

**A96 Dualling Programme**  
**Strategic Environmental Assessment**  
**Tier 2 Environmental Report**

Appendix C - Preliminary Assessment  
of 16 Improvement Strategy Options

**May 2015**



## Appendix C - Preliminary Assessment of 16 Improvement Strategy Options

Table C-1 Option A

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this online option constitutes a 500m buffer zone around the existing A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness</p> <p>Approx. Length: 139Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 13,877Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No national designations identified</li> <li>- 9 Landscape Character Areas crossed</li> </ul>	<p>The main settlements located within this option include:</p> <p>Alves, Ardye, Auldearn, Bainshole, Blackcastle, Blinkbonny, Brackley, Cairnie, Coachford, Colpy, Elgin, Fochabers, Forgie, Forres, Gollanfield, Hillhead, Huntly, Inveramsay, Inverurie, Keith, Lhanbryde, Lochside, Milton of Gollanfield, Mosstodloch, Nairn, Newton, Old Rayne, Pitcaple, Pitmachie, Port Elphinstone, Skares, Springfield, Tornagrain, and Whiteford</p> <p>As this option represents full dualling of the existing A96, the communities likely to be affected by the dualling would be those currently located on or near the A96</p> <p>Impacts on these communities may include demolition of properties, and increased air and noise pollution</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line dualling reduces the requirement for additional land-take</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No environmental relief provided for communities on/ near the existing A96, exacerbating existing issues such as road safety, noise and air quality</li> <li>• Large areas of land at risk of flooding span the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Conservation Areas and numerous Listed Buildings are clustered around a number of settlements throughout this option</li> <li>• Auldearn Battlefield spans the majority of the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Land take around the current A96 has the potential for significant environmental effects on the cultural and natural environment and particularly on the people and communities currently affected</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 43 Scheduled Monuments</li> <li>- 2 Battlefields covering 1.4% of the option area (196.50Ha)</li> <li>- 7 Conservation Areas covering 0.8% of the option area (114.70Ha)</li> <li>- 791 Listed Buildings (41 Cat. A)</li> <li>- 6 GDL sites covering 2.2% of the option area (300.88Ha)</li> </ul>		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 Ramsar sites covering 0.6% of the option area (82.07Ha)</li> <li>- 3 SAC covering 0.2% of the option area (25.21Ha)</li> <li>- 3 SPA covering 0.6% of the option area (82.11Ha)</li> <li>- 4 Biological SSSIs covering 1.0% of the option area (132.84Ha)</li> <li>- 2 Mixed SSSIs covering 0.2% of the option area (28.66Ha)</li> <li>- Ancient Woodland covers 12.3% of the option area (0.2% (30.59Ha) semi-natural, 12.0% (1,660.86Ha) plantation, 0.1% (13.42Ha) Roy)</li> </ul>		
	<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 11.6 % of the option area (1,605.27Ha)</li> <li>- SEPA 1 in 200 year coastal flood zone covers 0.8% of the option area (106.79Ha)</li> </ul>		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Geological SSSI covering &lt;0.1% of the option area (2.48Ha)</li> <li>- 2 Mixed SSSIs covering 0.2% of the option area (28.66Ha)</li> <li>- Peat and peaty soils cover 2.8% of the option area (383.02Ha)</li> <li>- 3 GCR sites covering 0.3% of the option area (36.77Ha)</li> <li>- Arable agricultural land covers 20.3% of the option area (2,812.31Ha)</li> <li>- Mixed agricultural land covers 63.6% of the option area (8,825.76Ha)</li> </ul>		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key risks include the lack of environmental relief and increased disruption to communities along the existing A96</li> <li>• Includes increased risk to properties either side of existing A96 through settlements</li> <li>• Benefits include a reduced requirement for additional land take when compared with off-line options</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option A should not be taken forward for further consideration due to the potential for adverse effects on population and human health, exacerbating existing conditions</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 2 Option B North**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option B North</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this online option constitutes a 500m buffer zone around the existing A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness with bypasses to the north of Forres, Elgin and Inverurie</p> <p>The major settlements of Keith and Nairn, also situated within this option, are bypassed to the south</p> <p>Approx. Length: 155Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 19,564Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 8 Landscape Character Areas crossed	The main settlements within this option include:	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bypasses around major settlements will improve road safety and air quality</li> <li>• Also reduces the potential impact on Listed Buildings within settlements</li> <li>• On-line dualling of the existing A96, on sections between bypasses, will reduce the additional land-take required</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains more land at risk of fluvial and coastal flooding when compared with option B South (spanning the breadth of this option at multiple points)</li> <li>• Contains more productive agricultural land when compared with option B South (spanning the breadth of this option at multiple points)</li> <li>• Areas designated as Ancient Woodland could be adversely affected</li> <li>• Keith Hall GDL spans the breadth of this option near Inverurie</li> <li>• Auldearn and Harlaw Battlefields span the majority/ all of the breadth of this option</li> <li>• The River Spey SAC/ SSSI crosses the breadth of the option (however it should be noted that this is also the case for options A and B South)</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 43 Scheduled Monuments - 2 Battlefields covering 2.1% of the option area (473.24Ha) - 2 Conservation Areas covering 0.1% of the option area (16.51Ha) - 217 Listed Buildings (16 Cat. A) - 6 GDL sites covering 2.6% of the option area (501.29Ha)	Alves, Auldearn, Ardye, Bainshole, Balhalgardy, Blackburn, Blackcastle, Blinkbonny, Brackley, Cairnie, Chapel of Garioch, Chapel of Stoneywood, Coachford, Colpy, Fochabers, Forgie, Gollanfield, Hillhead, Househill, Huntly, Kinellar, Kintore, Lhanbryde, Lochside, Milton of Gollanfield, Moss-side, Mosstodloch, Muir of Nairn, Newton, Old Rayne, Pitmachie, Skares, Springfield, Tornagrain	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 2 Ramsar sites covering 0.5% of the option area (91.82Ha) - 2 SAC covering 0.1% of the option area (21.51Ha) - 3 SPA covering 0.5% of the option area (91.85Ha) - 3 Biological SSSIs covering 0.6% of the option area (121.24Ha) - 2 Mixed SSSIs covering 1.2% of the option area (235.67Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 10.7% of the option area (0.2% (31.84Ha) semi-natural, 10.4% (2,042.18Ha) plantation, 0.1% (23.17Ha) Roy)	All of these communities could potentially be affected by dualling within option B North, however it should be noted that settlements including Inverurie, Keith, Elgin, Forres and Nairn would be bypassed by this option, providing environmental relief and reducing the risk of potentially adverse impacts on these communities when compared with the online dualling option A	
	<b>Water</b>	-SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 11.2% of the option area (2,184.85Ha) - SEPA 1 in 200 year coastal flood zone covers 1.5% of the option area (301.24Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 2 Geological SSSIs covering <0.1% of the option area (8.61Ha) - 2 Mixed SSSIs covering 1.2% of the option area (235.67Ha) - Peat and peaty soils cover 2.2% of the option area (432.19Ha) - 4 GCR sites covering 1.3% of the option area (252.76Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 25.7% of the option area (5,025.12Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 66.5% of the option area (13,012.70Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key risks include more land at risk of flooding (fluvial and coastal) when compared with option B South, and the presence of more historic environment designations spanning a large proportion of the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Key benefits include bypasses around major settlements, providing environmental relief for communities</li> <li>• B North and B South only vary in terms of the bypass options around Forres, Elgin and Inverurie and, on balance, SEA review considers that option B North is more significantly constrained than option B South</li> <li>• However, <b>bypass options to the North of these settlements should be taken forward for further consideration, in order to provide flexibility at this early stage should the PES engineering studies determine that options to the South of these settlements are particularly constrained in engineering terms</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 3 Option B South**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option B South</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this online option constitutes a 500m buffer zone around the existing A96 with bypasses to the south of Forres, Elgin and Inverurie</p> <p>The major settlements of Keith and Nairn, also situated within this option, are bypassed to the south</p> <p>Approx. Length: 151Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 18,777Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 8 Landscape Character Areas crossed	<p>The main settlements within option B South include:</p> <p>Auldearn, Bainshole, Blackburn, Blackcastle, Blinkbonny, Brackley, Cairnie, Chapel of Garioch, Chapel of Stoneywood, Cloves, Coachford, Colpy, Fochabers, Forgie, Gollanfield, Hillhead, Househill, Huntly, Kintore, Lhanbryde, Lochside, Miltonduff, Milton of Gollanfield, Moss-side, Mosstodloch, Muir of Kinellar, Nairn, Newton, Old Rayne, Paddockhaugh, Pitmachie, Skares, Tornagrain.</p> <p>All of these communities could potentially be affected by dualling within option B South, however it should be noted that settlements including Inverurie, Keith, Elgin, Forres and Nairn would be bypassed by this option, providing environmental relief and reducing the risk of potentially adverse impacts on these communities when compared with the online dualling option A</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bypasses around major settlements will improve road safety and air quality</li> <li>• Also reduces the potential impact on Listed Buildings within settlements</li> <li>• On-line dualling of the existing A96, on sections between bypasses, will reduce the additional land-take required</li> <li>• Avoids Keith Hall GDL and Harlaw Battlefield (both near Inverurie) that would be affected by option B North</li> <li>• Impacts less productive agricultural land than option B North</li> <li>• Crosses less land at risk of flooding than option B North (approx. 66% less coastal flood risk approx. 20% less fluvial flood risk)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The River Spey SAC/SSSI crosses the breadth of this option (however it should be noted that this is also the case for options A and B North)</li> <li>• Crosses significant areas of land at risk of flooding (fluvial/ river crossings)</li> <li>• Areas designated as Ancient Woodland could be adversely affected</li> <li>• Auldearn Battlefield spans the majority of the breadth of this option</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 43 Scheduled Monuments - 1 Battlefield covering 1.7% of the option area (314.26Ha) - 2 Conservation Areas covering 0.1% of the option area (16.51Ha) - 195 Listed Buildings (26 Cat. A) - 6 GDL sites covering 1.6% of the option area (299.21Ha)		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 2 Ramsar sites covering 0.5% of the option area (93.31Ha) - 2 SAC covering 0.1% of the option area (21.59Ha) - 3 SPA covering 0.5% of the option area (93.31Ha) - 3 Biological SSSIs covering 0.7% of the option area (122.31Ha) - 2 Mixed SSSIs covering 1.2% of the option area (234.33Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 12.3% of the option area (0.1% (24.80Ha) semi-natural, 12.1% (2,262.80Ha) plantation, 0.1% (25.67Ha) Roy)		
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 9.1% of the option area (1,717.90Ha) - SEPA 1 in 200 year coastal flood zone covers 0.5% of the option area (101.63Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 1 Geological SSSI covering <0.1% of the option area (2.48Ha) - 2 Mixed SSSIs covering 1.2% of the option area (234.33Ha) - Peat and peaty soils cover 2.3% of the option area (422.51Ha) - 3 GCR sites covering 1.3% of the option area (234.85Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 17.3% of the option area (3,242.91Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 73.3% of the option area (13,759.49Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B North and B South only vary in terms of the bypass options around Forres, Elgin and Inverurie and, on balance, SEA review considers that option B South is less significantly constrained than option B North</li> <li>• Key benefits include bypasses around major settlements providing environmental relief for communities and avoidance of historic environment features potentially affected by B North</li> <li>• Key risks include significant areas of land at risk of flooding within the bypass options to the south of communities (less; however, than B North) and potential risk of adverse impacts on Ancient Woodland designations</li> <li>• SEA considers that, at this early stage, option B South could be viewed as the reference case for SEA comparison of other broad alternative options</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option B South is less significantly constrained than online option A and option B North and therefore should be taken forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 4 Option C**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at the existing A96 between Boddum Hill and Dunbennan Hill</p> <p>It bypasses to the south of Huntly and runs in a straight line through the north of Insch, bypassing to the south west of Inverurie and rejoining the existing A96 south of Kintore</p> <p>Approx. Length: 41Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 4,102Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 4 Landscape Character Areas crossed	<p>The main community located within option C is Insch, however the majority of Insch is situated outside the South-west extent of the option, and therefore dualling towards the north-east of this option could potentially avoid/ bypass the settlement</p> <p>Other settlements in this option include Aquhythie, Ardoyne, Burnhervie, Shanquhar, and Westhall, all of which could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option</p> <p>Impacts on communities may include, for example, demolition of properties, and increased air and noise pollution</p> <p>This option does bypass Huntly and Inverurie, potentially providing environmental relief for these larger settlements</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bypassing the major settlements of Inverurie and Huntly on the existing A96, will improve road safety and local air quality</li> <li>• Crosses less land at risk of fluvial flooding than the corresponding section of options A, B North and B South</li> <li>• Fewer historic environment designations when compared with the equivalent section of options A, B North and B South</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More Ancient Woodland (predominantly to the south of the option) than in the corresponding sections of options A, B North and B South</li> <li>• Arable agricultural land, close to Insch, is more of a constraint compared with the corresponding sections of options A, B North and B South</li> <li>• Peaty soil stretches across this option, west of Garioch, presenting potential engineering, management and restoration constraints when compared with the equivalent sections of options A, B North and B South</li> <li>• The southern extent of this option connects to the existing A96 dualled section south of Kintore but may require a link to one of the broad options (e.g. options L/ M) which propose offline dualling from north of Huntly either direct to Nairn, or via Dufftown to Inverness</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 8 Scheduled Monuments - 14 Listed Buildings (1 Cat. A)		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- Ancient Woodland covers 8.6% of the option area (0.3% (10.90Ha) semi-natural, 8.1% (331.61Ha) plantation, 0.2% (7.08Ha) Roy)		
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 4.8% of the option area (196.14Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- Peat and peaty soils cover 7.3% of the option area (299.05Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 9.9% of the option area (407.20Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 80.2% of the option area (3,288.86Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When compared with the corresponding stretches of options A, B North and B South, this option is less significantly constrained</li> <li>• Risk of adverse impacts in terms of losses of productive (mixed agricultural) land, and impacts on areas designated as Ancient Woodland</li> <li>• Key risk is the introduction of potentially adverse impacts on those smaller settlements presently unaffected by A96 issues</li> <li>• Key benefits include the avoidance of the larger settlements of Inverurie and Huntly, potentially providing environmental relief</li> <li>• Also avoids a number of historic environment designations potentially affected by options A, B North and B South</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option C should be taken forward for further consideration as it could potentially provide a less constrained alternative to the corresponding sections of options A, B North and B South</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 5 Option D**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option D</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at the existing A96 between Hill of Skares and Hill of Tillymorgan</p> <p>It is assumed that this option does not bypass any major settlements but runs in straight line to re-join the existing A96 just north of Milton of Inveramsay</p> <p>Approx. Length: 13Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 1,308Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 2 Landscape Character Areas crossed	The main community located within option D is Whiteford	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bypassing communities including Colpy and Pitmachie on the existing A96 will improve road safety and local air quality</li> <li>• Crosses less land at risk of fluvial flooding than the corresponding sections of options A, B North and B South</li> <li>• Avoids Williamston House and Newton House GDLs (issues in options A, B North and B South)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of Ancient Woodland (plantation) cross the breadth of this option – permanent losses likely</li> <li>• Majority of the option area is productive (arable and mixed) agricultural land – permanent losses likely</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 2 Scheduled Monuments - 4 Listed Buildings (2 Cat. A)	Whiteford is situated on the south-west boundary of the option, and dualling towards the north east of the option around this area could reduce potential for adverse impacts on this community	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- Ancient Woodland covers 9.6% of the option area (125.56Ha plantation)	Other settlements in this option include Bonnyton, Durno, and Kirkton of Culsalmund, all of which could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option	
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood risk zone covers 6.6% of the option area (86.25Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 1 Geological SSSI covering 0.2% of the option area (3.09Ha) - 1 GCR site covering 0.2% of the option area (2.95Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 31.1% of the option area (406.65Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 66.6% of the option area (870.66Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When compared with the corresponding stretches of options A, B North and B South, this option is less significantly constrained</li> <li>• Key risk is the introduction of potentially adverse impacts on those smaller settlements presently unaffected by A96 issues</li> <li>• Also risk of adverse impacts in terms of losses of productive (arable and mixed) agricultural land, and impacts on areas designated as Ancient Woodland</li> <li>• No larger A96 settlements bypassed by this option; however, does enable the avoidance of a number of GDLs</li> <li>• Option D would be most beneficial when considered in conjunction with a north bypass option around Inverurie</li> <li>• Option D may be removed from further consideration should PES engineering assessments determine that either option B South or option C is preferred in this area</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option D should be taken forward for further consideration as it could potentially provide a less constrained alternative to the corresponding sections of options A, B North and B South</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 6 Option E**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option E</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at the existing A96 between Hillhead of Thomaston and Rack Moss</p> <p>It is assumed that this option does not bypass any major settlements but provides a straight line/ tunnelling option to re-join the existing A96 just north of the B992 intersections</p> <p>Approx. Length: 9Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 876Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 2 Landscape Character Areas crossed	The main settlement within option E is Wrangham	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although this option is constrained by 200-year fluvial flood risk zones (river crossings) at the north and south extents, there is much lower flood risk when compared with corresponding stretches of options A, B North and B South</li> <li>When compared with options A, B North and B South, this option presents greater potential to avoid Williamston House GDL</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option involves the construction of a twin bore dual carriageway tunnel (distance not confirmed) and the associated environmental issues (e.g. excavations, blasting, spoil management/ waste, construction and maintenance accesses for ventilation shafts, etc.) should be considered significant</li> <li>The southern end of this option is constrained by an area of Ancient Woodland (plantation) near Cranieston and an expanse of productive (arable) agricultural land</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 1 Listed Building (Cat. C) - 1 GDL site covering 0.2% of the option area (1.64Ha)	Wrangham, along with a number of smaller settlements could potentially be affected by dualling within this option through, for example, demolition of properties or increased air or noise pollution during construction and operation	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- Ancient Woodland covers 0.4% of the option area (3.11Ha plantation)		
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood risk zone covers 2.4% of the option area (20.88Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- Arable agricultural land covers 11.7% of the option area (102.31Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 72.8% of the option area (638.08Ha)	Tunnelling presents additional issues including safety of workers during construction, operations and maintenance phases, with further safety issues associated with the transportation of flammable materials (eg. whisky)	
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compared with the corresponding sections of options A, B North and B South, this option is less significantly constrained</li> <li>No significant environmental designations on/ around the hill(s) for the tunnel option</li> <li>Key issues relate to environmental impacts of tunnelling operations (e.g. excavations, spoil, construction and maintenance accesses for ventilation shafts, etc.)</li> <li>However, tunnelling spoil could provide substrate aggregate material for other sections of A96 dualling</li> <li>Key benefits include avoidance of a GDL</li> <li><b>SEA recommendation would be to avoid a tunnelling option in favour of an 'open' solution</b></li> <li><b>On balance, SEA review considers that a tunnelling option should only be taken forward for further consideration where the PES engineering studies determine that the alternative options in this area are particularly constrained; however, option E should be taken forward as it may provide flexibility to consider a less constrained alternative</b></li> </ul>			



**Table C- 7 Option F**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option F</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences south of Elgin between the Benraich-Glenlivet Distillery off the A941 and Longmorn and Raich Farm</p> <p>It is assumed that this option then runs in a straight line, bypassing to the south of Fochabers, until the junction of the B9103 and B9015 near Orton</p> <p>From here it is assumed to follow the B9103 and then the A95 to Hillockhead Wood, just west of Keith</p> <p>Approx. Length: 21Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 2,112Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 4 Landscape Character Areas crossed	<p>This option would require connections with a southern bypass around Elgin and Keith</p> <p>It bypasses Fochabers and Mosstodloch on the A96; however, a number of small settlements including Longmorn, Mulben, Newlands of Dundurcas, and Rosarie, along with a number of distilleries are all dispersed within option F</p> <p>Each of these communities/ distillery businesses could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option</p> <p>An option linking the south of Elgin to the south side of Keith, could provide some relief for existing A96 communities, but could adversely impact those communities within this option</p> <p>Mixed effects likely with some benefits for A96 communities, disbenefits for communities within the boundaries of this option and potential benefits/ disbenefits for distillery businesses as improved transport links could benefit businesses within the option</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bypasses communities including Llanbryde, Mosstodloch and Fochabers on the existing A96 – could help improve road safety and local air quality (although recently completed bypass work at Fochabers and Mosstodloch would limit likely extent of benefits)</li> <li>• Avoids Gordon Castle (Bog of Gight) GDL (Present in options A/B North/B South)</li> <li>• While this option does contain 3 Listed Buildings, it avoids a number of Listed Buildings and Conservation Area at Fochabers (present in options A/B North/B South)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to option B South at the southern bypass around Elgin and A/B North/B South to the west of Keith and would therefore rely on these bypass options being taken forward</li> <li>• The River Spey SAC/SSSI crosses the breadth of this option (however it should be noted that this is also the case for options A/B North/B South)</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland crosses the breadth of this option (however it should be noted that this is also the case for options A/B North/B South)</li> <li>• Peaty soils and arable agricultural land span the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Dualling could potentially impact upon a number of distilleries present within this option</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 3 Listed Buildings (1 Cat. A)		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 1 SAC covering 1.3% of the option area (26.66Ha) - 1 Biological SSSI covering 0.9% of the option area (19.05Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 22.4% of the option area (0.3% (5.50Ha) semi-natural, 22.1% (466.69Ha) plantation)		
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood risk zone covers 6.2% of the option area (131.65Ha) Various rivers/ burns to cross in this option including the River Spey, Longmorn Burn, Burn of Auchlunkart, Loan Burn – these burns/ rivers feed the range of distilleries found within this option		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- Peat and peaty soils cover 18.9% of the option area (398.31Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 7.8% of the option area (163.71Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 58.2% of the option area (1,230.22Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In terms of environmental constraint designations, when compared with the corresponding sections of options A/B North/B South, this option is less significantly constrained</li> <li>• However, in terms of watercourses and water quality, this option contains a number of distilleries which would support consideration of this option only where others do not prove viable</li> <li>• Key issues include valuable habitats (including Ancient Woodland and peaty soils which traverse the breadth of the option) and the River Spey SAC/SSSI</li> <li>• Relies on selection of a southern bypass option around both Elgin and Keith</li> <li>• Environmental relief benefits for existing A96 communities likely to be limited due to recent completion of bypass works at Fochabers/ Mosstodloch (not dual carriageway bypass)</li> <li>• Key benefits include the avoidance of historic environment designation (GDL) present in options A/B North/B South and which was previously affected by the Fochabers/ Mosstodloch scheme</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option F should only be taken forward for further consideration where the PES engineering studies determine that the alternative options in this area are particularly constrained in engineering terms</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 8 Option G**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option G</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at Inshes on the A96 east of Inverness, and runs in a straight line south east to rejoin the existing A96 at the Kinellar roundabout near Blackburn, north west of Aberdeen</p> <p>It is assumed that this option therefore bypasses all of the major settlements on the current A96 route</p> <p>Direct end-to-end straight line option</p> <p>Approx. Length: 117Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 11,721Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cairngorms NP covers 8.2% of the option area (963.84Ha)</li> <li>Direct option which would require construction/ excavation/ tunnelling through extremely challenging terrain</li> <li>- 7 Landscape Character Areas crossed</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to Westhill on the outskirts of Inverness, option G contains a number of small communities including: Auchnagallin, Castletown, Drumin, Keig, Lettoch, Leylodge, Lumsden, Mains of Dalvey, Muir of Kinellar, Pitfichie, and Shenal</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option contains less land at risk of flooding than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• While this option contains a number of sites of historic and cultural designation, it avoids more of these sites than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• There is less productive agricultural land compared with options A/B North/B South</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This offline option would require commitment to complete an entirely new route through mountainous terrain, and that does not address the community relief issues on the A96 corridor</li> <li>• Would really only benefit end-to-end travel</li> <li>• Carn nan Tri-tighearnan, River Spey, Coreen Hills and Hill of Towanreef SAC/ SPAs span the entire breadth of the option</li> <li>• This option cuts through areas of the Cairngorms National Park</li> <li>• Peaty soils cover a large proportion of this option</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland crosses the breadth of this option at multiple points</li> <li>• Fluvial flooding from several waterbodies is still a significant constraint, Lochindorb in particular spanning the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Larger settlements such as Westhill and Lumsden present constraints along this offline option with potential risks to properties within these communities</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 Scheduled Monuments</li> <li>- 25 Listed Buildings (3 Cat. A)</li> <li>- 2 GDL sites covering &lt;0.01% of the option area (2.55Ha)</li> </ul>	<p>Any of these communities could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option, for example through demolition of properties or increased air/ noise pollution</p>	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 SAC covering 8.9% of the option area (1,047.03Ha)</li> <li>- 4 Biological SSSIs covering 5.8% of the option area (682.19Ha)</li> <li>- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 3.2% of the option area (373.57Ha)</li> <li>- Ancient Woodland covers 6.2% of the option area (0.7% (78.53Ha) semi-natural, 5.3% (624.77Ha) plantation, 0.2% (25.89Ha) Roy)</li> </ul>	<p>A direct end-to-end option between Inverness and Aberdeen would really only benefit traffic travelling end-to-end – it would not benefit travel along and between communities on the A96 corridor</p>	
	<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 5.1% of the option area (592.25Ha)</li> </ul>	<p>Rough estimate for end-to-end traffic is in the order of 10-15%</p>	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 3.2% of the option area (373.57Ha)</li> <li>- Peat and peaty soils cover 48.8% of the option area (5,716.38Ha)</li> <li>- Arable agricultural land covers 1.8% of the option area (210.33Ha)</li> <li>- Mixed agricultural land covers 34.5% of the option area (4,047.46Ha)</li> </ul>	<p>Would not really provide environmental relief for communities on the A96 as the majority of trips would not be addressed by this option</p>	
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key issues include the mountainous terrain and cutting through the Cairngorms National Park which spans the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Does not address the community relief issues on the A96 corridor as would only really help end-to-end traffic</li> <li>• Cuts through three Natura sites that would be avoided entirely by focusing on solutions along the existing A96 corridor</li> <li>• Key benefits include the avoidance of a number of designated historic environment sites when compared with options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option G should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 9 Option H**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option H</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at the Raigmore Interchange in Inverness and follows the A9 south east until the junction with the A938 near Baddengorm</p> <p>From here it is assumed to follow the A938 east and then the A95 toward Granton-on-Spey</p> <p>It is then assumed to follow the A939 south east to the junction with the A944 near Colnabaichin, continuing to follow the A944 to join the A97 near Deskry Bridge</p> <p>For the purposes of SEA it is then assumed to follow the A97 to Mossat, then the A944 all the way to the east of Westhill, which is west of Aberdeen</p> <p>This option is assumed to bypass all of the major settlements on the current A96 route</p> <p>Alternative end-to-end option using existing roads</p> <p>Approx. Length: 166Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 16,392Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cairngorms NP covers 48.8% of the option area (8,003.82Ha)</li> <li>This option would require dualling of approx. 70-75km of existing roads through the north end of the Cairngorms National Park</li> <li>- 7 Landscape Character Areas crossed</li> </ul>	<p>Option H contains a number of settlements of varying size including: Alford, Bellabeg, Blairnamarrow, Bridge of Alford, Bridge of Brown, Carrbridge / Drochaid Charr, Colnabaichin, Craggan, Craggie, Culcabock, Daviot, Dirdhu, Drumnahive, Dulnain Bridge, Dunecht, Duthil, Elrick, Forbestown, Glenkindie, Heugh-head, Kirkton of Skene, Lochanhully, Lynemore, Mains of Kildrummy, Moy, Old Kinnernie, Ordhead, Sauchen, Scatraig, Skye of Curr, Slochd, Speybridge, Strathdon, Tillyfourie, Tomatin, Tomintoul, Waterside, Westhill on the outskirts of Aberdeen, and Whitehouse</p> <p>This option also crosses the southern extent of Grantown on Spey</p> <p>Each of these communities could potentially be affected by dualling within this option</p> <p>An end-to-end option between Inverness and Aberdeen would really only benefit traffic travelling end-to-end – it would not benefit travel along and between communities on the A96 corridor</p> <p>Rough estimate for end-to-end traffic is in the order of 10-15%</p> <p>Would not really provide environmental relief for communities on the A96 as the majority of trips would not be addressed by this option</p> <p>In terms of overall distance, this is a longer option than options A/ B North/ B South</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains less land at risk of flooding than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Contains less productive agricultural land than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Presumed on-line dualling of existing A class roads</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option would not be useful for current A96 users unless travelling directly from Aberdeen to Inverness or vice versa</li> <li>• Does not address the community relief issues for the A96 corridor</li> <li>• Requires dualling through 70-75km of the Cairngorms National Park (almost half of the option area)</li> <li>• The River Spey, Creag nan Gamhainn, and Ladder Hills SACs and SSSIs span the breadth of the option</li> <li>• Alford Battlefield spans the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Areas of fluvial floodrisk span the breadth of the option at multiple points</li> <li>• Peat and peaty soils span the breadth of the option at multiple points</li> <li>• GCR sites may be difficult to avoid, spanning the majority of the breadth of the option at multiple points</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland cross the breadth of this option at multiple points</li> <li>• Presumed dualling of current A class roads within the option is likely to exacerbate existing issues including air quality, noise and community severance, and may put local properties at risk</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 28 Scheduled Monuments</li> <li>- 1 Battlefield covering 1.4% of the option area (234.40Ha)</li> <li>- 1 Conservation Area covering &lt;0.1% of the option area (0.02Ha)</li> <li>- 173 Listed Buildings (12 Cat. A)</li> <li>- 3 GDL sites covering 1.4% of the option area (229.63Ha)</li> </ul>		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 Ramsar sites covering 0.3% of the option area (55.12Ha)</li> <li>- 4 SAC sites covering 4.3% of the option area (703.81Ha)</li> <li>- 3 SPA sites covering 0.5% of the option area (75.28Ha)</li> <li>- 5 Biological SSSIs covering 0.6% of the option area (103.28Ha)</li> <li>- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 2.9% of the option area (474.25Ha)</li> <li>- Ancient Woodland covers 14.3% of the option area (3.3% (545.60Ha) semi-natural, 10.3% (1,689.37Ha) plantation, 0.7% (111.85Ha) Roy)</li> <li>- 1 LNR covering 0.1% (9.17Ha)</li> </ul>		
	<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 6.9% of the option area (1,133.15Ha)</li> <li>- SEPA 1 in 200 coastal flood zone covers &lt;0.1% of the option area (3.48Ha)</li> </ul>		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Geological SSSI covering 0.1% of the option area (14.07Ha)</li> <li>- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 2.9% of the option area (474.25Ha)</li> <li>- Peat and peaty soils cover 21.3% of the option area (3,495.85Ha)</li> <li>- 4 GCR sites covering 0.5% of the option area (80.38Ha)</li> <li>- Arable agricultural land covers 3.9% of the option area (646.59Ha)</li> <li>- Mixed agricultural land covers 53.3% of the option area (8,743.39Ha)</li> </ul>		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key issues include the mountainous terrain and dualling through the Cairngorms National Park which covers almost half of this option</li> <li>• Does not address the community relief issues on the A96 corridor as would only really help end-to-end traffic</li> <li>• Introduces dual carriageway through Cairngorms communities not currently affected by A96 issues</li> <li>• Cuts through Natura sites that would be completely avoided by focusing on solutions around the existing A96 corridor</li> <li>• Key benefits include potentially reduced land take if dualling existing A class roads, and use of less land at risk of flooding</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option H should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 10 Option I**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option I</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at Carrbridge on the A938, running south east towards Bridge of Brown on the A939</p> <p>From here it is assumed to continue in a straight line east to the junction of the A97 and the A944 at Bridgend</p> <p>This option is assumed to bypass all of the major settlements on the current A96 route</p> <p>Straight line connection option to shorten distances between key points on option H</p> <p>Requires approval on key sections of option H</p> <p>Approx. Length: 52Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 5,204Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cairngorms NP covers 81.5% of the option area (4,240.28Ha)</li> <li>As option I provides connections between points on option H, the majority of this option would require direct route construction/ excavation/ tunnelling through extremely challenging terrain</li> <li>- 4 Landscape Character Areas crossed</li> </ul>	<p>The main settlements of Carrbridge / Drochaid Charr, Chapelton, and Silemore, as well as the northern extent of Nethy Bridge and Abernethy are located in option I</p> <p>While any of these communities could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option, it should be noted that Abernethy comprises a number of developments spread across the majority of the option breadth which may therefore be difficult to avoid</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option avoids Ladder Hills SAC and SSSI which constrain the corresponding sections of option H</li> <li>• More Ancient Woodland of plantation origin and mixed agricultural land is avoided when compared with the corresponding sections of option H</li> <li>• The option includes fewer Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings than the corresponding sections of option H</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option provides shorter, more direct links to sections of option H and is therefore reliant on option H being taken forward</li> <li>• The Cairngorms National Park covers more than 80% of this option</li> <li>• An area of Craigmore Wood, designated as an SPA and containing semi-natural Ancient Woodland, crosses the option</li> <li>• A large continuous section of this option, near Nethy Bridge, is at risk of fluvial flooding</li> <li>• Peaty soil is a major constraint, covering a large expanse of the option</li> <li>• Does not address community relief issues on the A96 corridor</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 Scheduled Monuments</li> <li>- 21 Listed Buildings (6 Cat. A)</li> <li>- 1 GDL Site covering 0.2% of the option area (10.11Ha)</li> </ul>	<p>This option would be part of an end-to-end solution comprising parts of option H</p> <p>Would really only benefit traffic travelling end-to-end – it would not benefit travel along and between communities on the A96 corridor</p>	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 SACs covering 2.4% of the option area (127.37Ha)</li> <li>- 1 SPA covering 3.0% of the option area (157.28Ha)</li> <li>- 2 Biological SSSIs covering 0.4% of the option area (20.16Ha)</li> <li>- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 0.9% of the option area (46.31Ha)</li> <li>- Ancient Woodland covers 6.3% of the option area (4.9% (255.10Ha) semi-natural, 0.7% (37.06Ha) plantation, 0.7% (37.36Ha) Roy)</li> </ul>	<p>Would not really provide environmental relief for communities on the A96 as the majority of trips would not be addressed by this option</p>	
	<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood risk zone covers 7.4% of the option area (386.74Ha)</li> </ul>	<p>Introduces dual carriageway through Cairngorms communities not currently affected by A96 issues</p>	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 0.9% of the option area (46.31Ha)</li> <li>- Peat and peaty soils cover 47.6% of the option area (2,477.36Ha)</li> <li>- Mixed agricultural land covers 37.3% of the option area (1,941.21Ha)</li> </ul>		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on the approval of parts of option H</li> <li>• Key issues include the mountainous terrain and dualling through the Cairngorms National Park which covers over 80% of this option</li> <li>• Does not address the community relief issues on the A96 corridor as would only really help end-to-end traffic</li> <li>• Introduces dual carriageway through Cairngorms communities not currently affected by A96 issues</li> <li>• Cuts through Natura sites that would be completely avoided by focusing on solutions around the existing A96 corridor</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option I should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 11 Option J**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option J</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences on the A941 south of Elgin at the Benraich-Glenlivet Distillery</p> <p>It is assumed to follow the A941 through Rothes, Craigellachie, Dufftown, bypassing to the south of Fochabers, Keith and Huntly</p> <p>The assumption is that this option then follows the A97 south from Rhynie and terminates at the junction with the A944 at Bridgend</p> <p>Approx. Length: 59Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 5,894Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 6 Landscape Character Areas crossed	The main communities in option J include: Auchinroath, Ballochford, Cabrach, Craigellachie, Dandalieth, Dufftown, Elrick, Fogwatt, Inverharroch, Longmorn, Lumsden, Rhynie, Rothes, and Whitewreath	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links option H in the south to option B South in the north and likely to require the dualling of several existing A roads in between</li> <li>• The River Spey SAC and SSSI crosses the option at multiple locations</li> <li>• Land at risk of flooding crosses the option at several locations</li> <li>• Peaty soils span the breadth of this option at multiple locations</li> <li>• A number of Ancient Woodlands span the breadth of the option</li> <li>• Potential to impact communities within the option including Rothes, Craigellachie and Dufftown which span the breadth of the option</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 9 Scheduled Monuments - 53 Listed Buildings (1 Cat. A)	While any of these communities could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option, it should be noted that Rothes, Craigellachie and Dufftown span the breadth of the option and therefore it is particularly likely that these communities would be impacted, particularly through demolition of residences and businesses	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 2 SACs covering 2.5% of the option area (146.53Ha) - 1 Biological SSSI covering 1.0% of the option area (59.75Ha) - 1 Mixed SSSI covering 0.9% of the option area (53.23Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 5.1% of the option area (1.5% (86.33Ha) semi-natural, 3.1% (184.74Ha) plantation, 0.5% (27.21Ha) Roy)	Depends on the approval of a southern bypass around Elgin and the eastern part of option H	
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood zone covers 8.6% of the option area (505.24Ha)	Not likely to address the community relief issues along the A96 corridor	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 2 Geological SSSIs covering 0.2% of the option area (10.13Ha) - 1 Mixed SSSI covering 0.9% of the option area (53.23Ha) - 4 GCR sites covering 0.4% of the option area (22.21Ha) - Peat and peaty soils cover 11.6% of the option area (683.30Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 2.6% of the option area (153.06Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 52.1% of the option area (3,068.52Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key issues include the potential to impact communities within the option, including Rothes, Craigellachie and Dufftown</li> <li>• Unlikely to address community relief issues within the A96 corridor – would require commitment to dual a completely different route</li> <li>• Impacts on Natura, SSSI and GCR sites that would be avoided by focusing on solutions along the A96 corridor</li> <li>• <b>SEA review considers that option J should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 12 Option K**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option K</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences on the A941 just west of the junction with the B9002 near Elrick</p> <p>It is assumed to run in a straight line south east to Hill of Towanreef where it curves south towards Lumsden on the A97, which it follows until the junction with the A944 at Bridgend</p> <p>Provides a shorter linking route between option H and option J</p> <p>Approx. Length: 10Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 1,032Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 3 Landscape Character Areas crossed	The main settlements located in option K are Lumsden and the small settlement of Elrick	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option provides a shorter connection between options H and J</li> <li>The option avoids areas prone to flooding which are a constraint in the corresponding section of option J</li> <li>When compared with the equivalent section of option J, a smaller area of productive agricultural land is contained within the option</li> <li>Avoids the settlement of Rhynie which spans the majority of the breadth of the corresponding section of Option J</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This short connecting option depends on the approval of the majority of options H and J</li> <li>The Hill of Towanreef SAC and SSSI is a significant constraint, as this option bisects the site</li> <li>The presence of peaty soil across the option south east of Elrick represents a construction constraint</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 1 Scheduled Monument - 2 Listed Buildings (Cat. B & C)	Lumsden spans approximately half the breadth of this option, and therefore could potentially be avoided by bypassing to the south-west	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 1 SAC covering 43.4% of the option area (447.83Ha) - 1 Mixed SSSI covering 43.5% of the option area (449.30Ha) Dissects the Hill of Towanreef SAC/ SSSI site - Ancient Woodland covers 4.0% of the option area (0.6% (5.90Ha) semi-natural, 3.4% (35.34Ha) plantation)	Elrick is located to the north east of the option and therefore could also potentially be bypassed	
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood risk zone covers 2.7% of the option area (27.56Ha)	Depends on the approval of the majority of options H and J, as well as a southern bypass around Elgin	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 1 Mixed SSSI covering 43.5% of the option area (449.30Ha) Dissects the Hill of Towanreef SAC/ SSSI site - Peat and peaty soils cover 9.6% of the option area (98.76Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 35.4% of the option area (365.12Ha)	Not likely to address the community relief issues along the A96 corridor	
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compared with the corresponding section of option J, this option is more constrained as it dissects the Hill of Towanreef SAC and SSSI site</li> <li>Depends on the approval of the majority of options H and J</li> <li>Unlikely to address the community relief issues along the A96 corridor</li> <li>Key benefits include the avoidance of the settlement of Rhynie, present in the corresponding section of option J</li> <li><b>On balance, SEA review considers that option K should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 13 Option L**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option L</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at the Raigmore Interchange in Inverness and runs in a straight line south east to Dufftown</p> <p>It is then assumed to follow the A920 east to the junction with the existing A96 to the north west of Huntly</p> <p>This option is assumed to bypass the major settlements of Nairn, Forres, Elgin and Keith</p> <p>Provides a direct end-to-end option between Inverness and Huntly</p> <p>Approx. Length: 83Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 8,335Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 7 Landscape Character Areas crossed	Option L settlements include: Culcabock, Dalroy, Dufftown, Milltown of Auchindoun, Milltown of Edinville, Smithton, Torry, and a number of dispersed properties and distilleries to the south of Carron	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains less land at risk of flooding than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Contains less productive agricultural land than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Avoids multiple GDLs present in options A/B North/B South</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains substantially more peat and peaty soils than options A/B North/B South, crossing the breadth of the option at multiple points</li> <li>• Passes through the centre of Culloden Battlefield, which spans the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Moidach More and the River Spey SACs and SSSIs span the breadth of the option</li> <li>• The Tips of Coursemaul SPA and SSSI, and the Dalroy and Clava Landforms SSSI span a large proportion of the option and may therefore be difficult to avoid</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland spans the breadth of this option at multiple points</li> <li>• Potential to impact communities within the option including Smithton and Dufftown which span the breadth of the option</li> <li>• Unlikely to address community relief issues for larger A96 communities (including Keith, Elgin, Forres and Nairn)</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 5 Scheduled Monuments - 1 Battlefield covering 3.7% of the option area (308.27Ha) - 1 Conservation Area covering 1.8% of the option area (149.65Ha) - 32 Listed Buildings (6 Cat. A)	Together, Cradlehall, Westhill and Smithton span the breadth of the option and are therefore likely to be impacted to some extent by dualling	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 2 SACs covering 3.5% of the option area (289.35Ha) - 1 SPA covering 0.3% of the option area (26.63Ha) - 3 Biological SSSIs covering 3.6% of the option area (296.30Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 9.3% of the option area (0.9% (75.82Ha) semi-natural, 7.8% (651.50Ha) plantation, 0.6% (47.68Ha) Roy)	The southern extent of Dufftown also spans the majority of the breadth of this option, may therefore be impacted by dualling	
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood zone covers 4.2% of the option area (354.14Ha)	Unlikely to address community relief issues for larger A96 communities (including Keith, Elgin, Forres, Nairn)	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 1 Geological SSSI covering 0.2% of the option area (14.21Ha) - 1 GCR site covering 0.1% of the option area (9.84Ha) - Peat and peaty soils cover 41.4% of the option area - Arable agricultural land covers 3.1% of the option area (256.04Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 36.9% of the option area (3,076.58Ha)	Would require approval of a completely new route from Inverness to Dufftown (in addition to current dual carriageway from Inverness to Nairn/ Nairn bypass)	
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key benefits include less land at risk of flooding than corresponding sections of options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Key issues include Culloden Battlefield which is intersected by this option</li> <li>• Affects a range of SAC/ SPA/ SSSI/ GCR sites that would be avoided completely by focusing on solutions along the A96 corridor</li> <li>• Would require approval and construction of a completely new route from Inverness to Dufftown</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option L should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 14 Option M**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option M</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences on the existing A96 just east of Aldearn</p> <p>It is then assumed to run in a straight line south east, where it rejoins the existing A96 to the north west of Huntly</p> <p>This option is assumed to bypass the major settlements of Forres, Elgin and Keith</p> <p>Provides a direct end-to-end option between Nairn and Huntly</p> <p>Approx. Length: 60Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 6,042Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 5 Landscape Character Areas crossed	Settlements within option M include: Conicavel, Dandaleith, Maggieknockater, and Whitemire, as well as a number of smaller settlements	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An end-to-end link between Nairn and Huntly could remove some through traffic from Forres, Elgin and Keith, but is less likely to affect traffic between these centres</li> <li>• Less land at risk of flooding compared with the corresponding sections of options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Less arable agricultural land compared with the corresponding sections of options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Fewer Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings when compared with options A/B North/B South</li> </ul> <p><b>Key issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would require approval and construction of an entirely new route between Nairn and Huntly – difficult terrain (hills, watercourses, peat and forested land)</li> <li>• The Darnaway and Lethen Forest SPA spans the whole option near Conicavel</li> <li>• Lower Findhorn Woods and River Spey SAC/ SSSI sites cross the breadth of the option</li> <li>• River Spey fluvial flood plain is a significant constraint</li> <li>• Large continuous sections of Ancient Woodland crossing the breadth of this option</li> <li>• Peaty soils present a significant constraint, covering a large area in the middle of the option</li> <li>• Darnaway Castle GDL spans the breadth of the option</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 3 Scheduled Monuments - 1 Conservation Area covering 0.1% of the option area (3.75Ha) - 20 Listed Buildings (1 Cat. A) - 1 GDL site covering 4.0% of the option area (241.69Ha)	All of these communities could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option through, for example, demolition of properties and increased air and noise pollution	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 2 SACs covering 1.1% of the option area (67.80Ha) - 1 SPA covering 3.2% of the option area (193.44Ha) - 2 Biological SSSIs covering 1.0% of the option area (62.48Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 19.4% of the option area (2.9% (176.21Ha) semi-natural, 16.1% (971.98Ha) plantation, 0.4% (22.26Ha) Roy)	Would require approval and construction of an entirely new route between Nairn and Huntly	
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood zone covers 4.7% of the option area (284.13Ha)	May not provide community relief for Elgin, Forres and Keith	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 1 Geological SSSI covering <0.1% of the option area (1.42Ha) -1 GCR site covering <0.1% of the option area (1.43Ha) - Peat and peaty soils cover 23.5% of the option area (1,418.5Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 4.2% of the option area (251.71Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 57.3% of the option area (3,464.61Ha)	Would not necessarily improve issues for Huntly either	
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compared with the corresponding sections of options A/B North/B South, option M appears to be more significantly constrained</li> <li>• Key issues include the Darnaway and Lethen Forest SPA, Lower Findhorn Woods and River Spey SAC/ SSSI sites and large areas of Ancient Woodland cover</li> <li>• Numerous watercourses and flood plain issues</li> <li>• Would require the approval and construction of a completely new route between Nairn and Huntly</li> <li>• Key benefit might include the bypassing of large A96 settlements including Forres, Elgin and Keith – however, option is unlikely to address traffic between these centres</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option M should not be carried forward for further consideration</b></li> </ul>			



**Table C- 15 Option N**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option N</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences on the existing A96 just east of Aldearn</p> <p>The assumption is that it then runs in a straight line east, where it re-joins the existing A96 to the south east of Fochabers</p> <p>This option is assumed to bypass the major settlements of Forres and Elgin</p> <p>Provides a direct end-to-end route option between Nairn and existing A96 between Fochabers and Keith</p> <p>Approx. Length: 44Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 4,359Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 4 Landscape Character Areas crossed	Settlements within option N include: Altonside, Fogwatt, Orbliston, Rafford, and Tulloch, as well as a number of smaller settlements, all of which could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains less land at risk of flooding than options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• Contains less arable agricultural land than options A/B North/ B South</li> <li>• Avoids Conservation Area and multiple Listed Buildings at Fochabers (present in options A/B North/B South)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option joins the A96 between Aldearn (East) and Fochabers (South-east) and would therefore require to link to options A/B North/B South</li> <li>• The Darnaway and Lethen Forest SPA, and Lower Findhorn Woods and River Spey SACs and SSSIs all span the breadth of the option</li> <li>• This option passes through the centre of Darnaway Castle GDL, which spans the breadth of the option</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland habitat crosses the breadth of this option at various points</li> <li>• Potential to impact communities within the option including Rafford and Fogwatt</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 4 Scheduled Monuments -14 Listed Buildings (2 Cat. A) -1 GDL site covering 8.7% of the option area (379.82Ha)		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	-2 SACs covering 0.8% of the option area (34.77Ha) Bisects Lower Findhorn Woods and River Spey SAC at locations not currently affected -1 SPA covering 1.7% of the option area (75.55Ha) Bisects Darnaway and Lethen Forest - 2 Biological SSSIs covering 0.8% of the option area (34.70Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 30.0% of the option area (0.2% (9.57Ha) semi-natural, 29.8% (1,297.42Ha) plantation)		
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 year fluvial flood risk zone covers 5.8% of the option area (253.59Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- 2 Geological SSSIs covering 0.1% of the option area (4.19Ha) - 2 GCR sites covering 0.1% of the option area (3.30Ha) - Peat and peaty soils cover 2.0% of the option area (88.93Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 3.1% of the option area (135.93Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 77.3% of the option area (3,369.86Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compared with the corresponding sections of options A/B North/B South, option N contains more significant Natura constraints at its western extent</li> <li>• Key issues also include Darnaway Castle GDL at the western extent</li> <li>• Uncertain whether this option would provide relief for settlements between Aldearn and Fochabers that may be more likely provided by options along the existing corridor</li> <li>• Key benefits include avoidance of a number of historic environment designations at Fochabers (present in options A/B North/B South)</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option N should not be carried forward for further consideration – some refinement to avoid Natura sites at the western extent could make this option more favourable</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 16 Option P**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option P</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences on the existing A96 north of Craigiebank, running in a relatively straight line south east before re-joining the existing A96 just east of Skares</p> <p>This option is assumed to bypass the major settlements of Huntly and Keith</p> <p>Provides an extension to option D, effectively providing a wider northern bypass option around Huntly, Keith and Inverurie</p> <p>A tunnel will be required for option P (approx. 1.6 km long) through Mickle Balloch hill immediately south east of Keith</p> <p>Approx. Length: 34Km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 3,381Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 5 Landscape Character Areas crossed	Settlements in option P include Aultmore, Forgie, Keith and Newmill	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a northern bypass option around the settlements of Huntly and Keith</li> <li>Avoids Conservation Area and Listed Buildings located in Keith (present in option A)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option is likely to involve the construction of a twin bore dual carriageway tunnel and the associated environmental issues (e.g. excavations, blasting, spoil management/ waste, construction and maintenance accesses for ventilation shafts, etc.) should be considered significant</li> <li>Ancient Woodland habitat crosses the breadth of the option at various points – dissects the Bin Forest</li> <li>Includes major river and flood plain crossings to the north of Huntly and Keith</li> <li>Peaty soils cross the breadth of the option</li> <li>Southern bypass options around Keith and Huntly appear less constrained</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 1 Scheduled Monument - 4 Listed Buildings	Any of these settlements, along with a number of smaller settlements, could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option	
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 1 SAC covering 0.2% of the option area (7.41Ha) - 2 Biological SSSIs covering 0.3% of the option area (10.22Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 15.3% of the option area (0.4% (12.46) semi-natural, 14.5% (489.09) plantation, 0.4% (12.33) Roy) Bisects the Bin Forest north of Huntly	Would be most effective if combined with a northern bypass around Inverurie, and linked through option D to provide a continuous northern bypass option from Craigiebank (south of Fochabers) past Keith, Huntly and Inverurie	
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 3.2% of the option area (106.55Ha) 2 major floodplain areas north of Keith and Huntly	Tunnelling presents additional issues including safety of workers during construction, operations and maintenance phases, with further safety issues associated with the transportation of flammable materials (e.g. whisky)	
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- Peat and peaty soils cover 13.5% of the option area (456.64Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 0.2% of the option area (6.13Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 93.9% of the option area (3,172.84Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compared with the corresponding section of option A, this option appears less significantly constrained</li> <li>Compared with the corresponding section of options B North/B South, this option is more significantly constrained</li> <li>Key issues include peaty soils and Ancient Woodland which across the breadth of the option and therefore cannot be avoided (bisects the Bin Forest)</li> <li>Major river and flood plain crossings to north of Keith and Huntly</li> <li>Likely to be most beneficial when combined with a northern bypass around Inverurie and linking through option D</li> <li>However, southern bypass options around Keith and Huntly appear less significantly constrained</li> <li>Other key issues relate to environmental impacts of tunnelling operations (e.g. excavations, spoil, construction and maintenance accesses for ventilation shafts, etc.)</li> <li>However, tunnelling spoil could provide substrate aggregate material for other sections of A96 dualling</li> <li><b>SEA recommendation would be to avoid a tunnelling option in favour of an 'open' solution</b></li> <li><b>On balance, SEA review considers that a tunnelling option should only be taken forward for further consideration where the PES engineering studies determine that the alternative options in this area are particularly constrained; however, option P should be carried forward for further consideration as it may provide flexibility to consider a continuous northern bypass option from Craigiebank (south of Fochabers) past Keith, Huntly and Inverurie</b></li> </ul>			

**Table C- 17 Option Q**

Option Information	SEA Topic	Overview of Environmental Constraints	Commentary on Population/ Communities	SEA Comment
<p><b>Option Q</b></p> <p>For the purpose of assessment, SEA assumes that this offline option consists of a 500m buffer zone which commences at the existing A96 at Colpy, and curves round, approximately following the route of the A920 to Oldmeldrum and the A947 to just north of Dyce</p> <p>This option is assumed to provide an alternative bypass route around Inverurie, but may affect various other (non-A96) settlements including Oldmeldrum and Newmachar</p> <p>Approx. Length: 33km</p> <p>Approx. Area: 3,314Ha</p>	<b>Landscape</b>	- No national designations identified - 2 Landscape Character Areas crossed	<p>Settlements within option Q include: Cairnhill, Fingask, Hattoncrook, Kinmundy, Kirkton of Culsalmond, Mill of Kingoodie, Newmachar, Newseat, Oldmeldrum, Rothmaise, Straloch, Tocher, Whitefield and Whiterashes</p> <p>(all communities along the existing A920 between Colpy and Oldmeldrum and the existing A947 between Oldmeldrum and Dyce)</p> <p>Any of these settlements could potentially be impacted by dualling within this option</p> <p>In purely environmental terms, this option would appear to introduce road construction (dualling) issues into communities not currently directly affected by A96 issues; however, given current plans for the AWPR, this option may be worth considering due to the potential to remove traffic from the already congested A96 Inverurie/ Aberdeen dual carriageway</p> <p>May not be viable due to the number of communities affected on this alternative option</p>	<p><b>While many of the constraints identified could potentially be avoided within a 1km wide zone, SEA considers that the key issues and benefits associated with this particular option include:</b></p> <p><b>Key Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an alternative bypass around Inverurie</li> <li>• Connects to the AWPR north of Dyce and could remove some airport traffic from the existing A96 dual carriageway south of Inverurie</li> <li>• Crosses less land at risk of flooding than options A, B North and B South</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would require bypass solutions around Oldmeldrum and Newmachar to avoid dualling through these communities</li> <li>• While this option avoids Harlaw Battlefield (present in option B North), it bisects Barra Battlefield south of Oldmeldrum</li> <li>• SSSI, Ancient Woodland, peat, watercourse and flood plain issues – however, similar issues exist around Inverurie</li> <li>• While this option avoids Williamston House and Newton House GDLs, it does contain Straloch GDL which crosses the breadth of the option</li> <li>• May provide additional dual carriageway connection to AWPR (outwith A96 route) assuming existing A96 dual carriageway section south of Inverurie is still considered for upgrading</li> </ul>
	<b>Historic Environment</b>	- 4 Scheduled Monuments - 1 Battlefield covering 6.8% of the option area (226.46Ha) - 8 Listed Buildings (2 Cat. A) - 2 GDL sites covering 3.9% of the option area (130.22Ha)		
	<b>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	- 1 Biological SSSI covering 1.0% of the option area (32.27Ha) - Ancient Woodland covers 3.2% of the option area (105.28Ha plantation)		
	<b>Water</b>	- SEPA 1 in 200 fluvial flood zone covers 3.7% of the option area (122.58Ha)		
	<b>Soils &amp; Geology</b>	- Peat and peaty soils cover 2.7% of the option area (90.57Ha) - Arable agricultural land covers 37.2% of the option area (1,232.28Ha) - Mixed agricultural land covers 59.7% of the option area (1,978.86Ha)		
<b>SEA Option Review Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compared with the corresponding sections of options A/ B North/ B South, this option appears more significantly constrained</li> <li>• Key constraint issues include Barra Battlefield and Straloch GDL which both span the breadth of the option</li> <li>• Would introduce dualling issues to a range of communities not directly affected by A96 issues</li> <li>• Key benefits include less land at risk of flooding than the corresponding sections of options A/ B North/ B South</li> <li>• Also could provide alternative dual carriageway connection to AWPR north of Dyce that may relieve some traffic from existing A96 dual carriageway section south of Inverurie</li> <li>• <b>On balance, SEA review considers that option Q should be carried forward for further consideration as it could provide an alternative connection to the northern side of Dyce on the AWPR</b></li> </ul>			







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