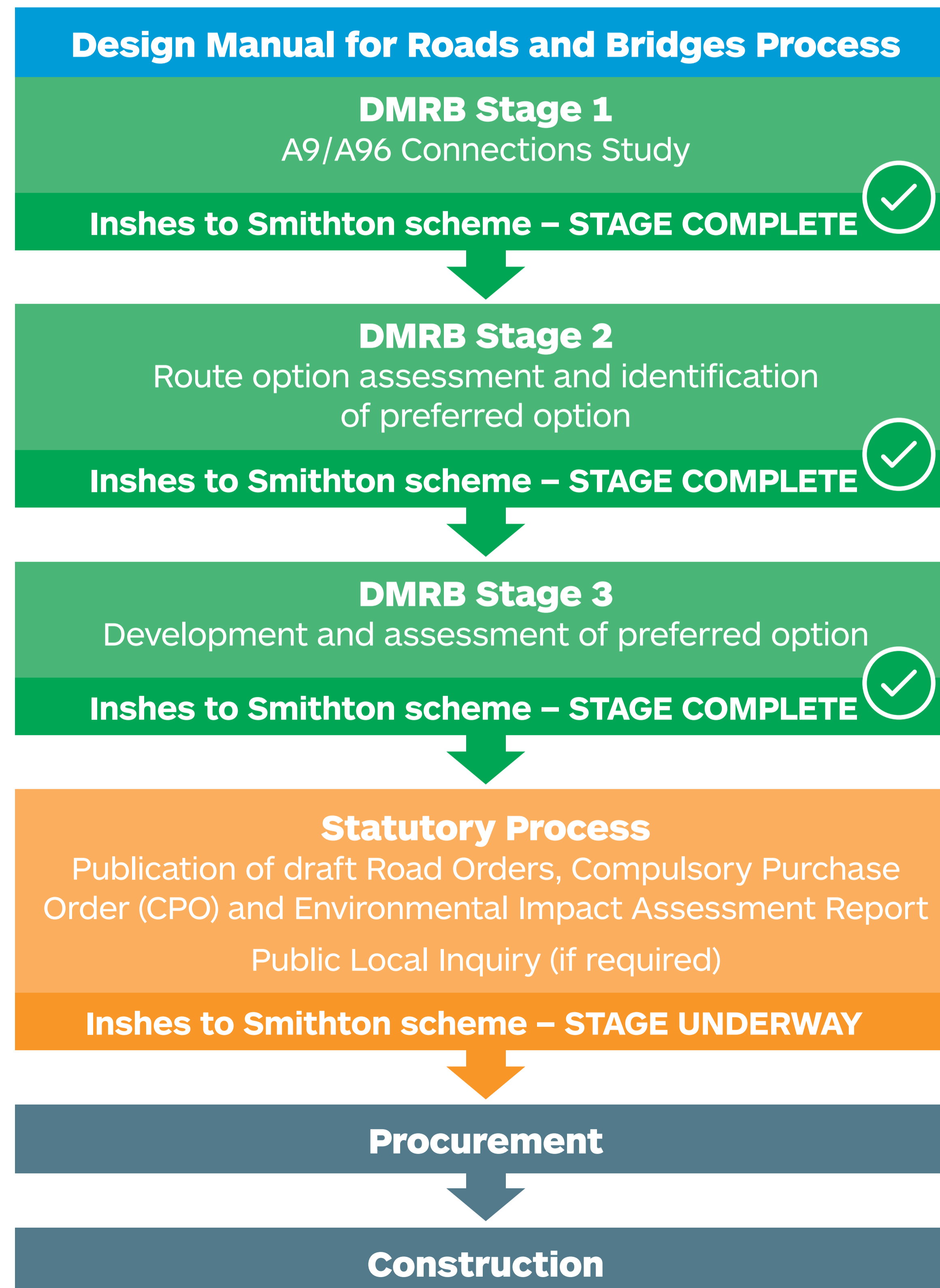
The preparation and development of trunk road schemes follows the scheme assessment process set out in the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\)](#). This three-stage assessment process covers [engineering](#), [environment](#), [traffic](#) and [economic considerations](#).

Consultation

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

The [DMRB Stage 3 Assessment](#) for the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme is now complete and the statutory process for the scheme is in progress.

Today's exhibition will provide you with further information on the publication of [draft Road Orders](#), [Compulsory Purchase Order](#) and [Environmental Impact Assessment Report](#).



Scheme objectives

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme has taken into account the scheme objectives and the Scottish Government's five appraisal criteria, namely: **environment**, **safety**, **economy**, **integration** and **accessibility and social inclusion**.

The scheme objectives are:

- To encourage more effective use of the road network hierarchy and thereby improve the operation of the network for longer distance and local journeys
- To maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport connections arising from the road infrastructure improvements
- To contribute to The Highland Council's Development Plan aims for development east of the A9, and to complement the benefits arising from the dualling of the A96
- To improve safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) where the trunk and local road network interact.



North of Caulfield Road North on National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN 1) (looking west)

The proposed scheme

The proposed scheme comprises approximately 3.2km of new single carriageway (mainline and side roads), to improve the road network between the existing A9 and A96. The proposed scheme also incorporates:

- A lane gain/lane drop arrangement on the A9 southbound diverge, forming a third lane between Raigmore Interchange and Inshes Junction
- Two at-grade roundabouts
- Local road diversions, the provision of new private means of access, and the provision of access for maintenance
- Two principal structures comprising one crossing of the A9 and one of the Highland Main Line Railway
- 12 culverts to allow watercourses and flood water to flow under the proposed roads
- The provision of approximately 7.3 km of shared use path, suitable for pedestrians and cyclists (referred to as Non-Motorised Users or NMUs), which has been developed collaboratively with The Highland Council to complement the Inverness East Development Brief
- Utility works including the diversion and protection of services such as gas, electricity, water and telecommunications.



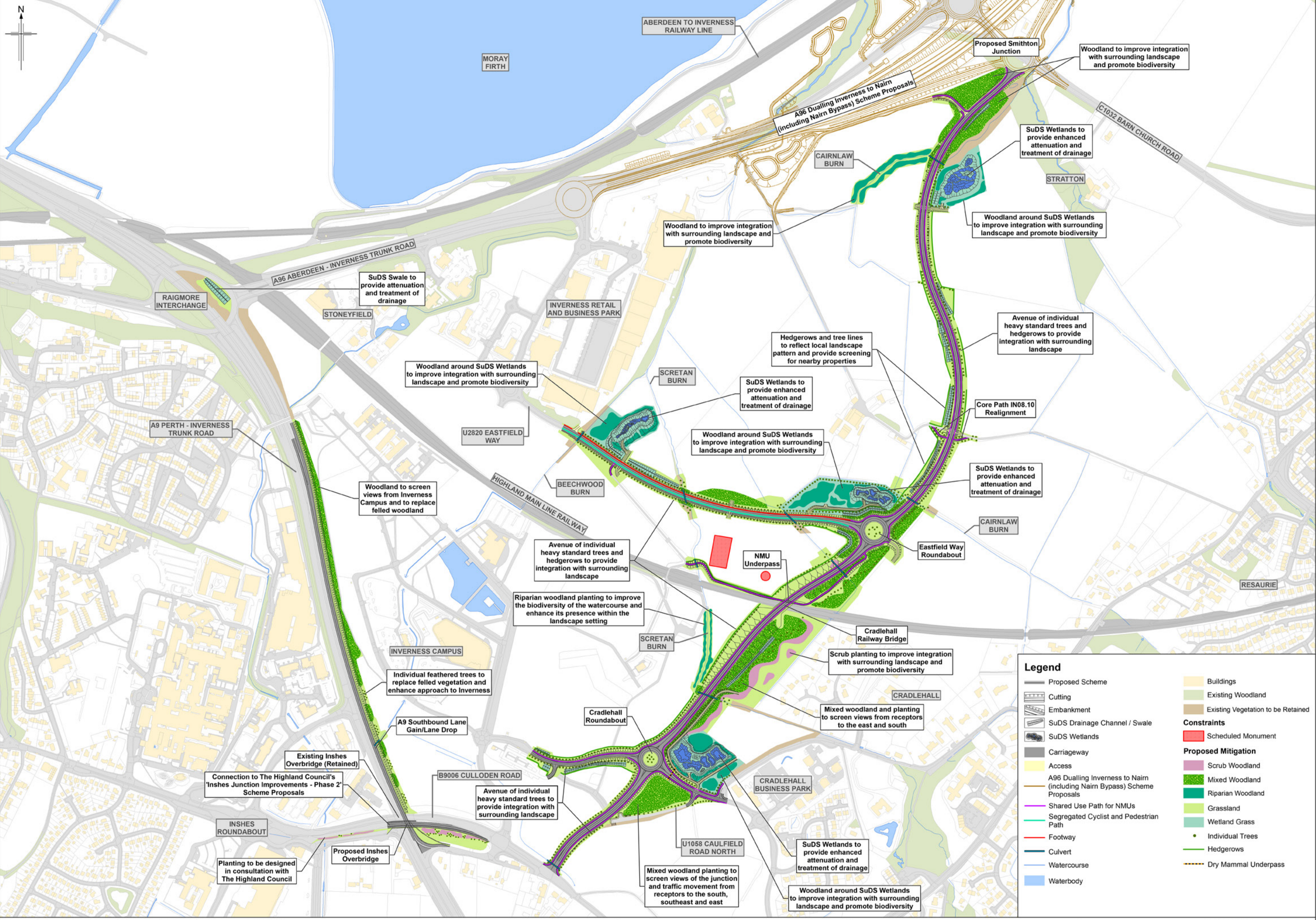
Proposed Cradlehall Roundabout (looking north)



Proposed Eastfield Way Roundabout (looking east)



Proposed scheme between Eastfield Way Roundabout and Smithton Junction (looking north)



Legend

	Proposed Scheme		Buildings
	Cutting		Existing Woodland
	Embankment		Existing Vegetation to be Retained
	SuDS Drainage Channel / Swale	Constraints	
	SuDS Wetlands		Scheduled Monument
	Carriageway	Proposed Mitigation	
	Access		Scrub Woodland
	A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) Scheme Proposals		Mixed Woodland
	Shared Use Path for NMUs		Riparian Woodland
	Segregated Cyclist and Pedestrian Path		Grassland
	Footway		Wetland Grass
	Culvert		Individual Trees
	Watercourse		Hedgerows
	Waterbody		Dry Mammal Underpass

Proposed Mitigation:

- Scrub Woodland
- Mixed Woodland
- Riparian Woodland
- Grassland
- Wetland Grass
- Individual Trees
- Hedgerows
- Dry Mammal Underpass

Constraints:

- Scheduled Monument

Proposed Scheme:

- Proposed Scheme
- Cutting
- Embankment
- SuDS Drainage Channel / Swale
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- Carriageway
- Access
- A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) Scheme Proposals
- Shared Use Path for NMUs
- Segregated Cyclist and Pedestrian Path
- Footway
- Culvert
- Watercourse
- Waterbody

Other Callouts:

- Woodland to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- SuDS Swale to provide attenuation and treatment of drainage
- Woodland around SuDS Wetlands to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Woodland to screen views from Inverness Campus and to replace felled woodland
- Avenue of individual heavy standard trees and hedgerows to provide integration with surrounding landscape
- Riparian woodland planting to improve the biodiversity of the watercourse and enhance its presence within the landscape setting
- Individual feathered trees to replace felled vegetation and enhance approach to Inverness
- Connection to The Highland Council's 'Inshes Junction Improvements - Phase 2' Scheme Proposals
- Planting to be designed in consultation with The Highland Council
- Woodland around SuDS Wetlands to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- SuDS Wetlands to provide enhanced attenuation and treatment of drainage
- Woodland around SuDS Wetlands to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Woodland to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Hedgerows and tree lines to reflect local landscape pattern and provide screening for nearby properties
- SuDS Wetlands to provide enhanced attenuation and treatment of drainage
- Woodland around SuDS Wetlands to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Avenue of individual heavy standard trees and hedgerows to provide integration with surrounding landscape
- SuDS Wetlands to provide enhanced attenuation and treatment of drainage
- Woodland around SuDS Wetlands to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Scrub planting to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Mixed woodland and planting to screen views from receptors to the east and south
- SuDS Wetlands to provide enhanced attenuation and treatment of drainage
- Woodland around SuDS Wetlands to improve integration with surrounding landscape and promote biodiversity
- Mixed woodland planting to screen views of the junction and traffic movement from receptors to the south, southeast and east

Adjacent scheme proposals

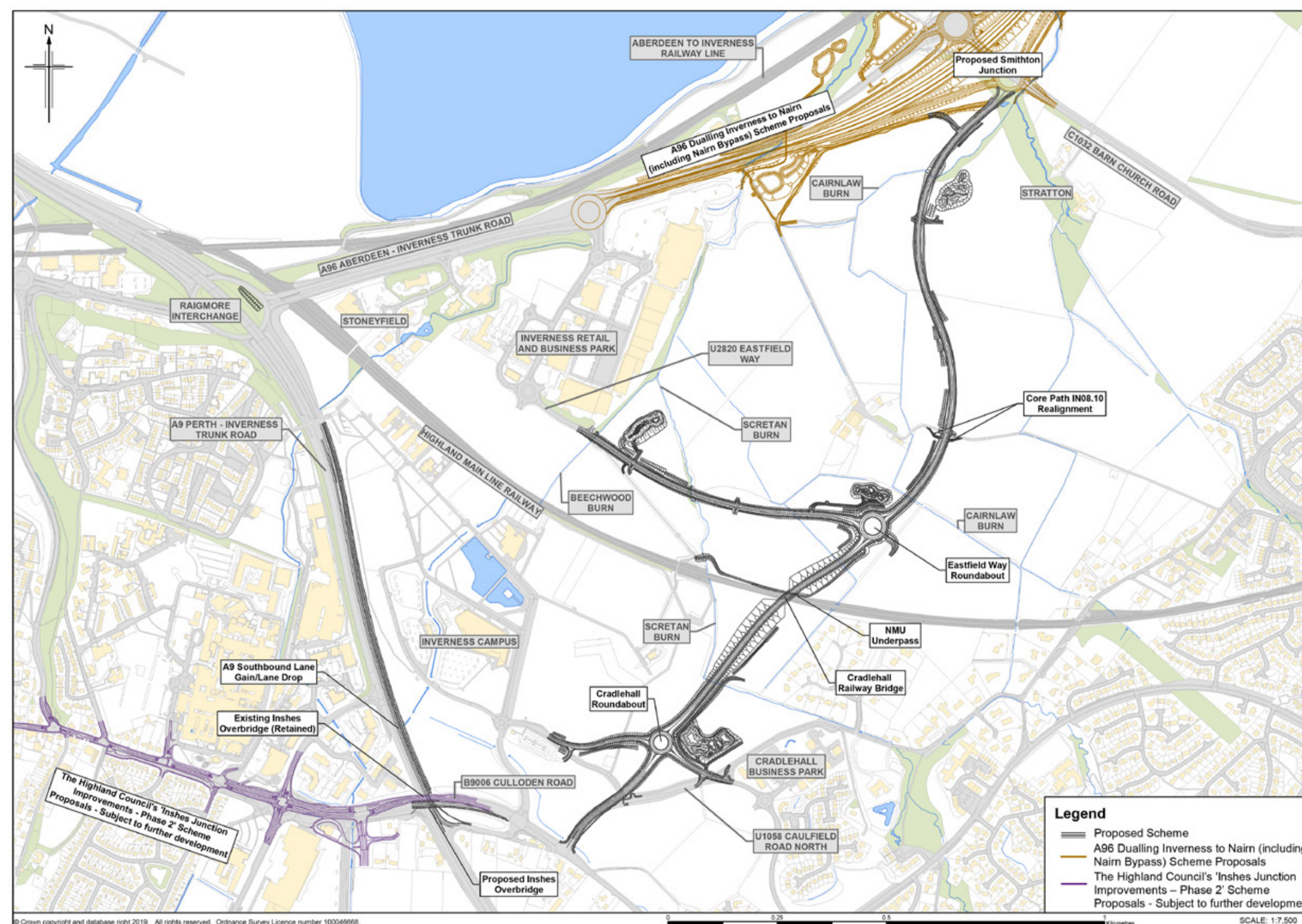
The proposed scheme is interdependent on both the **Inshes Junction Improvements – Phase 2** and the **A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)** scheme.

The Inshes Junction Improvements – Phase 2 (Inshes and Raigmore Development Area)

The Inshes Junction Improvements – Phase 2 will address existing congestion in the Inshes and Raigmore area of Inverness, predominantly at Culloden Road, the Inshes Roundabout, Old Perth Road and Sir Walter Scott Drive. The Inshes Junction Improvements – Phase 2 is being taken forward by The Highland Council.

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is included within the future baseline for the proposed A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme. The proposed scheme is dependent on the existence of the dualled A96, including the proposed A96 Smithton Junction. Without it, the proposed scheme will not be progressed. The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is being taken forward by Transport Scotland.



Protection of the environment

One of the main considerations throughout the development of the proposed scheme has been the need to avoid or reduce potential adverse effects on the environment.

The design of the proposed scheme has been informed by detailed environmental assessments, which have considered the biological, physical and historic environment, local communities and landowners, and the current or planned future use of the environment.

An [Environmental Impact Assessment \(EIA\)](#) of the proposals has been undertaken, with environmental constraints and issues identified and incorporated into the decision-making process throughout the development of the proposed scheme.

The mitigation developed has considered the environment in the vicinity of the proposed scheme and aims to reduce or offset the impacts predicted as a result of the assessment. Transport Scotland has published an [Environmental Impact Assessment Report](#), which reports on the findings of the EIA.

The [Environmental Impact Assessment Report](#) is available in full at the exhibition and on Transport Scotland's website. A [Non-Technical Summary of the EIA](#) has also been prepared and copies are available for you to take away.



View from southern end of Core Path IN08.10 looking north-west towards the Moray Firth and the Black Isle

Environmental sensitivities

As part of the **Environmental Impact Assessment**, a wide range of environmental sensitivities have been identified and assessed in the vicinity of the proposed scheme.

Key considerations include:

- Presence of habitat for protected species including otters, bats, badgers, and protected birds
- Environmentally sensitive surface water features including Scretan Burn, Cairnlaw Burn, Beechwood Burn and their tributaries
- Existing and predicted future areas of flood sensitivity, including both river and surface water flood risks
- Cultural heritage assets including a scheduled monument, archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes
- Residential properties in the vicinity of the proposed scheme are all considered sensitive to noise, air quality, and visual impacts
- Prime agricultural land in use along the route of the proposed scheme.



Cairnlaw Burn and surrounding agricultural landscape

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** contains full details of the EIA, including the mitigation proposed to avoid or reduce potential impacts. A **Non-Technical Summary** outlines the key issues in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, including the beneficial and adverse impacts considered to be of particular importance.



Beechwood Burn Watercourse

The **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** provides information regarding:

- Air quality
- Noise and vibration
- Landscape and visual
- Ecology and nature conservation
- Geology, soils, contaminated land and groundwater
- Road drainage and the water environment
- Cultural heritage
- Community and private assets
- All travellers
- Materials and waste.

To inform the EIA process, comprehensive consultation was undertaken with statutory consultees including **The Highland Council, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA); non-statutory consultees; local interest groups; and community councils.** The project team has worked closely with these groups to develop a scheme that aims to reduce environmental impacts through careful design, specific mitigation measures, and by seeking to avoid sensitive features.

Predicted environmental impacts

Environmental impacts associated with the proposed scheme are anticipated to include the following:

- Significant increases in traffic noise for 11 properties due to road traffic flow changes on existing road links
- Loss of prime agricultural land
- Impacts on the open agricultural landscape of farmland and the formal planting and parkland of Inverness Campus
- Impacts on views from a number of residential properties
- Ecological habitat loss, severance and fragmentation affecting bats and breeding birds
- Impacts on 31 individual and grouped tree features
- Increase in flood risk of four watercourses within the land purchased for the proposed scheme, and a beneficial impact on flooding for three watercourses
- Impacts on the setting of two cultural heritage sites and severance of archaeological remains
- Severance of two local paths, and relief from existing severance on one local path
- Temporary impacts for local residents, vehicle travellers, and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) and during construction.



Looking north-west towards Black Isle and Moray Firth

Environmental design and mitigation

The proposed scheme passes through existing farmland in a semi-rural area, which includes some environmentally sensitive areas and runs close to communities and individual properties. Therefore, the environmental design and mitigation proposals incorporate the following:

- Developing the proposed scheme to avoid severing the two parts of the scheduled monument
- Developing the proposed scheme design to minimise severance of agricultural land
- Planting to provide screening and to create views
- Easing of embankments to integrate into landscape
- Landscaping designed for ecological mitigation and habitat enhancement
- Retention of existing trees and vegetation, where possible, including for provision of bat boxes
- Design of drainage ponds to look as natural as possible, with planting to provide wildlife habitats and visual interest
- Creation of crossing points to maintain existing routes used by badgers and otters
- Archaeological excavation of historical sites to make a permanent record of archaeological remains
- Reconnection of field drainage systems and reinstatement of boundary features
- Treatment of road drainage before discharging to watercourses
- Improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists as part of the proposed scheme design
- Methods to minimise disruption for local residents, vehicle travellers, and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) due to construction.



Castlehill Gardens (looking west)

Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) and active travel

Facilities for NMUs are an integral feature of the proposed scheme. As part of the **DMRB Stage 3 Assessment process**, Jacobs has identified and assessed impacts on existing NMU links in developing the scheme design for all users. NMU provision for the scheme has been developed during the DMRB Stage 3 Assessment, in conjunction with The Highland Council's emerging masterplan for Inverness East.

The following objectives have been established in terms of NMU provision for this scheme:

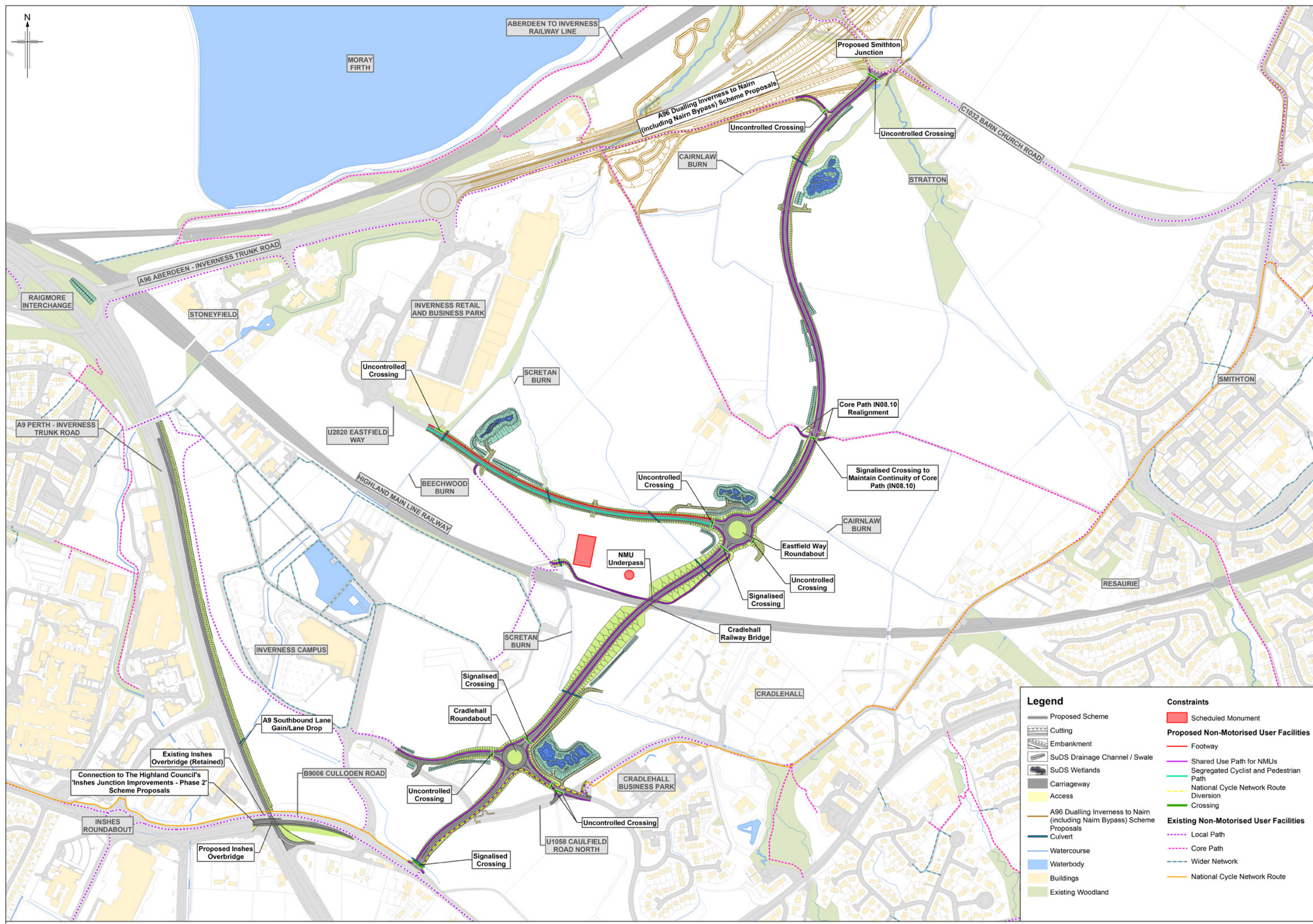
- To maintain continuity of the existing National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN 1) as it passes through the proposed scheme corridor
- To maintain continuity of the existing core path at Ashton Farm as it passes through the proposed scheme corridor



- To maintain continuity of other existing NMU routes as they pass through the proposed scheme corridor
- To take account of the proposed East Inverness Active Travel Corridor (EIATC) in the development of the proposed scheme design
- To recognise and exploit opportunities to provide for existing and potential future desirable pedestrian and cycling routes that pass through the proposed scheme corridor and the surrounding area.

To assist in meeting these objectives, the NMU design has been developed to include:

- A 3-metre shared surface adjacent to both sides of the proposed carriageway, including a 0.6 metre segregation strip
- A 3.5-metre dedicated cycleway along the link to Inverness Retail and Business Park, plus a 2-metre footway adjacent to both sides of the link
- Continuity of National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN 1)
- An NMU facility adjacent to the Highland Main Line Railway to tie into the existing facilities between the Inverness Campus and Inverness Retail and Business Park.



Construction

Construction of the proposed scheme can only commence if it is approved through the statutory process. Thereafter, a timetable for progress can be determined. Construction will generally be achieved through offline construction, with the exception of the proposed additional lane to be added adjacent to the existing A9 southbound carriageway between Raigmore Interchange and A9 Inshes southbound junction, and at local road tie-ins.

Key considerations of the construction process are as follows:

- Minimising disruption to the existing road network
- Some lane closures may be required for activities such as beam lifting and construction tie-ins. These operations will be restricted to night-time and weekends whenever possible
- Minimising disruption to the travelling public and local residents
- Measures to restrict the use of certain local roads during construction may be implemented to minimise disruption
- The works are expected to take approximately two years to complete.



Ground investigation works

Draft Orders and Environmental Impact Assessment Report

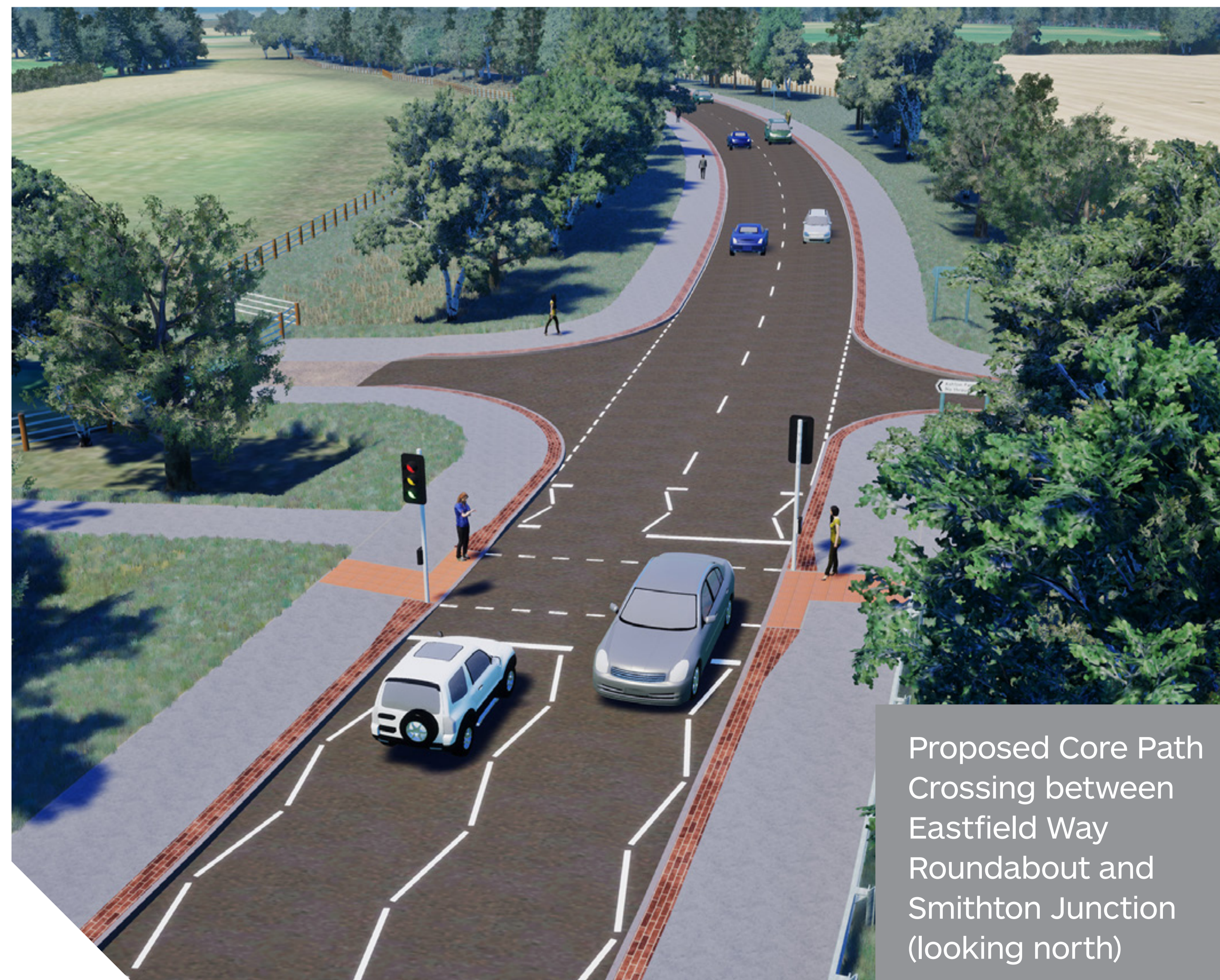
The **draft Orders** are available for viewing at this exhibition. These are statutory documents that define the line of the proposed road and associated improvements, and the extent of land that must be acquired for the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed scheme. A copy of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** is also available for viewing at this exhibition. The draft Orders and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report are also available to view electronically on Transport Scotland's website.

Hard copies are available for inspection at the following locations:

- **The Highland Council**, Glenurquahart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX
- **Inverness Library**, Farraline Park, Inverness IV1 1NH
- **Culloden Library**, Keppoch Road, Culloden, Inverness IV2 7LL
- **Inshes Library**, Inshes Road, Inverness IV2 3RF

And at:

Transport Scotland
Major Projects
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF



What happens next?

The **draft Orders** and **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** were published on **13 September 2019**. This marked the start of the statutory procedures and the formal consultation period.

Representations to the draft Orders, including objections, can be made in writing to Transport Scotland during the formal consultation period which closes on:

25 October 2019

Formal representations should be submitted in writing to the address below:

Director of Major Projects
A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Scheme
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

Or by email to:

a9a96-inshes-smithton@transport.gov.scot



Proposed new single carriageway from A96 Smithton Junction (looking south)

Should formal objections to the **draft Orders** be received which cannot be resolved, there may be the need for a **Public Local Inquiry (PLI)** before the scheme can proceed. A timetable for construction can only be determined once the scheme has been approved under the statutory procedures.

For further information on the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme, please visit the Transport Scotland website at:

transport.gov.scot/projects/a9a96-inshes-to-smithton