



Fiona Hyslop
Cabinet Secretary for Transport
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Sent via email to - CabSecfortransport@gov.scot

CC: John Swinney, First Minister & Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Finance

6th August 2025

Dear Ms Hyslop

Re: A96 Corridor Review

In light of the publication of the A96 Corridor Review consultation report, we believe it is a crucial moment for Moray's public, private and third sectors to reaffirm the position of our region. We noted with interest that 76% of consultation respondents were dissatisfied with the draft outcomes of the Corridor Review, and that the responses to the consultation exercise consistently demonstrated the strong support for full dualling of the A96 amongst public, businesses and the public sector alike.

We recognise that the Scottish Government has remained committed to full dualling but we also see that in recent statements there are already references to fiscal constraints by mentioning the UK Government's Spending Review, and updates to the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan. We are concerned that the highly extended nature of the initial scheme development and subsequent review processes could lead to a further marginalisation of the communities of northern Scotland without significant investment. This investment is vitally needed to continue the valuable role of the region in contributing to Scotland's economy. In this regard we would highlight the findings and opportunities set out in the Regional Transformation Opportunities report produced by Highlands & Islands Enterprise on behalf of the Highlands & Islands Economic Partnership. The full dualling of the A96 is critical for economic success. The delay in a firm commitment and timeline is undermining business confidence and delaying private sector growth.



Moray's position remains clear and unchanged from our responses submitted to the A96 Corridor Review consultation. The full dualling of the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness remains a top priority for Moray residents and business community. Full dualling is critical for the economic success of the region providing:

- Enhanced access to employment opportunities
- Improved journey times and improved road safety
- New housing, employment sites, and tourism
- Support to the green energy transition and supply chain access

There is overwhelming support within the Moray community for the full dualling of the A96, and Moray remains of the view that any other transport interventions proposed by Scottish Government – including investment in public transport – should be in addition to the full dualling of the A96 and not as an alternative. Journey time reduction and regional connectivity are important for both the regional and local economy – underpinning the reasoning behind the extensive public support for full dualling of the A96. The road acts as a critical link between two of Scotland's key cities. The significant economic development and employment opportunities from regional growth, including the Aberdeen Green Investment Zone and Cromarty Greenport are key considerations.

We must also take this opportunity to note that there are significant road safety benefits for the full dualling of the A96, with grade separated interchanges – reducing casualties over the 60-year appraisal period by at least 970. In the last few weeks alone, there have been multiple incidents, including several fatalities, on the A96, each with devastating impacts for the families involved. The road safety benefits of providing a dual carriageway, with grade separated junctions, removed from the centres of towns is clear and of significant importance – not only in socio economic appraisal terms, but in the way in which we value the safety of our population.

Certainty is needed to enable robust planning – the Moray Local Development Plan safeguards the route previously indicated. Any delay in bypassing key towns in Moray will have an adverse impact on the delivery of core housing infrastructure provision, particularly in Elgin, and including affordable housing (a Scottish Government priority).



These views are replicated across the region and notably are supported by our partners in HITRANS who welcome Government's continued support for dualling the full length of the A96 and asks that the Government develops a clear plan including key milestones and completion forecasts. In particular they note that journey times have significantly extended as traffic levels have grown making the existing route even more unfit for purpose with the hiatus on delivery.

The business case for dualling can only have strengthened in the last decade with new developments such as ScotWind and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. HIREP have identified aggregate impacts from 250 projects with a total potential investment of over £100 billion – this scale of investment needs to be supported to ensure the potential for Scotland's economy is realised, and is critical to achieving a just transition for the North East. To be competitive, we need to be connected. Connected regionally, nationally and internationally.

We would welcome a discussion on the opportunities that full dualling of the A96 will afford Moray as we continue to realise our ambitious growth plans supporting the local, regional and national economy and ensuring sustainable rural populations for the future.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen Robertson'.

Kathleen Robertson
Leader, Moray Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Medcraf'.

Sarah Medcraf
CE, Moray Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Duncan'.

Mike Duncan
Development Manager, Federation of Small Businesses