

A9/A96 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 single carriageway road connecting Inshes to Smithton in Inverness.

The purpose of this exhibition is to present the options under consideration for the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme to you and also to seek your vital feedback.

We would like to hear your views so we can take these into account during the route options assessment process.

Please take your time to consider the information presented. A leaflet summarising the exhibition content is available for you to take away, as well as a feedback form, where we welcome your comments. You can complete the feedback form and leave in the Feedback Box at the exhibition, or submit by email or post.

Staff from both Transport Scotland and its consultants, Jacobs, will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have in relation to the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme.



A9 looking north towards Inshes junction

Introduction

Background

The **Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR)**, published in 2008, set out the Scottish Government's transport investment priorities over the coming decades. Specific trunk road interventions emerging from the review included upgrading the A96 between Inverness and Nairn to dual carriageway with a new link connecting the A96 and A9 south of Inverness.

In 2010, Transport Scotland commissioned Jacobs to undertake the A96 Inshes to Nairn Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Assessment, which included consideration of options for a new link road connecting Smithton on the A96 with Inshes on the A9.

Following this initial work, public exhibitions were held in 2012 where Transport Scotland presented proposals for a dual carriageway trunk link road between Inshes and Smithton. A number of concerns were raised by members of the public on the scale of the scheme proposals and the severance, accessibility and integration impacts of the scheme.

In addition, further traffic modelling work carried out before and after the public exhibitions highlighted the degree of inter-dependency between Inshes, Raigmore and Smithton junctions, and the adjacent road networks.



Introduction (continued)

In view of public and other stakeholder feedback from the 2012 exhibitions, Transport Scotland commissioned Jacobs to carry out the **A9/A96 Connections Study**.

This work was carried out following Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) principles, which look at all modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport. The Connections Study examined the wider context of the A9/A96, looking at challenges, opportunities and issues concerning traffic between Inshes, Raigmore and Longman junctions. The final Connections Study Report recommends the grade-separation of the Longman junction and proposes two possible options for a single carriageway road connecting the A9 at Inshes across to the A96 at Smithton.

Scheme update

In 2014, Transport Scotland held public exhibitions to present the results of the A9/A96 Connections Study. Options C and D were identified as the best performing options.

Since then, Transport Scotland has appointed Jacobs to take forward the next stage of assessment work. This is the route options assessment process on the A9/A96 road connection between Inshes and Smithton. Nine sub-options were developed from Options C and D identified in the Connections Study. Following a sifting process, we now present the options we are progressing for further assessment.



Looking west towards the A9 and Dell of Inshes

Project background and update



Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2008

This set out the transport investment priorities for the trunk road and rail networks to 2032

Public exhibitions 2012

Transport Scotland presented proposals for a dual carriageway trunk link road between Inshes and Smithton

A9/A96 Connections Study

We took a wider look at issues on the A9, A96 and A82 in Inverness, using updated transport and land use information

Public exhibitions 2014

Results of the appraisal process were presented

A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Route Options Assessment (DMRB Stage 2)

Public exhibitions 2016

Transport Scotland is seeking your feedback on the route options

Dual carriageway trunk link road connecting the A9 south of Inverness and the A96

We listened to your feedback and decided to carry out further work

We worked with The Highland Council to co-ordinate with their plans and to consider impacts on local roads

Options C and D were identified as the best performing options following the public exhibitions

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme was taken forward to the next stage of design which is the route options assessment stage

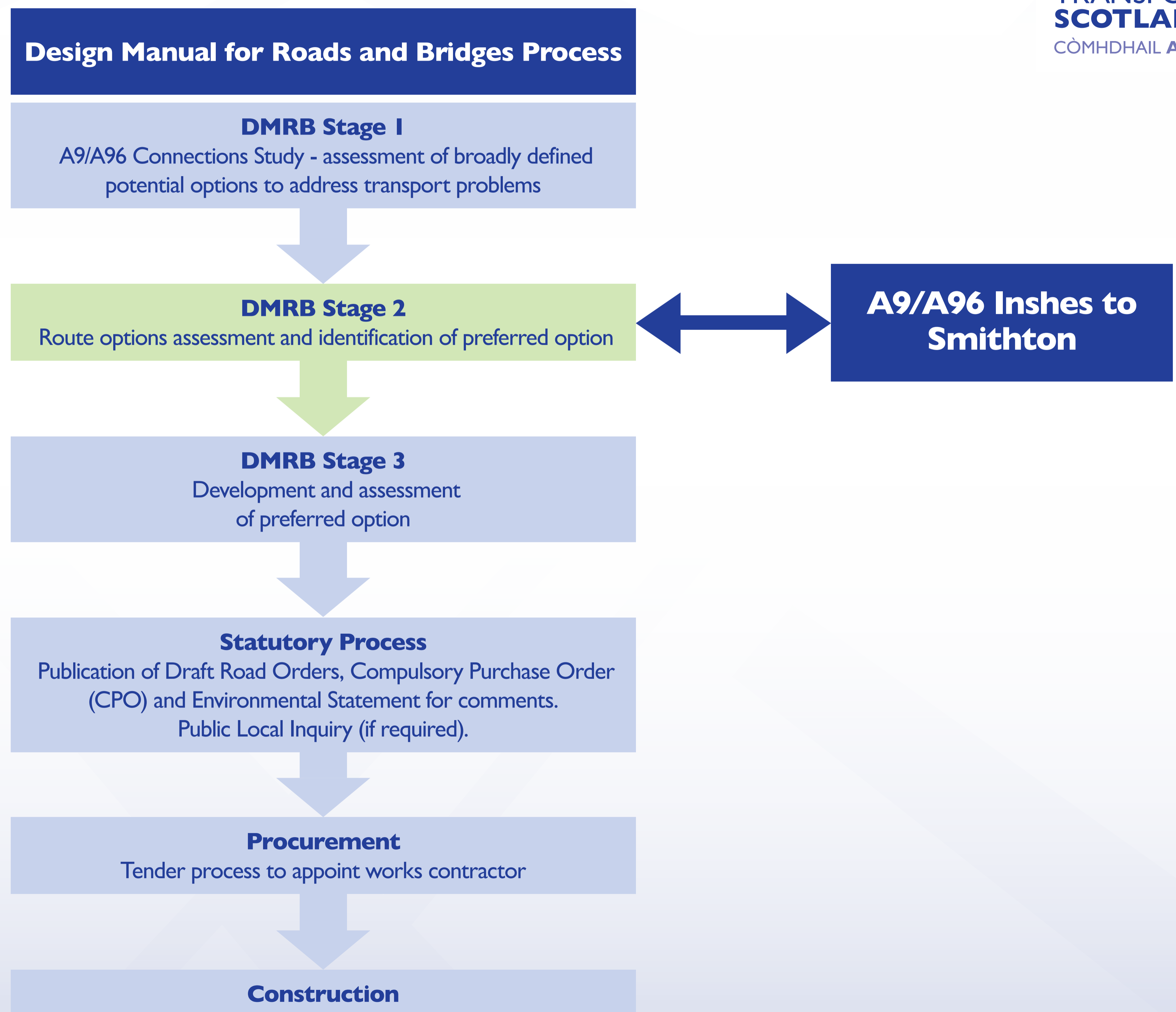
Initial options C and D have been further developed into options 1A/B, 2A/B and 3A/B. Your vital feedback will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment process

Scheme assessment process

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

The preparation and development of 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. Throughout this process Transport Scotland consults local communities, landowners, stakeholders and other interested parties.

The DMRB Stage 2 Assessment process for the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme is ongoing, with the route options under consideration presented at this exhibition.



Scheme objectives

The route options assessment process takes into account the scheme objectives and the Scottish Government's five appraisal criteria, which are:

- **Environment**
- **Safety**
- **Economy**
- **Integration**
- **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 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 where the trunk and local road network interact**
- **To maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport connections arising from the road infrastructure improvements.**



Looking north east towards Culloden Road and the UHI Campus

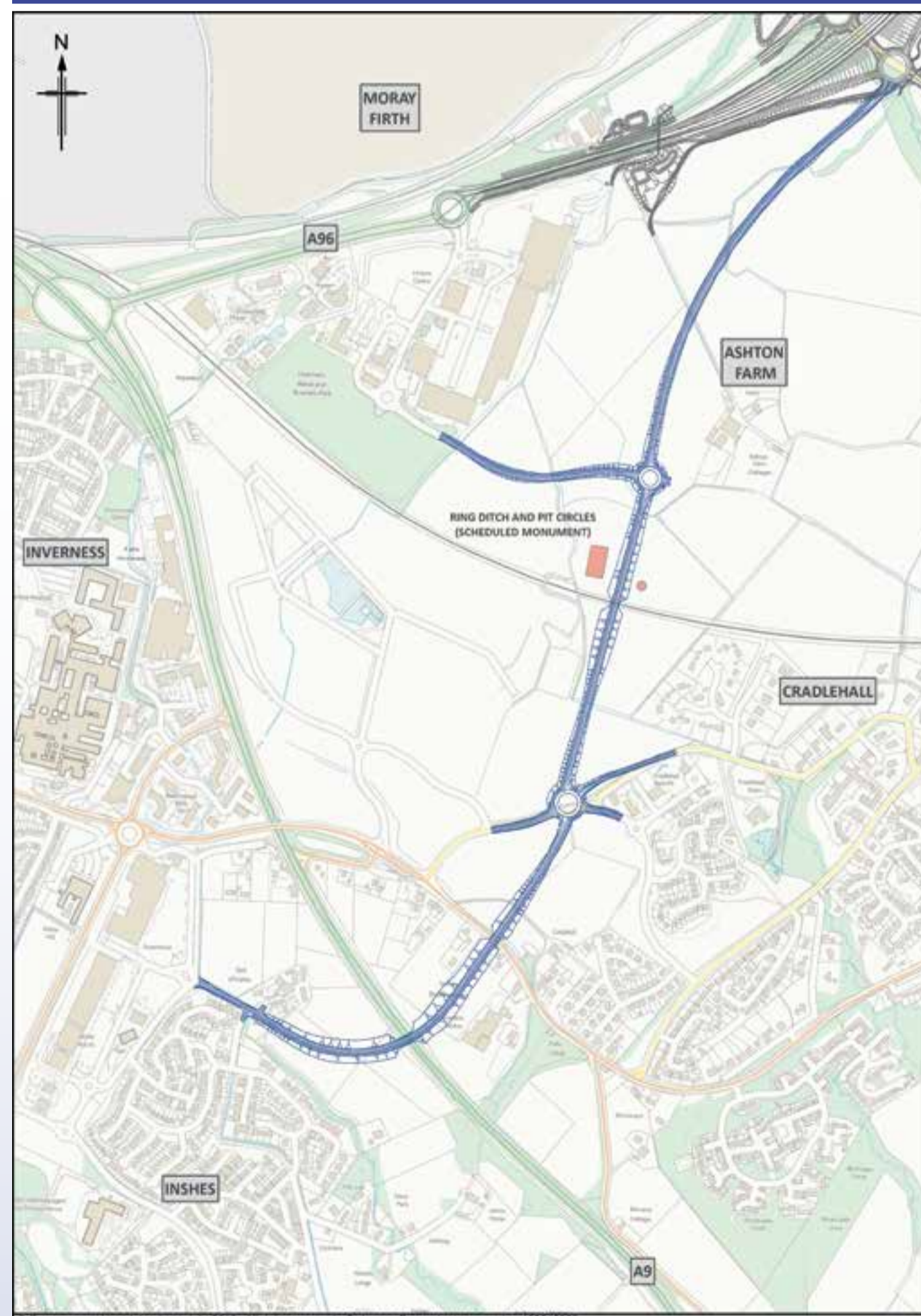
Sifted options (to be progressed)

Options C and D from the Connections Study were identified as the best performing options. As part of the route options assessment process, Options C and D were further developed and refined into a number of sub-options. These are shown below and on the following board. The sub-options have been developed to take account of:

- **environmental constraints**
- **engineering constraints**
- **traffic operational performance.**

Following a sifting process, options C1/C2, D1/D2 and D4 were identified to be progressed to the next stage of the assessment process. Going forward the options have been renamed to Options 1, 2 and 3 respectively with variants 'A' and 'B' to reflect the alternative alignments close to Ashton Farm.

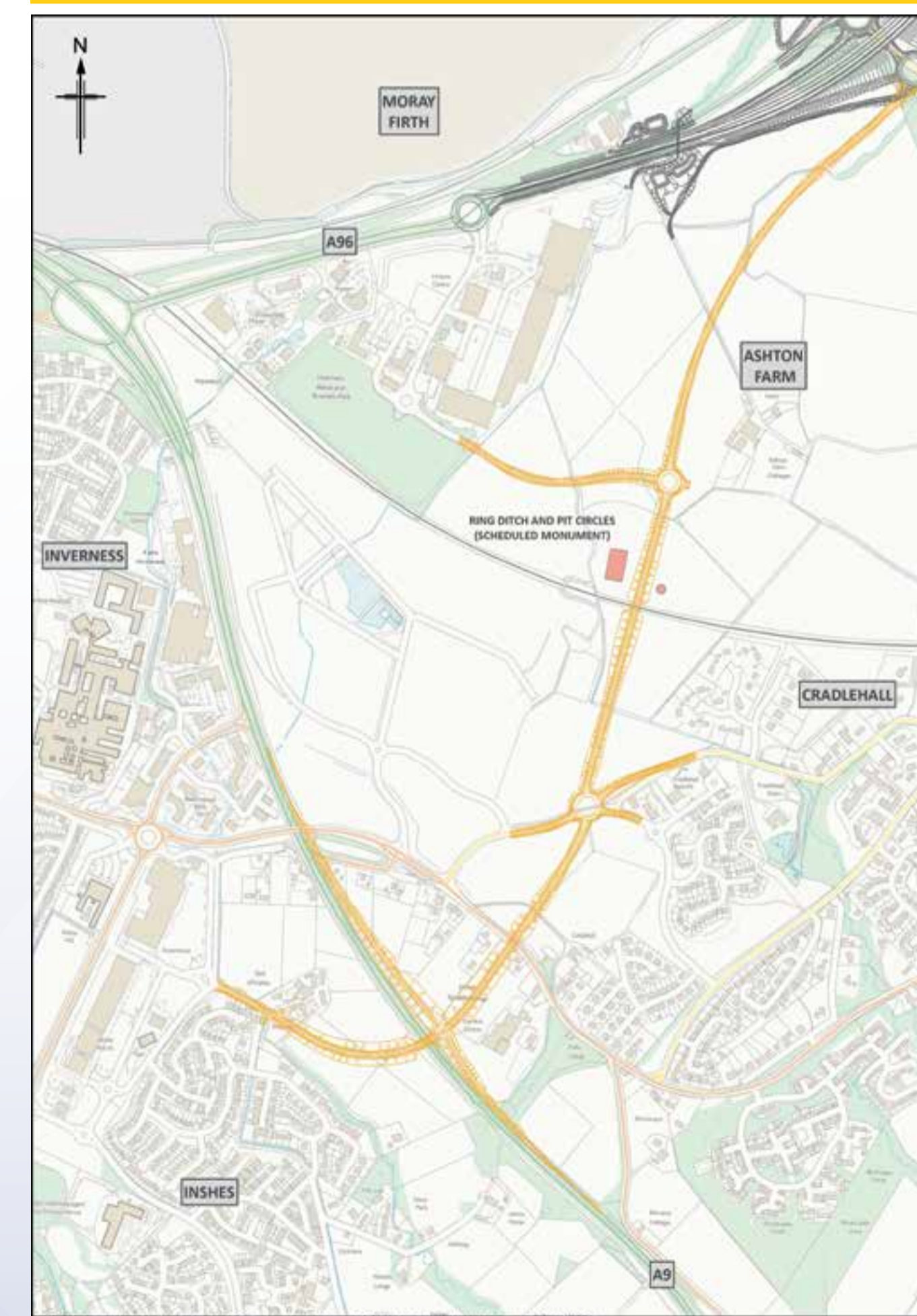
OPTION C1



OPTION C2

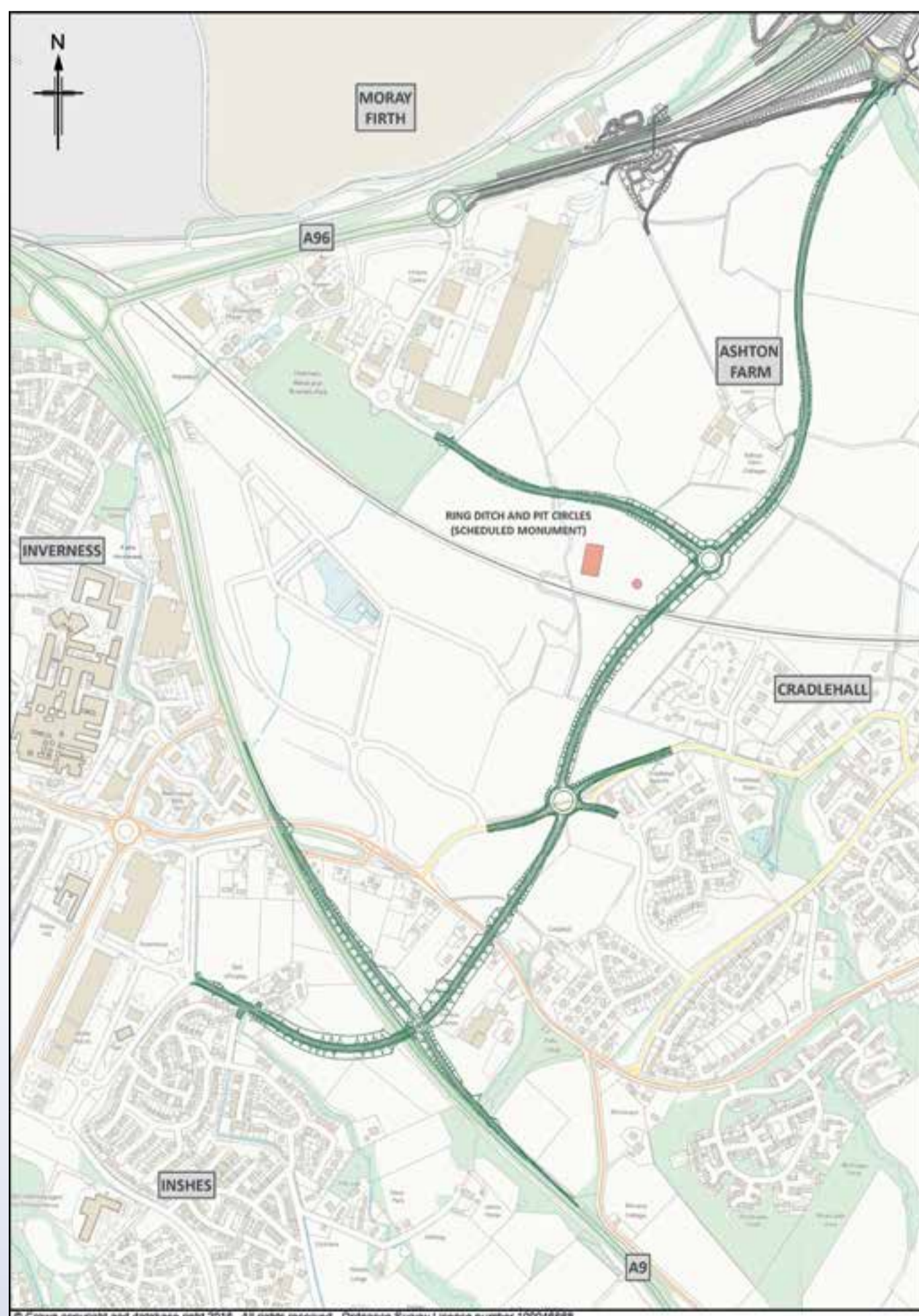


OPTION D1

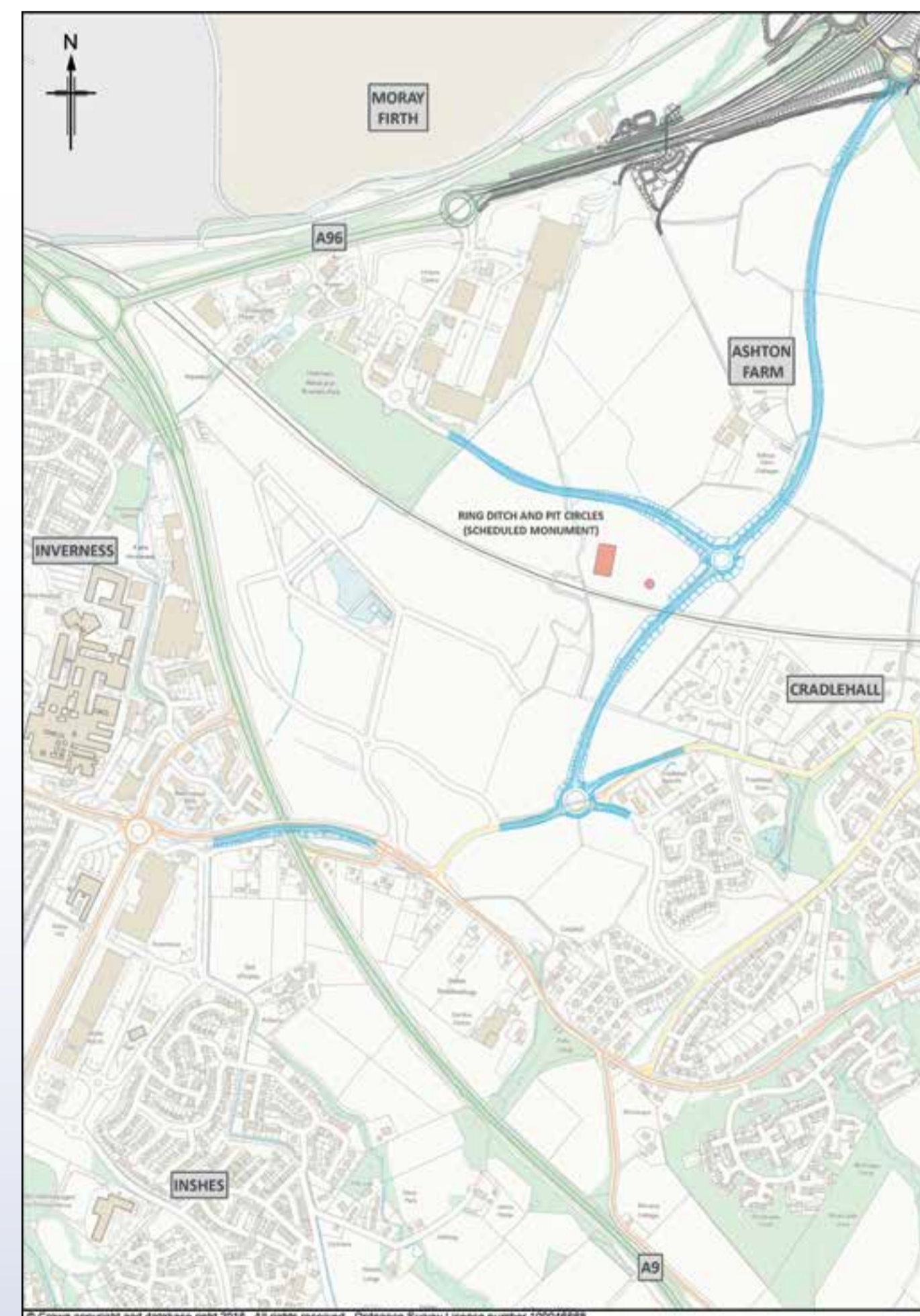


Sifted options (to be progressed)

OPTION D2



OPTION D4

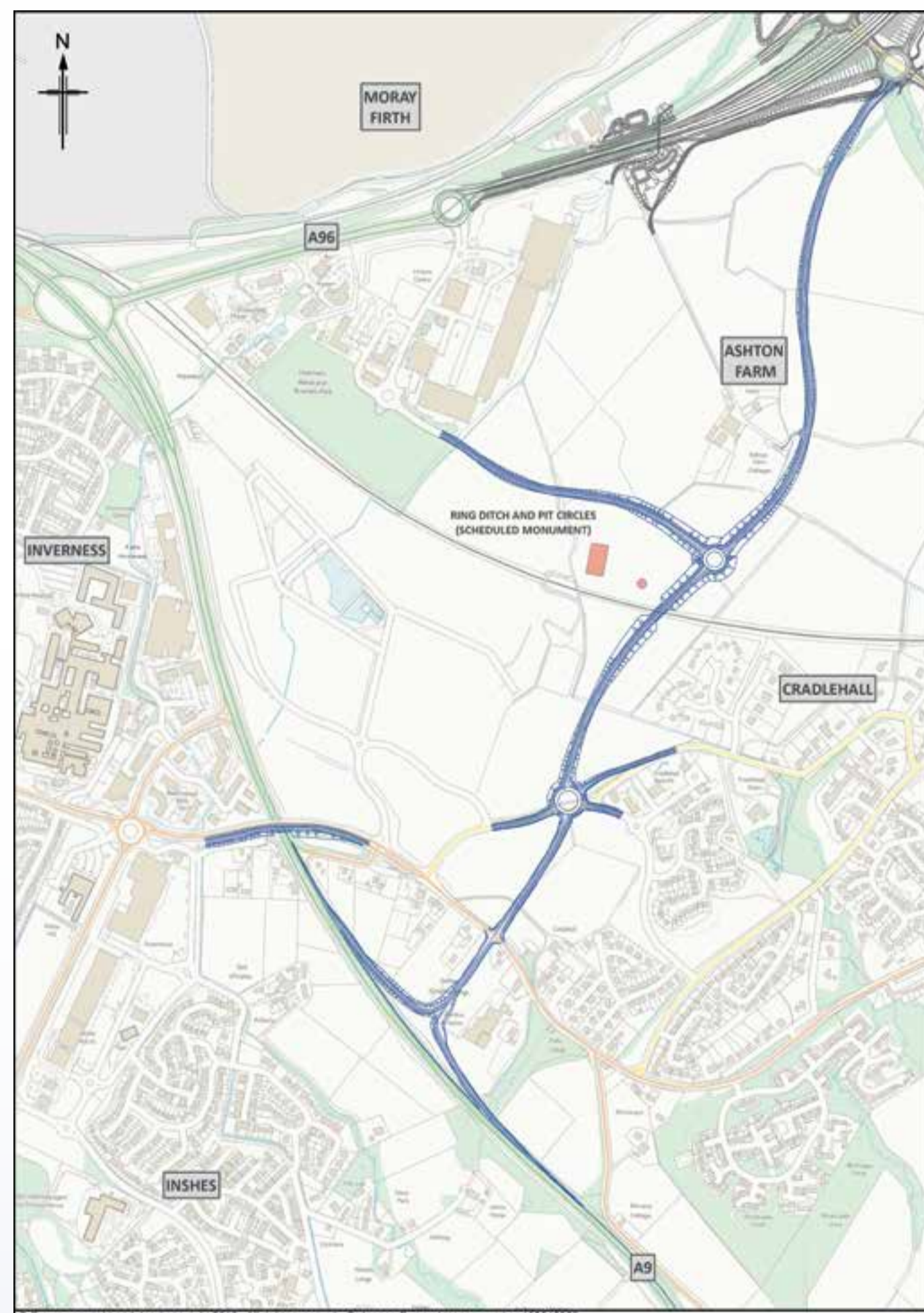


- **Option D4 also has a variant alignment to the west of Ashton Farm.**

Sifted options (not progressed)

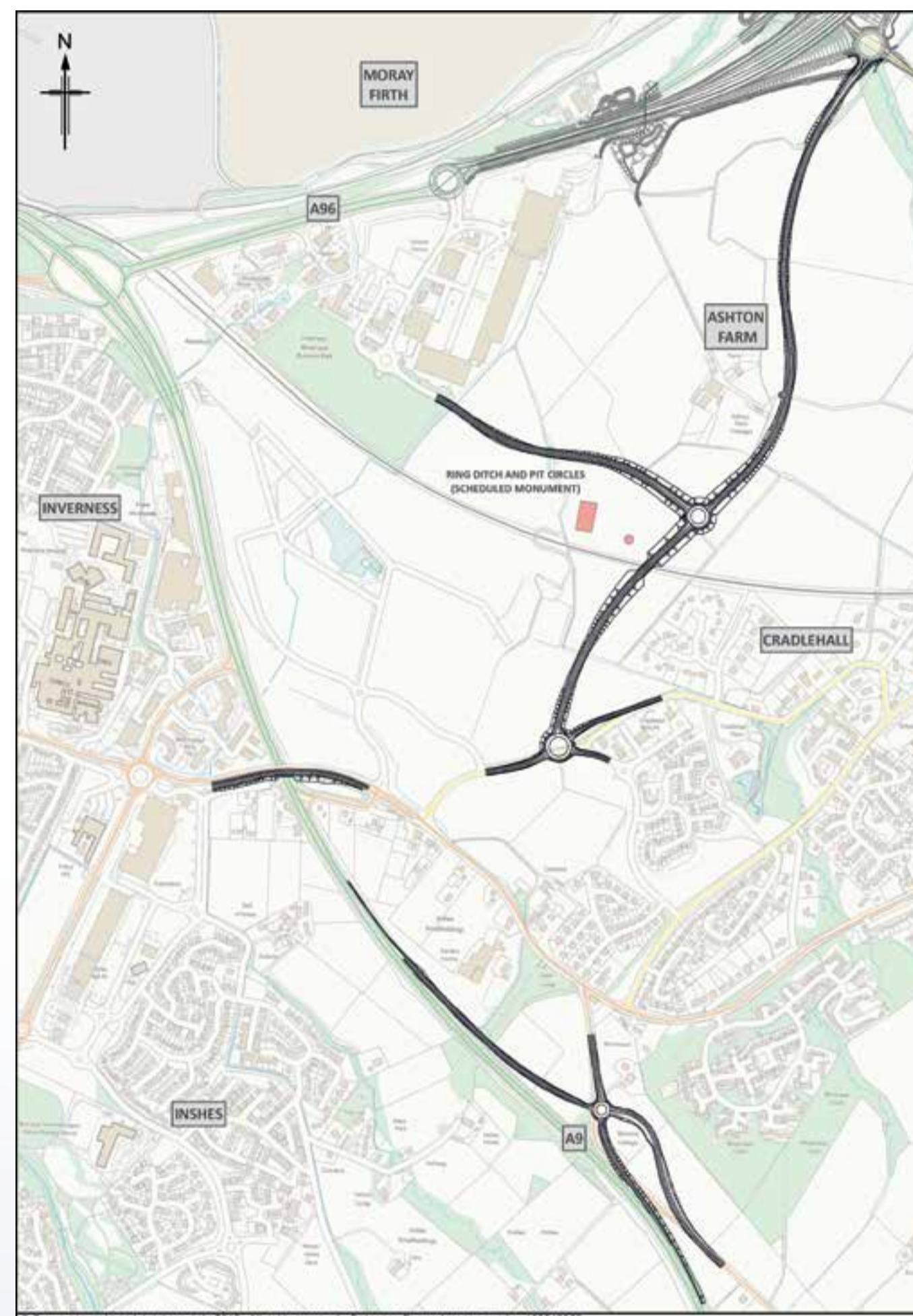
The following options were identified during the sifting process and are not being progressed to DMRB Stage 2 Assessment. The reasons for not progressing each of these options are listed alongside each overview diagram.

OPTION D3



- significant queuing develops on and around the Culloden Road corridor
- constant queue develops on A9 Inshes southbound off-slip.

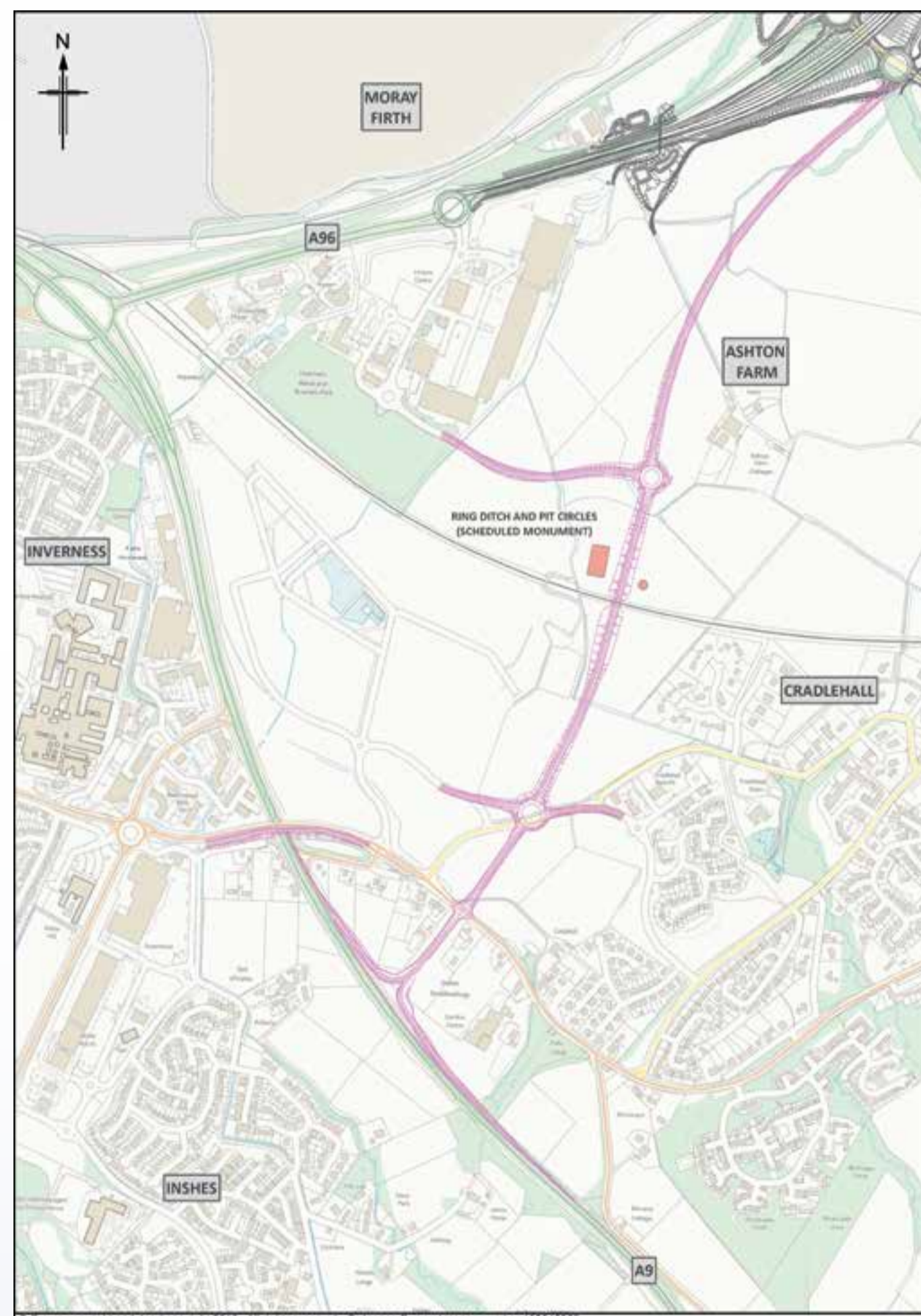
OPTION D5



- failed to meet engineering alignment standards.

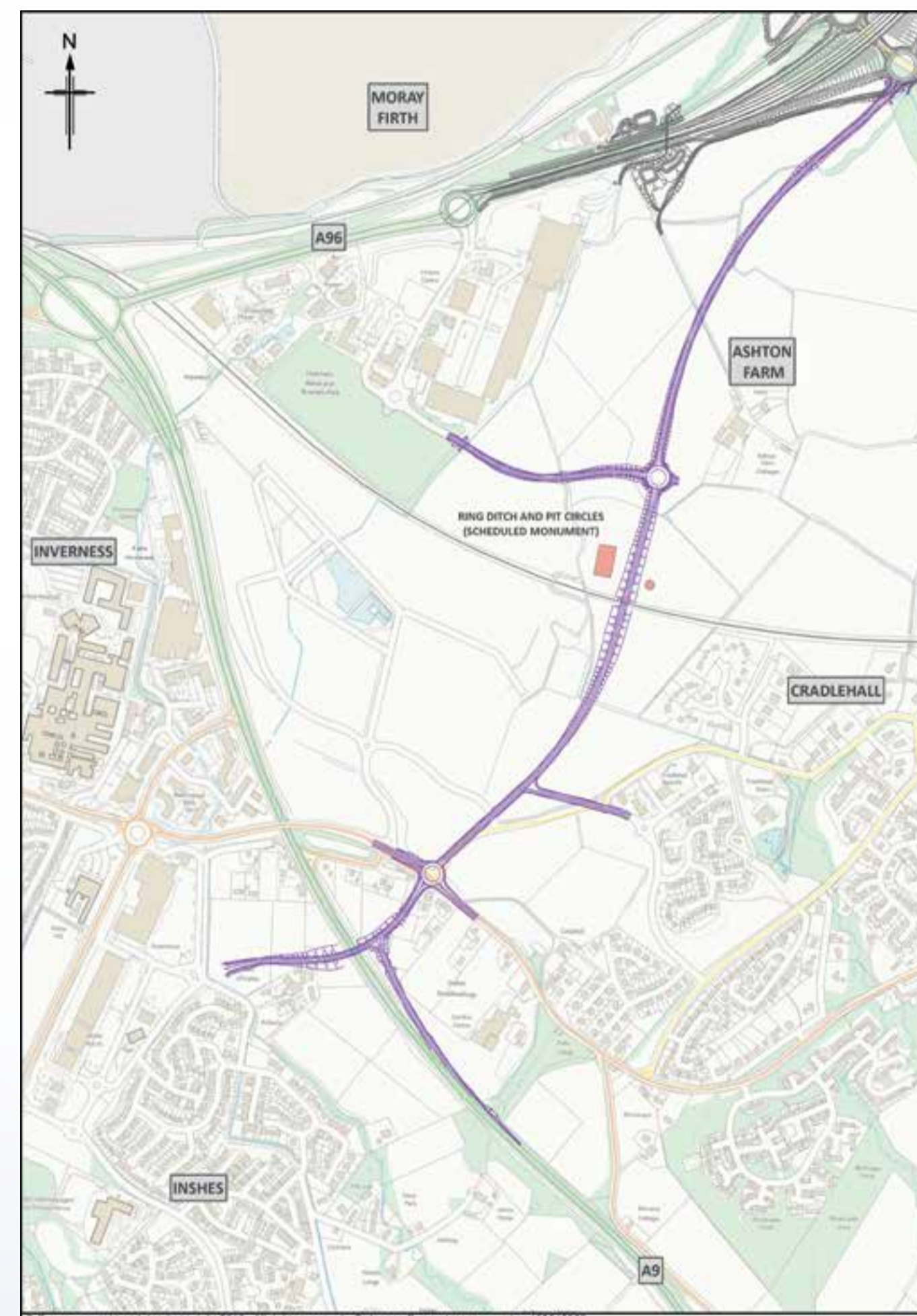
Sifted options (not progressed)

OPTION D6



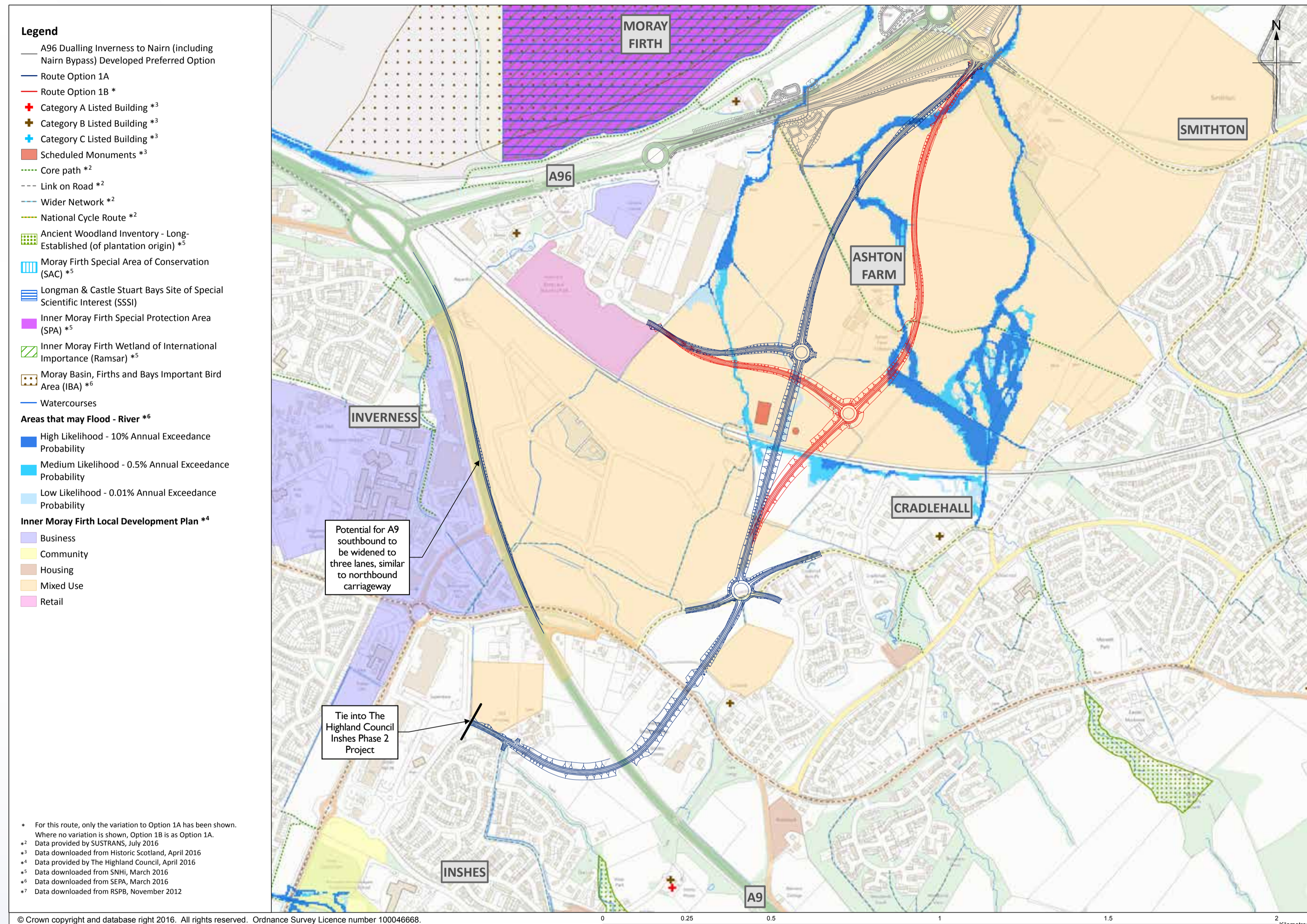
- fails operationally in the AM peak period, with the network gridlocked
- very significant queuing develops on and around the Culloden Road corridor
- significant queuing develops on the A9 Inshes southbound off-slip which blocks back and impacts on the A9.

OPTION D7



- fails operationally particularly in the PM peak period
- significant queuing develops on and around the Culloden Road corridor
- the new junction would be close to the UHI access, causing operational issues with queues on the A9 Inshes southbound off-slip, which blocks back and impacts the A9.

Option IA/B



Key early considerations:

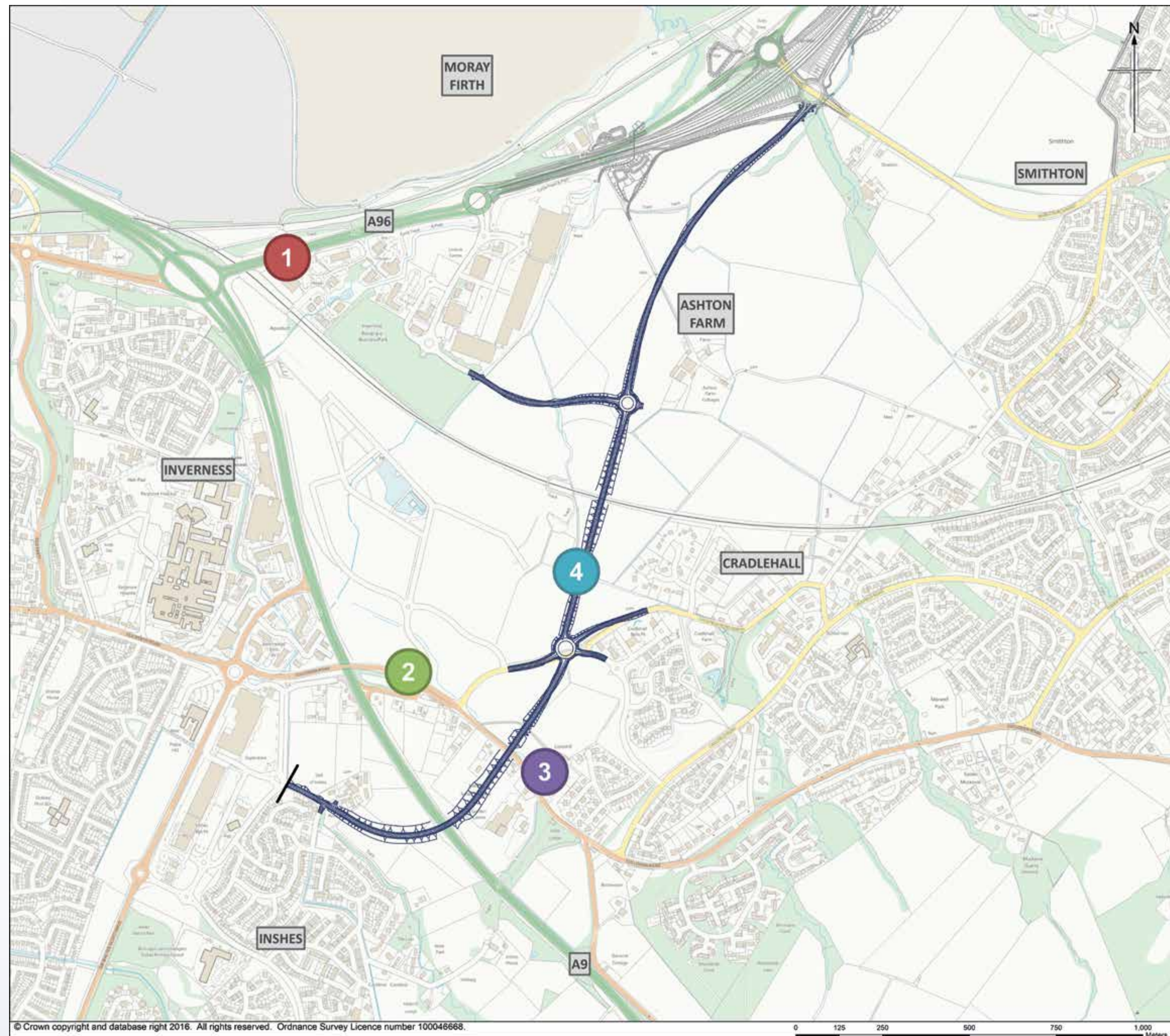
- potential land take from residential/commercial properties
- severs the grounds of a Category B listed building
- there are watercourse crossings and floodplain crossings
- Option 1B would require greater land take from flood plain than Option 1A
- Option 1A passes between elements of the Ring Ditch and Pit Circles (Scheduled Monument)
- Option 1B is in closer proximity to residential properties at Cradlehall
- the scheme is in close proximity to residential properties at Dell of Inshes
- reduces traffic on the A96, Culloden Road and Inshes overbridge
- intermediate cost
- The Highland Council Inshes Phase 2 Project.

The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in July 2016 and is for illustration purposes only.

Option IA/B – traffic flow



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The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in July 2016 and is for illustration purposes only.

Traffic flow (vehicles) for design year 2036

A96 1	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
Do minimum	4150	4950
Option I	3350	3850
% difference	-19%	-22%

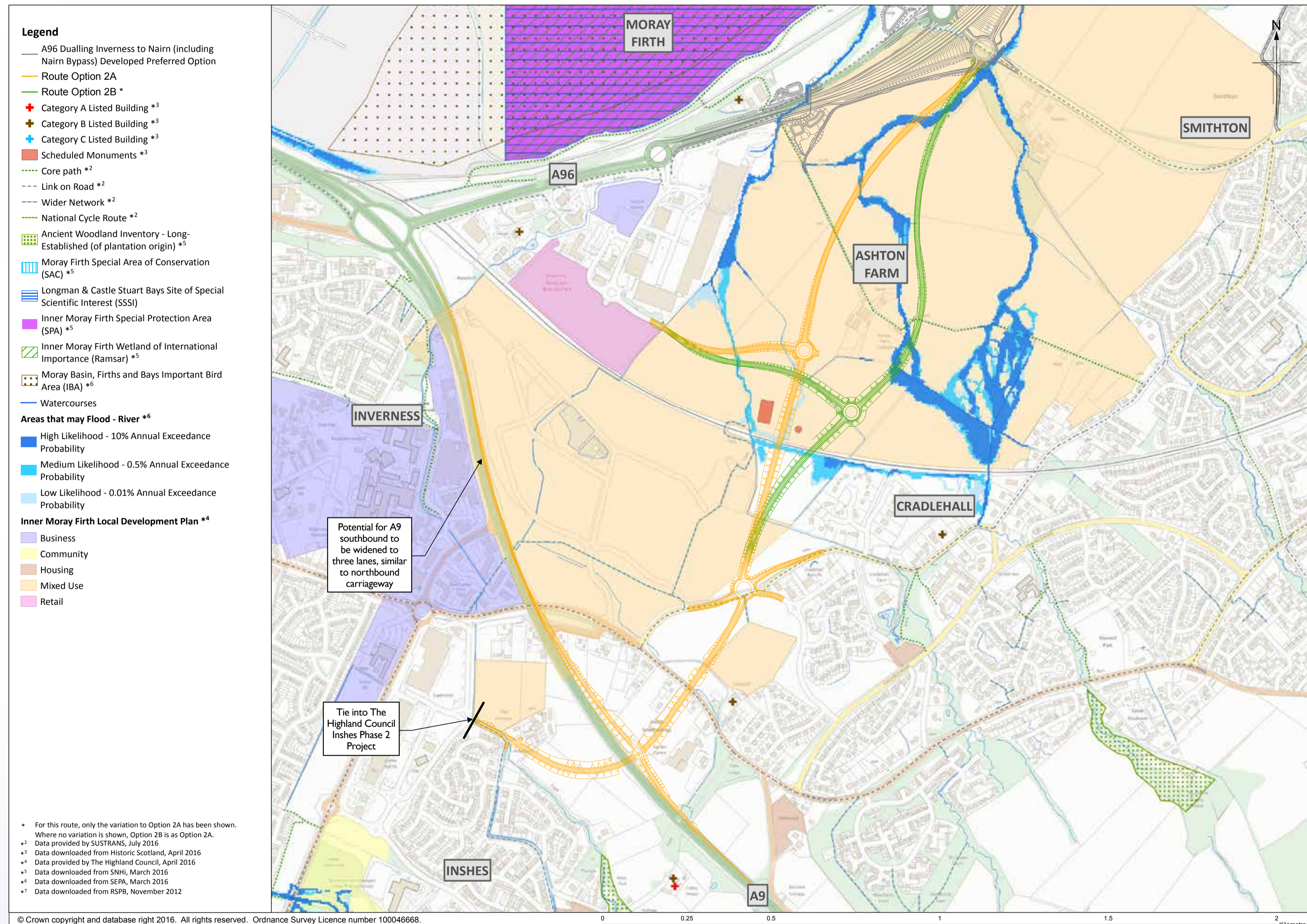
Culloden Rd overbridge 2	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
Do minimum	2250	2250
Option I	1650	1550
% difference	-27%	-31%

Culloden Rd 3	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
Do minimum	900	1050
Option I	550	800
% difference	-39%	-24%

New Link 4	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
Option I	2050	2400

The 'Do minimum' is what will happen on the current road network with traffic growth from proposed development in the Inverness area.

Option 2A/B



The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in July 2016 and is for illustration purposes only.

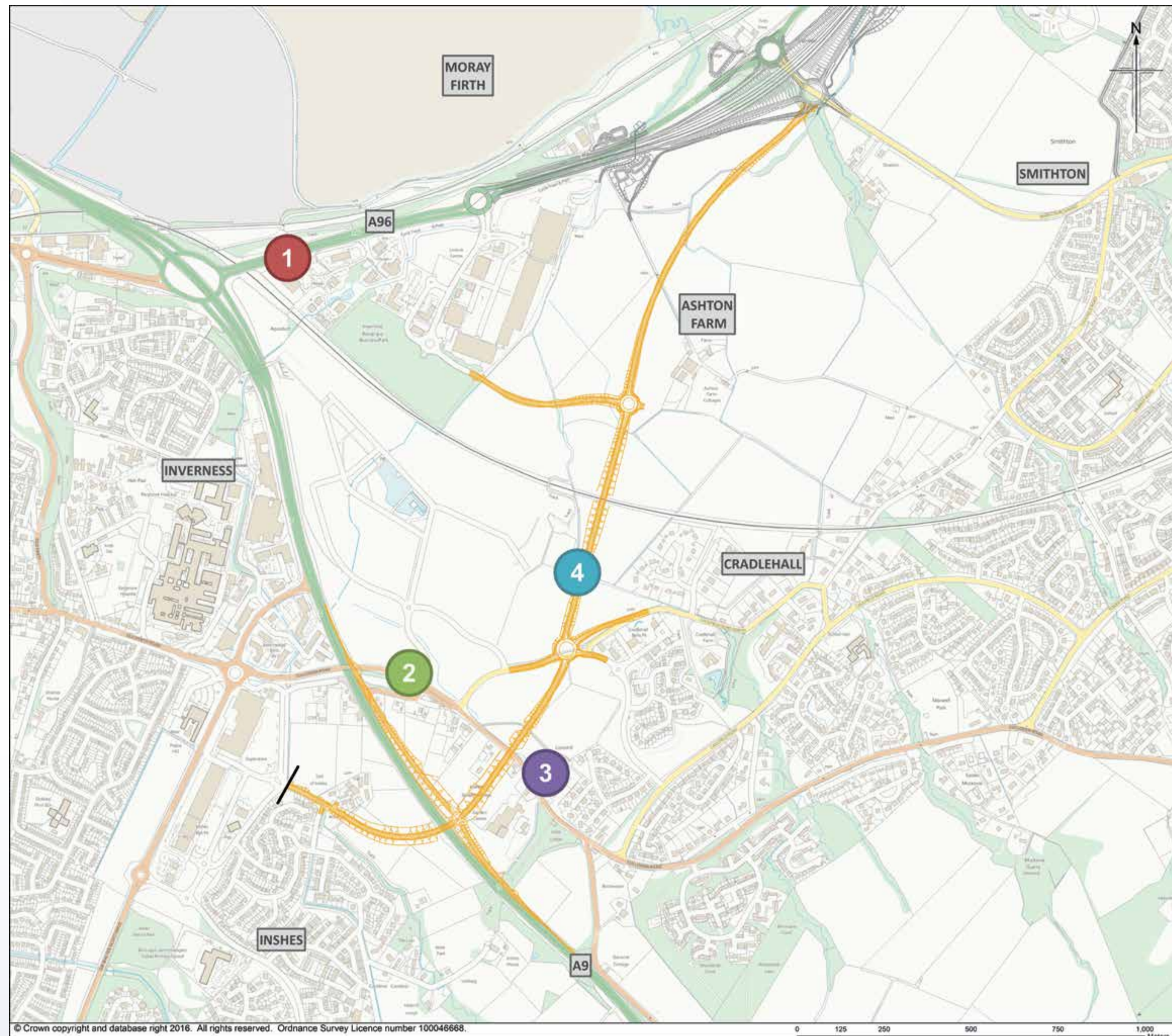
Key early considerations:

- potential land take from residential/commercial properties
- severs the grounds of a Category B listed building
- there are watercourse crossings and floodplain crossings
- Option 2B would require greater land take from flood plain than Option 2A
- the scheme requires demolition and replacement of existing Inshes overbridge
- Option 2A passes between elements of the Ring Ditch and Pit Circles (Scheduled Monument)
- Option 2B is in closer proximity to residential properties at Cradlehall
- the scheme is in close proximity to residential properties at Dell of Inshes
- reduces traffic on the A96, Culloden Road and Inshes overbridge
- this option has the largest reduction in A96 traffic
- higher cost than other options
- The Highland Council Inshes Phase 2 Project.

Option 2A/B – traffic flow



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The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in July 2016 and is for illustration purposes only.

Traffic flow (vehicles) for design year 2036

A96	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
1		
Do minimum	4150	4950
Option 2	3200	3800
% difference	-23%	-23%

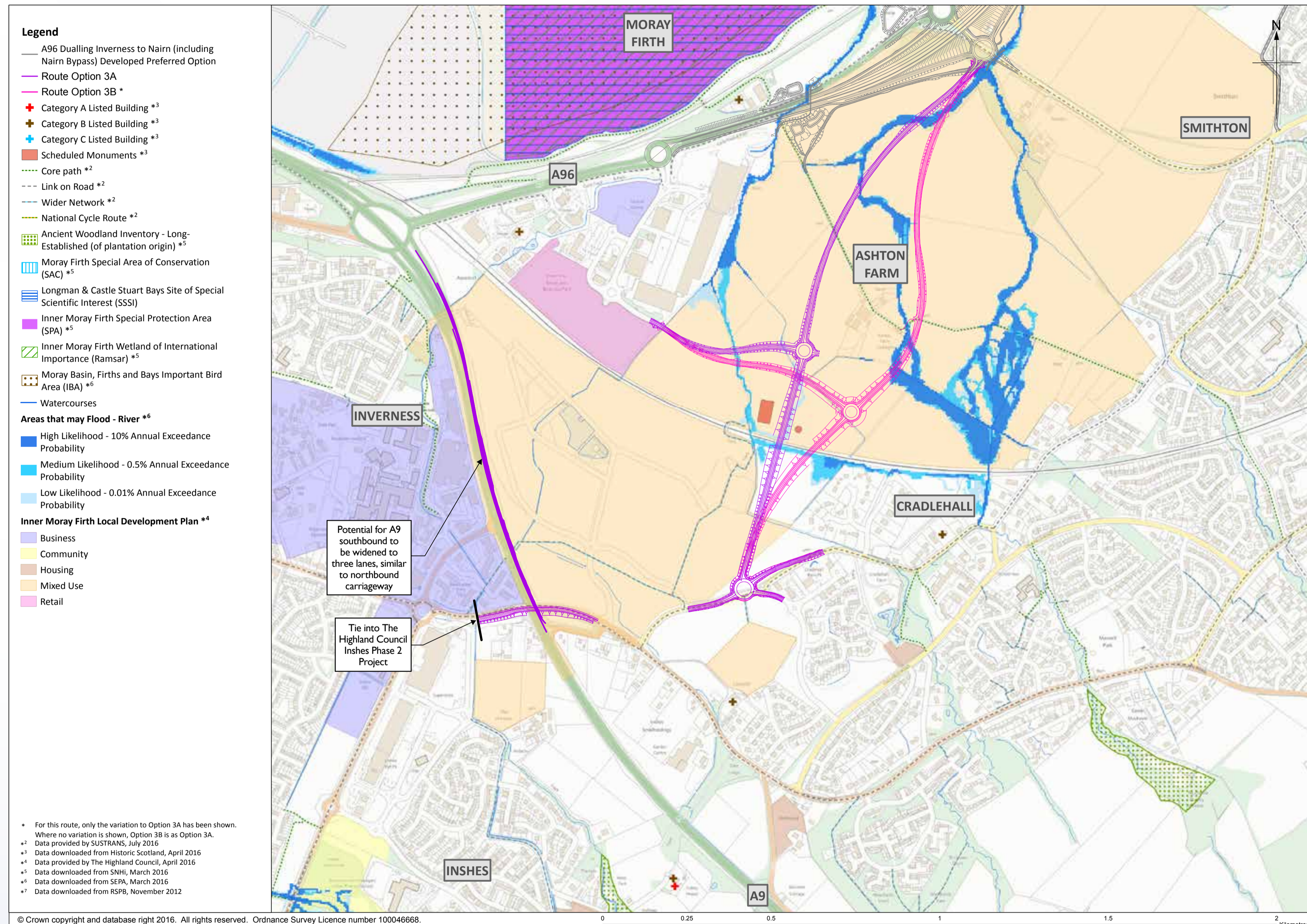
Culloden Rd overbridge	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
2		
Do minimum	2250	2250
Option 2	1400	1200
% difference	-38%	-47%

Culloden Rd	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
3		
Do minimum	900	1050
Option 2	600	750
% difference	-33%	-29%

New Link	Two way	
	AM Peak	PM Peak
4		
Option 2	2150	2400

The 'Do minimum' is what will happen on the current road network with traffic growth from proposed development in the Inverness area.

Option 3A/B

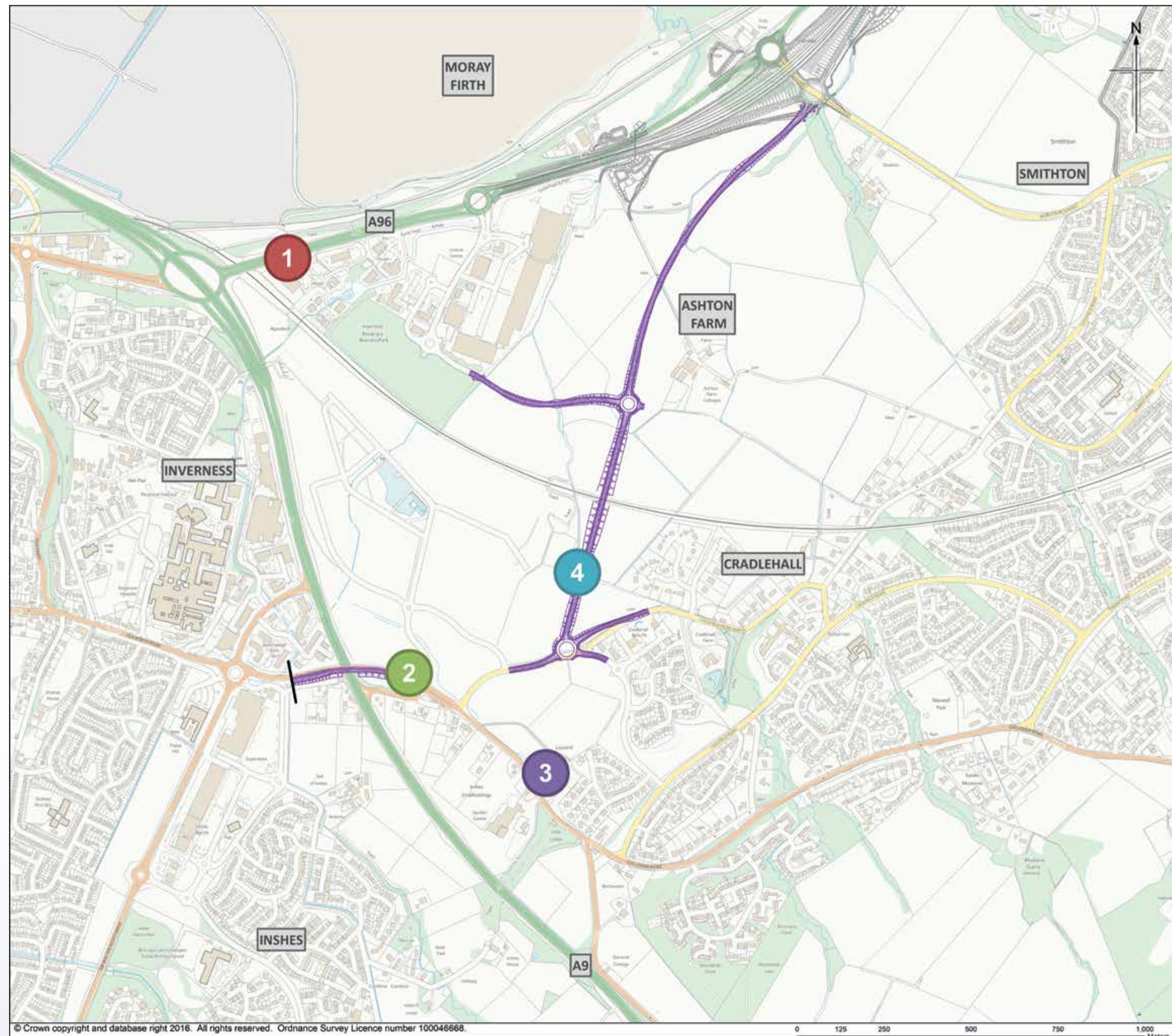


Key early considerations:

- no land take from residential property
- this option requires existing Inshes overbridge to be widened to accommodate multiple lanes in each direction
- there are watercourse crossings and floodplain crossings
- Option 3B would require greater land take from flood plain than Option 3A
- Option 3A passes between elements of the Ring Ditch and Pit Circles (Scheduled Monument)
- Option 3B is in closer proximity to residential properties at Cradlehall
- this option gives the lowest reduction in traffic levels on the A96
- lowest traffic flow on new road
- lower cost than other options
- The Highland Council Inshes Phase 2 Project.

The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in July 2016 and is for illustration purposes only.

Option 3A/B – traffic flow



The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in July 2016 and is for illustration purposes only.

Traffic flow (vehicles) for design year 2036

A96	Two way	
1	AM Peak	PM Peak
Do minimum	4150	4950
Option 3	3600	4300
% difference	-13%	-13%

Culloden Rd overbridge	Two way	
2	AM Peak	PM Peak
Do minimum	2250	2250
Option 3	2550	2500
% difference	13%	11%

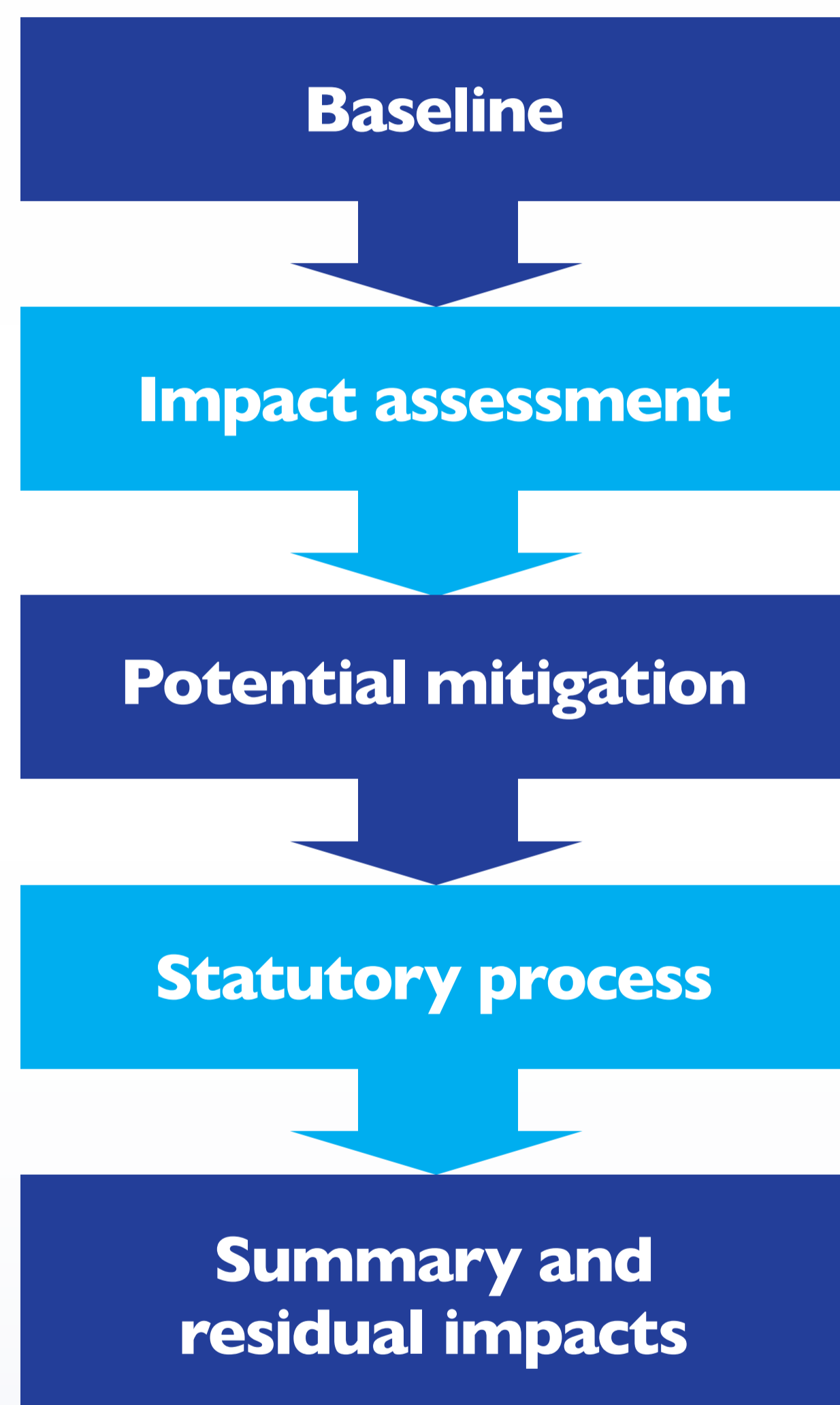
Culloden Rd	Two way	
3	AM Peak	PM Peak
Do minimum	900	1050
Option 3	900	900
% difference	0%	-14%

New Link	Two way	
4	AM Peak	PM Peak
Option 3	1500	1700

The 'Do minimum' is what will happen on the current road network with traffic growth from proposed development in the Inverness area.

Environmental assessment

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Environmental Assessment is considering the impact of the route options on:



Air quality – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).

Noise and vibration – at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas, schools and hospitals).

Landscape and visual – landscape character and visual amenity for built and outdoor receptors.

Habitats and biodiversity – e.g. designated sites, habitats and protected species.

Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes e.g. Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings.

Geology and soils – geology, soils (including contaminated land) and groundwater.

Community and private assets (including agriculture) – due to land take and potential community severance.

Development land – land allocation for development or land with planning permission.

All travellers – users of core paths, rights of way and the National Cycle Network (NCN) and impacts on vehicle travellers.

Materials – material resources and waste management.

Water environment – water quality, fluvial geomorphology and flood risk.

Non-Motorised User (NMU) provision

NMUs include pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and may be recreational users or, near larger communities, active travellers and daily commuters.

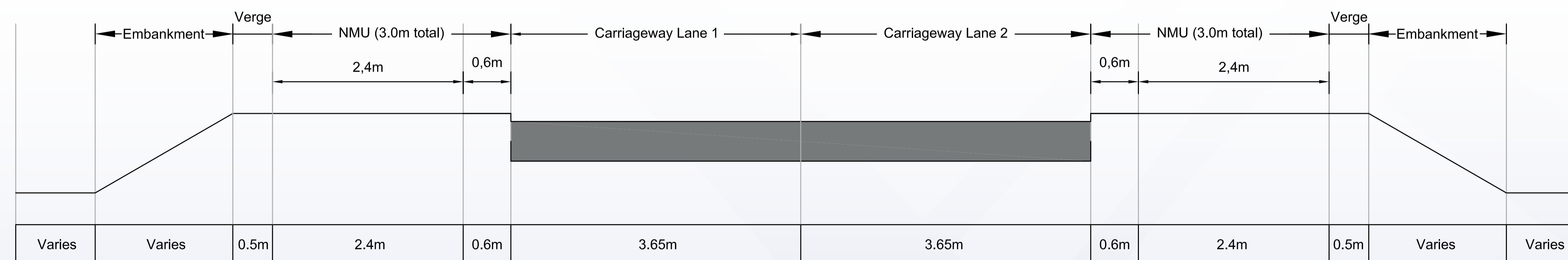
An emerging NMU strategy is being developed to provide a consistent approach to NMU provision within the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton corridor. The main principles of the strategy are as follows:

- **enhance NMU facilities within A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton corridor**
- **integrate with existing NMU facilities such as core paths and the National Cycle Network.**

The NMU provision will integrate with the existing network to facilitate active travel and will integrate with public transport facilities where possible.



Existing NMU provision linking Inverness Retail Park to UHI



Typical cross-section showing the provision of a proposed 3.0m wide NMU facility on either side of the carriageway.

What happens next?

The options presented may be subject to further development. The Design Manual for Road and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Assessment will consider advantages, disadvantages and constraints associated with the route options, in relation to environmental, engineering, traffic and economic issues.

Transport Scotland is seeking to confirm a preferred option for the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme in 2017.

All the information presented today is available at:
www.transport.gov.scot/project/a9a96-inshes-smithton

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

You can provide your comments by:

- **using the relevant feedback form and leaving it in the Feedback Box provided at the exhibition**
- **emailing your comments to us at the project email address:
a9a96-inshes-smithton@transport.gov.scot**
- **posting the feedback form to us at the following address:**



View looking west from Inshes overbridge

A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Team

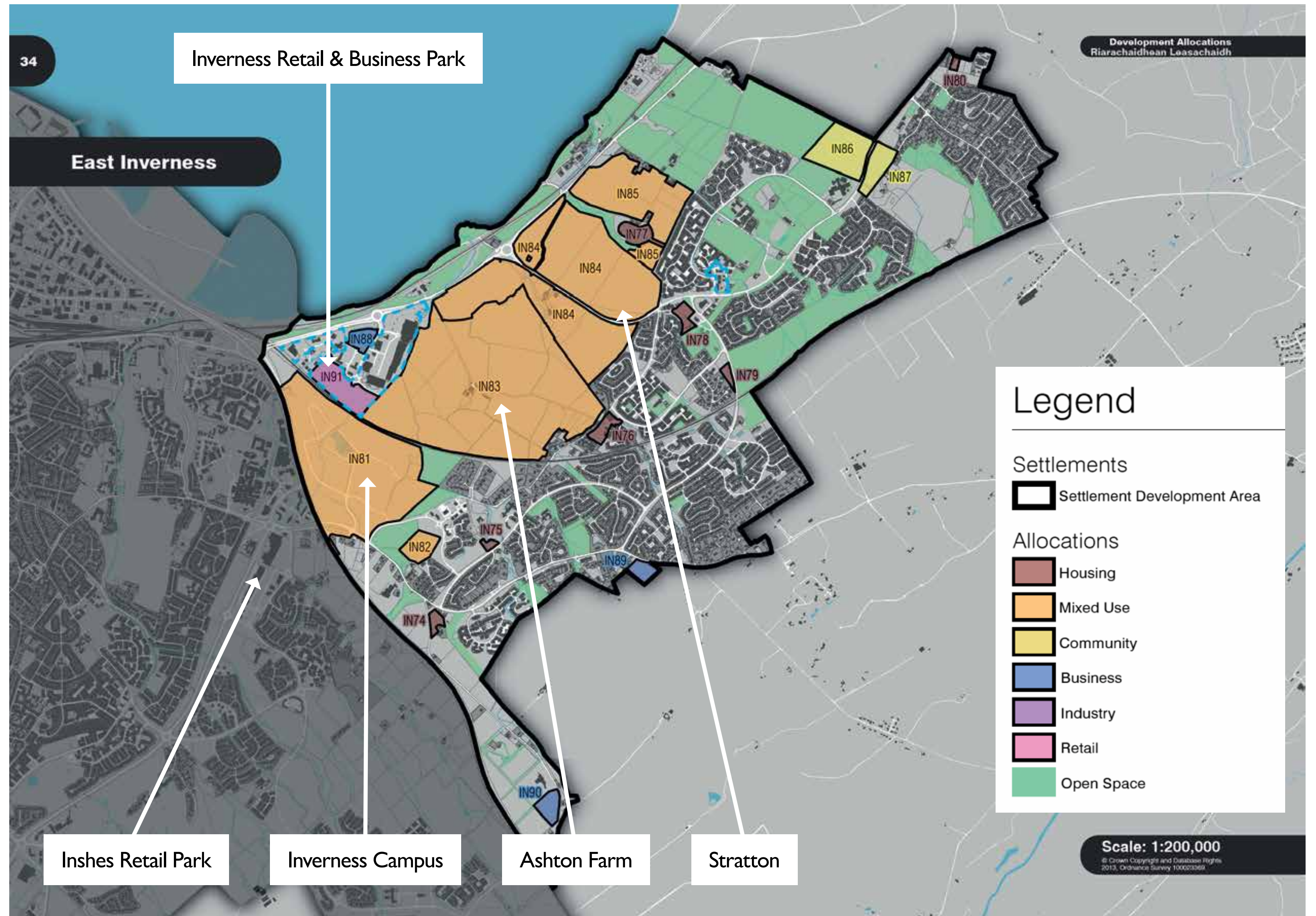
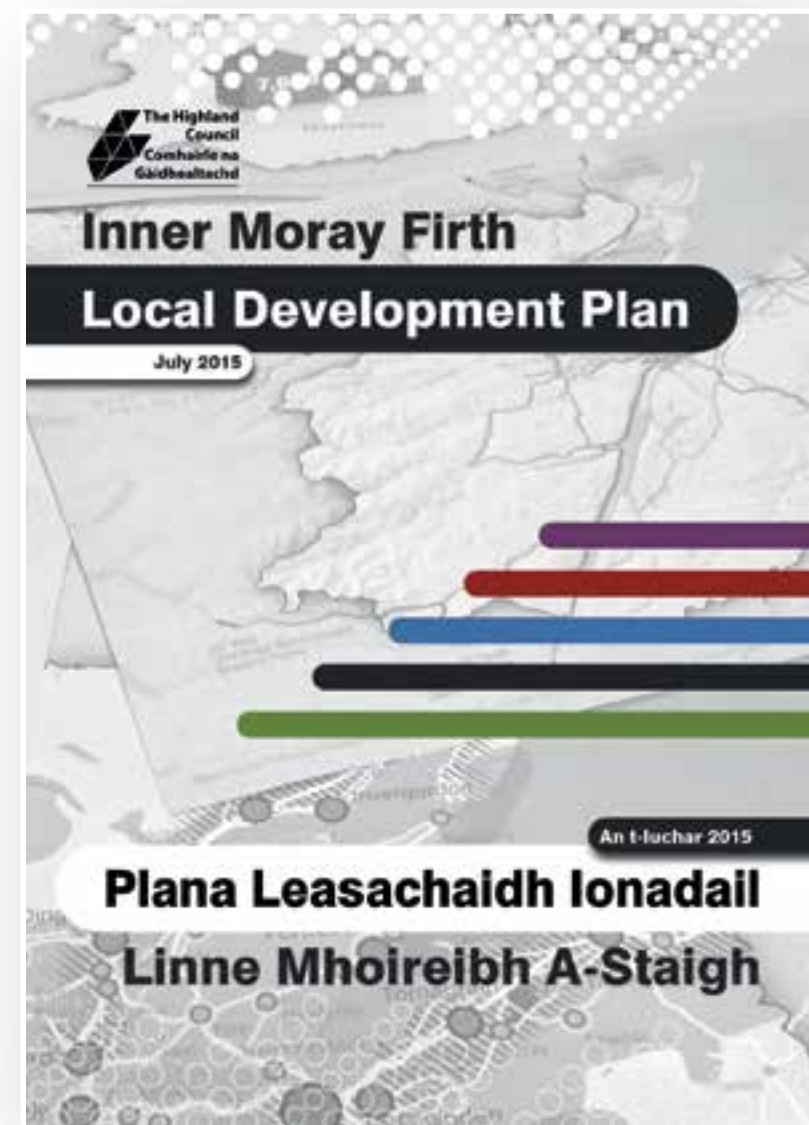
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

Please submit your comments to us by **7 October 2016**.

Planning for the future – linking transport improvements with new developments

THE INNER MORAY FIRTH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme is an important part of future development plans for the City. It is part of the proposals put forward as part of the Inverness City Region Deal, which was recently agreed with the UK and Scottish Governments. Highland Council and Transport Scotland are working together to ensure that the new road integrates with land use planning. This panel provides details of the existing planning policy context for the land across which the potential road and other links pass.



An extract of the Highland Council's statutory land use plan that provides the local detail for Inverness is shown below and opposite. This is known as the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. The map and text shows which areas of land the Council expects to be developed in the future and for what uses. It can be seen that most of the land covered by the road options is earmarked for future development (the orange mixed use areas) but also some areas of green space.

INVERNESS EAST DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Given the existing and planned developments at Inshes, Inverness Campus, Ashton Farm, Inverness Retail and Business Park and Stratton, the Highland Council intends to produce a detailed masterplan for the land across which the road options pass.

This document will be called the Inverness East Development Brief and will be used to help assess planning applications in the future as well as provide certainty to the community about

what development will be allowed where, and when. We intend to prepare the Brief over the course of the next year, and we will be engaging and consulting with communities, development interests and agencies responsible for water, waste water, flood management and natural heritage to ensure that everyone has a say. At this stage, we would be happy to hear what you think some of the development issues should be.

Please send your comments to: devplans@highland.gov.uk

Housing

Site: IN74 Easterfield Farm
Area (ha): 1 Housing Capacity: 21
Requirements: Junction improvement to secure adequate visibility.

Site: IN75 Caulfield Road
Area (ha): 0.4 Housing Capacity: 4
Requirements: Suitable road access; retention of existing footpath routes and connections; appropriate set back from adjoining mature woodland.

Site: IN76 Resaurie
Area (ha): 1.8 Housing Capacity: 64
Requirements: Development in accordance with planning permission 09/00231/FULIN.

Site: IN77 Stratton Lodge
Area (ha): 2.5 Housing Capacity: 25
Requirements: Respect for fabric and setting of Category B Listed building; retention and management of mature policy woodland; Flood Risk Assessment (may affect developable area); transport assessment (subject to which development may proceed in advance of the wider transport measures associated with the development of sites IN82, IN83 and IN84 in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan).

Site: IN78 Former Forestry Commission Depot, Smithton
Area (ha): 1.5 Housing Capacity: 23
Requirements: Improvements to junction of Tower Road and Barn Church Road; Flood Risk Assessment (may affect developable area).

Site: IN79 Land east of Smithton Free Church
Area (ha): 0.7 Housing Capacity: 15
Requirements: Agreed improvements to junction of Tower Road and Barn Church Road; wind stable tree line on Tower Road; off-site pedestrian works; assessment of implications for parking provision in the area, and any necessary mitigation.

Site: IN80 Upper Cullernie Farm
Area (ha): 0.4 Housing Capacity: 12
Requirements: Development in accordance with planning permissions 12/03711/FUL and 13/02472/FUL including Flood Risk Assessment; junction improvements at Cullernie Road.

Mixed Use

Site: IN81 Inverness Campus, Beechwood
Area (ha): 62.4 Uses: Business, Student Accommodation, Community.
Requirements: Development in accordance with planning permission 09/00887/PIPIN and related permissions including: active travel connections including pedestrian/cycle bridge over the A9; local road network improvements; reservation of land for potential A9/A96 Trunk Road; Flood Risk Assessment; linkage to the green network.

Site: IN82 West of Castlehill Road
Area (ha): 3.3 Uses: 17 homes, Community, Business, Leisure.
Requirements: Safeguard for possible strategic road routing to north west of site; active travel connections to existing and planned future foot/cycle ways and to adjoining open space; high standard of architectural design quality commensurate with tourist route prominence; badger survey and protection plan if necessary.

Site: IN83 Ashton Farm and Adjoining Land
Area (ha): 105.2 Uses: 1,300 homes, Community, Business, Industrial, Non-residential Institution.
Requirements: The Council will produce a masterplan / development brief which it will adopt as Supplementary Guidance. This will address: green parkland corridors following the principal watercourses embodying a development setback and passage for people and wildlife; assessment and if necessary mitigation for any adverse impact on the scheduled monuments within the site; assessment of and safeguards for existing and likely future transport corridors (this will include a distributor road connection between the rear of the Inverness Retail Park and Barn Church Road); avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space; foot/cycle paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail); badger survey and protection plan if necessary; Flood Risk Assessment (may affect developable area).

Site: IN84 Stratton
Area (ha): 73.7 Uses: 2,475 homes, Retail, Business, Community, Leisure.
Requirements: Development in accordance with planning permission 09/00141/OUTIN including: master planning of each phase of development; Flood Risk Assessment and any resultant mitigation; scheduled monument protection and setting impact assessment and any resultant mitigation; transport networks safeguards; improvements; pipeline corridor safeguards; provision of park and ride facility. Avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space, paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail).

Site: IN85 Milton of Culloden
Area (ha): 24.9 Uses: 375 homes, Business, Community.
Requirements: The Council will produce a masterplan/development brief which it will adopt as supplementary guidance. This will address: access; Flood Risk Assessment (may affect developable area); need to assess and if necessary mitigate for any adverse impact on the scheduled monument within the site; avoidance of any adverse effect on the integrity of the Inner Moray Firth SPA/Ramsar alone or in combination through the preparation of a recreation access management plan, which brings together components relating to open space; paths provision and the wider green network (including mitigation works in connection with the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail); foot/cycle way connections especially to adjoining neighbourhood and improvement of foot/cycle way on south east boundary; badger survey and protection plan if necessary; possible trunk road improvement land safeguard.

Community

Site: IN86 Land North East of Culloden Academy
Area (ha): 10.1 Uses: Relocated and expanded school playing fields.
Requirements: Relocated and expanded provision should existing Academy be extended.

Site: IN87 Land North East of Culloden Academy
Area (ha): 4.3 Uses: Community.
Requirements: Safeguarded for community facilities including allotments, meeting space and neighbourhood shop.

Business

Site: IN88 West of Eastfield Way
Area (ha): 1.9 Uses: Business.
Requirements: High architectural and landscape design quality that addresses or at least does not compromise the site's frontage. Active travel connectivity improvements to adjoining developments; Flood Risk Assessment to support any planning application, this may affect the developable area.

Site: IN89 Easter Mucklovie
Area (ha): 2 Uses: Business.
Requirements: Development in accordance with planning permission 10/00046/FULIN including: requirement for site access visibility improvements.

Site: IN90 Land south east of Drumossie Hotel
Area (ha): 2.4 Uses: Business /Tourism.
Requirements: Badger survey and transport assessment and any consequential mitigation; high standard of architectural design quality commensurate with tourist route prominence and to respect setting of Category B Listed hotel building adjacent.

Retail

Site: IN91 South of Inverness Retail and Business Park
Area (ha): 7.2 Uses: Bulky goods retail only.
Requirements: Badger survey and protection plan if necessary.