

# 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 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 been taking forward options assessment work for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

In June 2017, and then in February and March 2018, public engagement events were held to seek feedback from members of the public on the options being developed.

The purpose of this leaflet is to inform you about the options development work that has been carried out since March



2018, to present the updated options under consideration for the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme and also to highlight the elements and junction locations that have been removed as part of the ongoing design development work.

# Scheme assessment process

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

The preparation and development of trunk road projects follows the scheme assessment process set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

This is a three-stage assessment process that covers engineering, environmental, traffic and economic considerations.

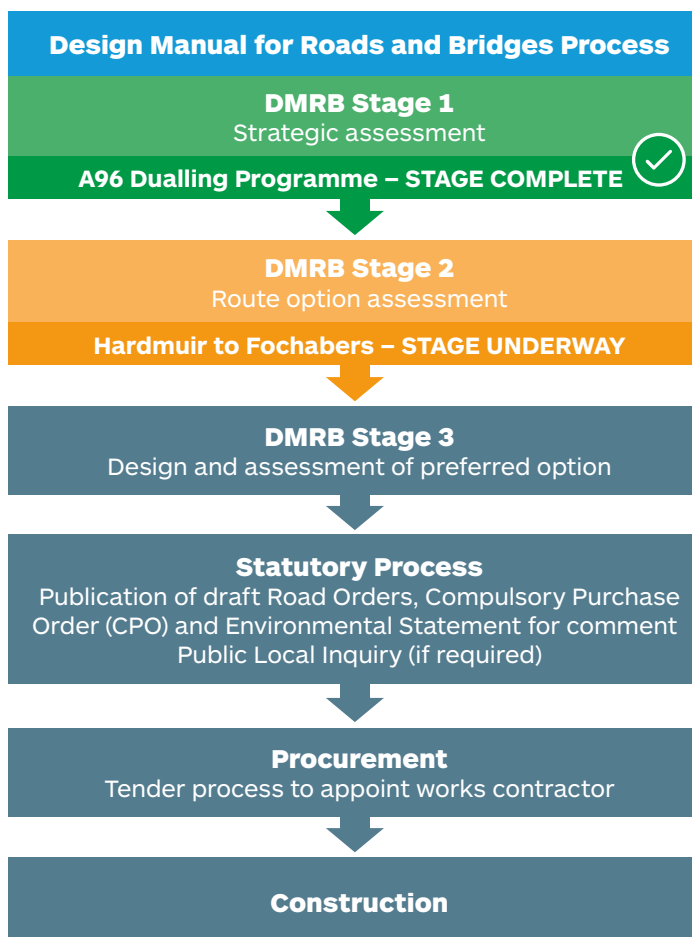
Throughout this assessment process, Transport Scotland consults with a diverse range of stakeholders, local communities and interested parties, including heritage, environmental and Non-Motorised User (NMU) groups such as pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

The DMRB Stage 1 Assessment of the A96 Dualling Programme is complete.

The DMRB Stage 2 Assessment is well underway for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

The route options have been further developed, following the February and March 2018 public exhibitions, to address feedback received from stakeholders and members of the public, as well as for engineering, environment, traffic and economic reasons.

We aim to complete the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment and announce a preferred option for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme later in 2018.



# Scheme objectives

The options assessment process takes into account the scheme objectives and the Scottish Government's five appraisal criteria, namely; **environment, safety, economy, integration and accessibility and social inclusion.**



A96 at Elgin looking east

## The scheme objectives are:

- To improve the operation of the A96 and inter-urban connectivity through:
  - Reduced journey times
  - Improved journey time reliability
  - Increased overtaking opportunities
  - Improved efficiency of freight movements along the transport corridor
  - Reduced conflicts between local traffic and other traffic in urban areas and strategic journeys.
- To improve safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users through:
  - Reduced accident rates and severity
  - Reduced driver stress
  - Reduced Non-Motorised User conflicts with strategic traffic in urban areas.
- To provide opportunities to grow the regional economies on the corridor through:
  - Improved access to the wider strategic transport network
  - Enhanced access to jobs and services.
- To facilitate active travel in the corridor.
- To facilitate integration with public transport facilities.
- To avoid significant environmental impacts and, where this is not possible, to minimise the environmental effect on:
  - The communities and people in the corridor
  - Natural and cultural heritage assets.

# Updated route options

## Schematic drawing

- The route options shown in the drawing overleaf have been assessed and developed following public consultation in February and March 2018.
- Dashed lines in the drawing represent elements and junction locations that have now been removed from the route selection process. These have been de-selected either by assessing their comparative performance with adjacent route elements or by specific design development in certain areas.
- All decisions regarding the route selection process have been carried out whilst taking into account engineering, traffic, economic and environmental factors, as well as the vital feedback received from stakeholders and members of the public.
- The route elements which have been dropped from further consideration are:
  - P1
  - O5 (except the easternmost extent)
  - B1
  - O7
  - R6-R7
- We have highlighted five areas on the drawing where elements have been subject to alignment alterations and explained the reasoning for this. More detailed layout drawings for these five areas are available to view on the project website at [transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers](https://transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers)



A96 Elgin West

- The drawing includes potential junction locations which are represented by a black diamond. The location and style of junctions connecting the new dual carriageway to the local road network will be developed further once a preferred option has been identified, and any further development will be shown to members of the public. These junctions will be grade-separated, meaning that they will use both slip roads and bridges.

# What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its consultants, Mott MacDonald Sweco, will continue to progress the assessment of route options for the **A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme**.

Remaining route options, comprising combinations of the coloured elements shown on the schematic diagram, will be assessed in detail to select a preferred option. These assessments 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 later in 2018. As part of our ongoing engagement on the scheme, we will hold further public exhibitions when the preferred option is announced. This will provide an opportunity for comments and feedback from stakeholders, local communities, and members of the public.



# Comments and feedback

Transport Scotland welcomes your comments and feedback on the design updates that are being incorporated into the options which are currently being assessed. Comments can be made by email or post.

Email to: [a96dualling@transport.gov.scot](mailto:a96dualling@transport.gov.scot)

Or by post to: **A96 Dualling Team, Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF**



Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by **14 September 2018**.

## About your comments and feedback

Transport Scotland will consider your comments and feedback as part of the further design development and assessment of the scheme, and all submissions will be shared with our design consultant for the project. We may also use your submission to inform future reports or public documents related to this scheme. If you choose to provide contact details with your submission, Transport Scotland will send you updates about the scheme, including invitations to future public engagement events. We will only use your contact details for the purpose of keeping you updated with the progress of this project. Your personal data will be deleted on completion of the project and you can opt out of receiving updates about the scheme from Transport Scotland at any time by contacting the project team. The provision of contact details is optional and your comments will still be considered if provided anonymously. However Transport Scotland will be unable to respond to your submission or update you on the scheme if you choose not to provide these details.

## 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](mailto:keri.stewart@sweco.co.uk)

Landowner and Communities  
Manager: **Dave Gowans**  
Tel: **01309 250 380**  
Email:  
[dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk](mailto:dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk)

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

## Project

For further information on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers project, and to view a digital version of this leaflet, please visit:

[transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers](https://transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers)

Should you have any specific accessibility requirements, the contents of this leaflet and information on the project website can be made available in an appropriate format on request by contacting the project team.

## A96 Dualling Programme

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

[transport.gov.scot/a96dualling](https://transport.gov.scot/a96dualling)

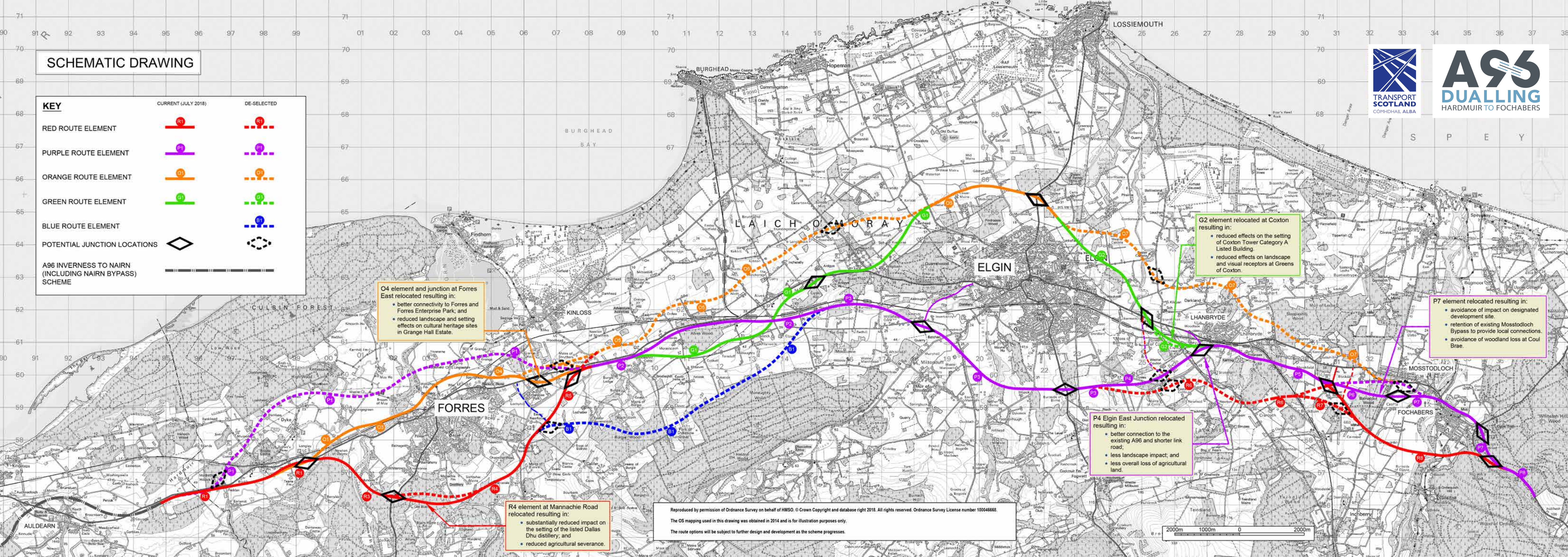
Or email:  
[a96dualling@transport.gov.scot](mailto:a96dualling@transport.gov.scot)

# SCHEMATIC DRAWING

**KEY**

	CURRENT (JULY 2018)	DE-SELECTED
RED ROUTE ELEMENT		
PURPLE ROUTE ELEMENT		
ORANGE ROUTE ELEMENT		
GREEN ROUTE ELEMENT		
BLUE ROUTE ELEMENT		
POTENTIAL JUNCTION LOCATIONS		

A96 INVERNESS TO NAIRN (INCLUDING NAIRN BYPASS) SCHEME



**O4 element and junction at Forres East relocated resulting in:**

- better connectivity to Forres and Forres Enterprise Park, and
- reduced landscape and setting effects on cultural heritage sites in Grange Hall Estate.

**R4 element at Mannachie Road relocated resulting in:**

- substantially reduced impact on the setting of the listed Dallas Dhu distillery; and
- reduced agricultural severance.

**G2 element relocated at Coxton resulting in:**

- reduced effects on the setting of Coxton Tower Category A Listed Building.
- reduced effects on landscape and visual receptors at Greens of Coxton.

**P4 Elgin East Junction relocated resulting in:**

- better connection to the existing A96 and shorter link road;
- less landscape impact; and
- less overall loss of agricultural land.

**P7 element relocated resulting in:**

- avoidance of impact on designated development site.
- retention of existing Mosstodloch Bypass to provide local connections.
- avoidance of woodland loss at Coul Brae.

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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 as the scheme progresses.

