

Welcome

Our public engagement for the A96 Dualling Programme began with a series of public exhibitions held in November 2013. At that time, we shared initial information on the design, development and assessment process we need to follow in order to provide a dual carriageway between Inverness and Aberdeen.

Since then, we have been increasing our knowledge of the challenges associated with providing a dual carriageway between Inverness and Aberdeen, and appointed the Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture team to take forward the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme in June 2016.

'Meet the Team' events were held in October 2016 and since that time we have been developing route options.

Today's event gives you the opportunity to see and comment on the early design work and the route options under consideration for the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

Mott MacDonald Sweco



A96 at Brodie looking west

Staff from Transport Scotland and its consultants will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have in relation to the scheme.

A leaflet summarising the exhibition content is available for you to take away, as well as a feedback form where we welcome your comments.



Background

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.

Preliminary Engineering and Strategic Environmental Assessment work has been completed for the A96 Dualling Programme. The outcome was presented at a

series of well-attended public information exhibitions in May 2015.

For the next stages of design and assessment, the A96 Dualling Programme has been divided into sections (i.e. individual schemes between Inverness and Aberdeen). Each section will be assessed in greater detail, and over time this will allow route options assessment and preliminary design to be taken forward along the entire length of the A96 Dualling Programme.



The A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme (western section) will create a new A96 dual carriageway from the tie-in of the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme at Hardmuir (east of Auldearn), to the east of Fochabers – a distance of approximately **46km (28 miles)**.



Scheme assessment process

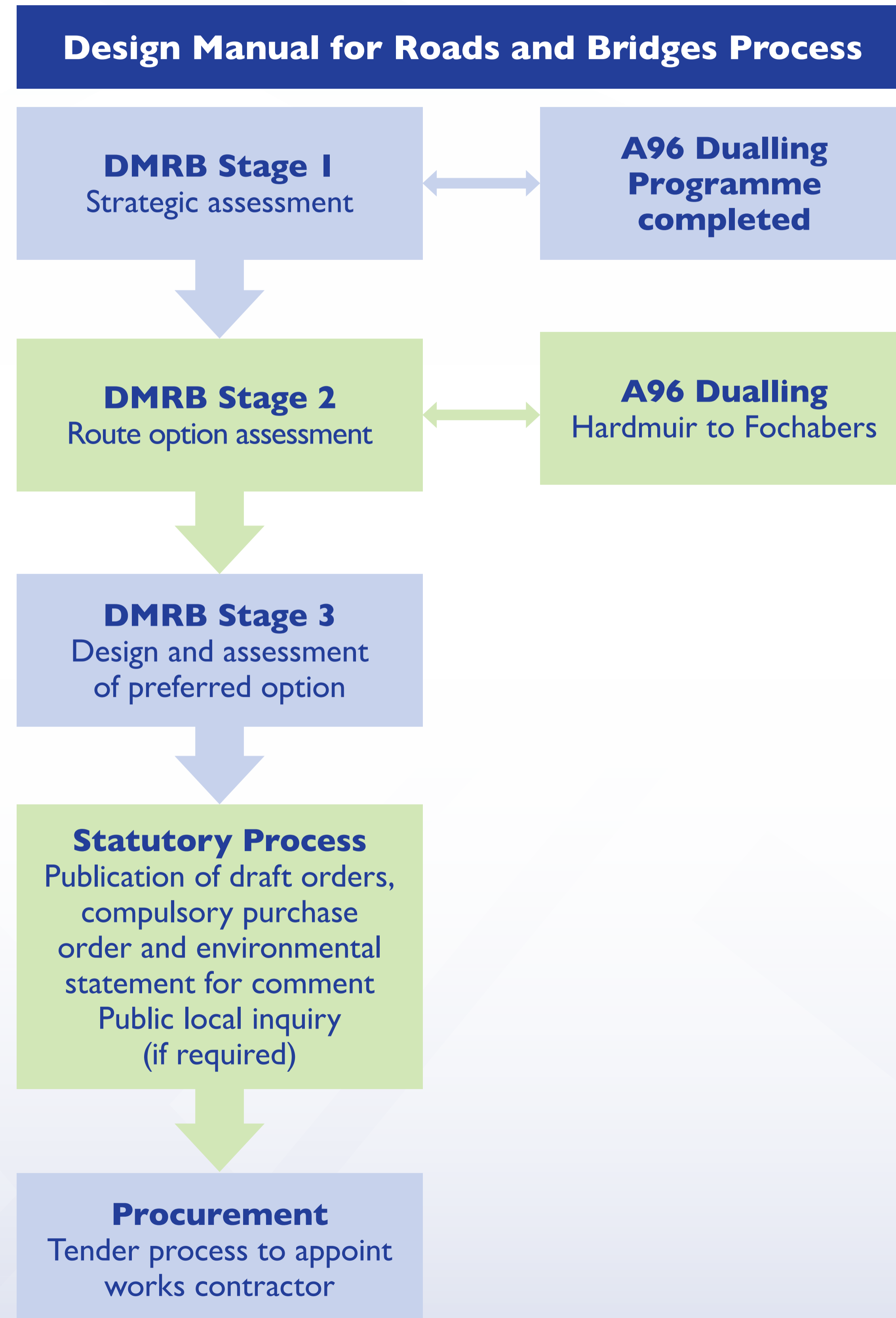


We are following the normal trunk road scheme development process and progressing in accordance with guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The three-stage assessment process covers engineering, environment, traffic and economic considerations.

Throughout this 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, equestrians and cyclists.

Having completed the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment of the A96 Dualling Programme, the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment is underway for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

A range of route options that have been developed as part of this process are available for you to view here today. Transport Scotland is seeking vital feedback from members of the public and other stakeholders to help inform the ongoing design development work. We aim to complete the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment and announce a preferred option for the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme in 2018.



Scheme objectives



The initial options assessment process takes into account how the developed route options perform against the scheme objectives. The objectives below have been developed for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

- 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.



Developing the scheme design

DMRB Stage 2 Assessment

Transport Scotland is taking forward the route options assessment, which has involved the development of a range of route options that are available for you to view at today's exhibition. These route options will be subject to further design and assessment with a view to identifying a preferred option in 2018.

As part of the assessment process, we will consult with members of the local community, stakeholders and members of the public to seek vital feedback on the route options being considered. The feedback we receive on the route options shown at this exhibition will be considered, as well as the engineering, traffic, economic and



environmental assessment of the potential impacts of each option. These factors will inform the choice of a preferred option.

To help in the design development and environmental assessment of the route options, further information will be gathered over the coming months about the current status of the natural environment in the area.

DMRB Stage 3 Assessment

Following selection of a preferred option, the design will be further developed, refined and assessed.

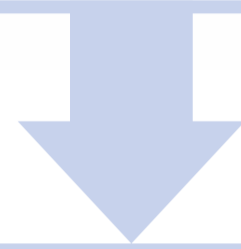
An Environmental Statement will be prepared and the land required for the dualling will be identified. During this stage of assessment, the preferred option will be developed to take into account the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other Non-Motorised Users (NMUs).

Environmental mitigation measures will also be considered and designed. The draft Road Orders (which show the line of the proposed scheme) will be prepared for publication at the same time as the Environmental Statement.

Initial development and assessment of options

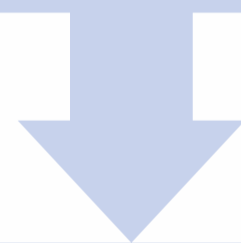
CONSTRAINTS

Initially we carried out a desktop study to gather details of constraints, including designated sites (with international, national and local designations, residential properties, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and protected landscapes). We also consulted with statutory bodies, such as the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The design team used the information gained to make evidence-based decisions about which corridors and route options were feasible.



CORRIDORS

Corridors that provided feasible areas in which route options could be developed were then established between Hardmuir and Fochabers after consideration of constraints and taking account of information gathered during site visits. These were generally 400 metres wide and avoided constraints and significant topographical features where possible.



ROUTE OPTIONS

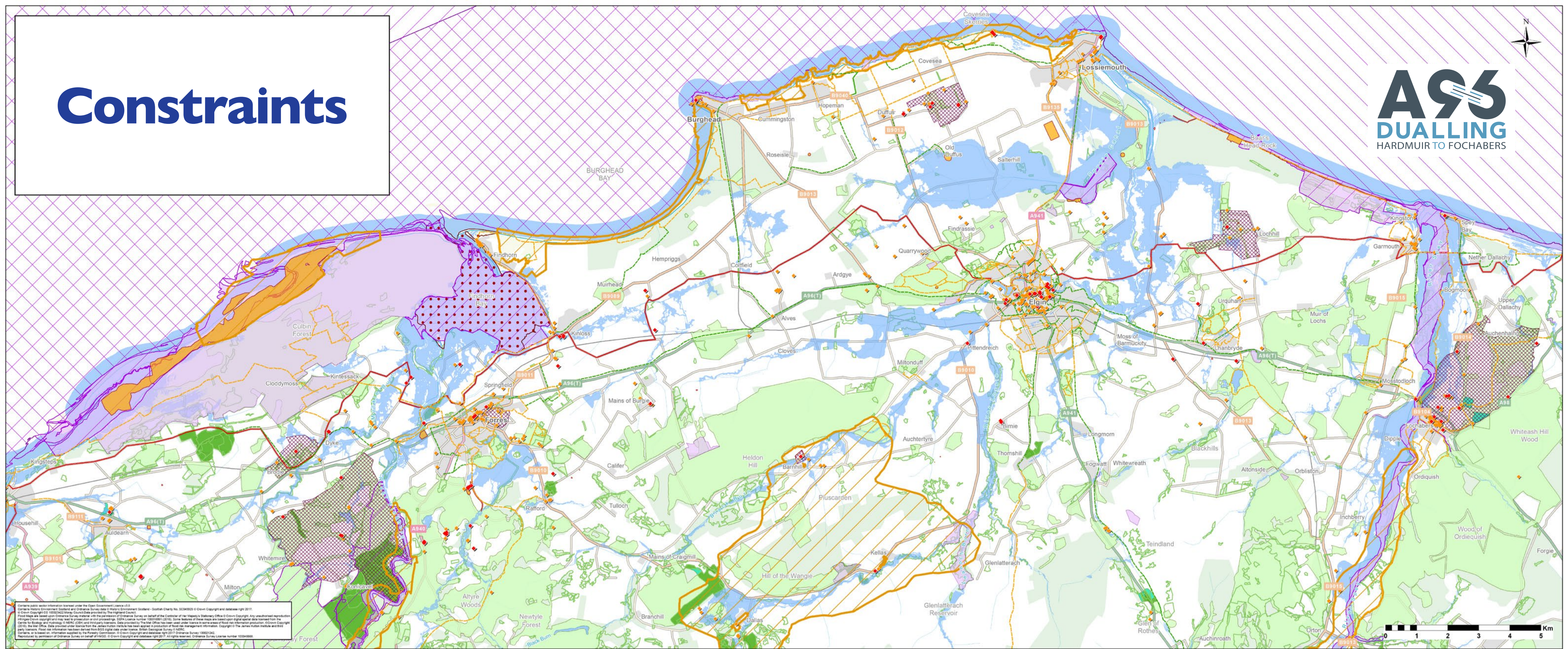
Once the corridors were finalised, route options were designed within these. Some of the route options are flexible and can cross and form combinations. These combinations formed a longlist of options that was taken into the initial options assessment process.



ASSESSMENT

The performance of each of the options from the longlist was assessed against the scheme objectives. The outcome recommended that four elements be deselected as a result of poor performance against these objectives. These can be seen on the Deselected options and elements panel later in this exhibition.

Constraints



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Legend

- Core Path
- Core Path Aspirational
- National Cycle Route
- Listed building**
 - Category A
 - Category B
- Scheduled Monument (SM)
- Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL)
- Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)
- Natura 2000 site (Ramsar site, SAC and SPA)
- Proposed Natura 2000 Site (pSPA)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Flood (coastal and river) - medium and high likelihood
- Native Woodland
- Ancient Woodland**
 - Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
 - Long-established (of plantation origin)
 - Other (on Roy map)

This drawing highlights the key environmental designations within the study area.

Constraints mapping is available on the touchscreens.









Route options on display

- The route options on display will be subject to development and further assessment during the DMRB Stage 2 process. Several engineering and environmental considerations will influence their development, as will feedback from stakeholders and members of the public
- The options will then be assessed in terms of engineering, environmental, traffic and economic performance in order to determine a preferred option
- The drawing on the following panels shows a number of coloured elements each with their own reference number. The preferred option will comprise a combination of these elements that will form a continuous route between Hardmuir and east of Fochabers.

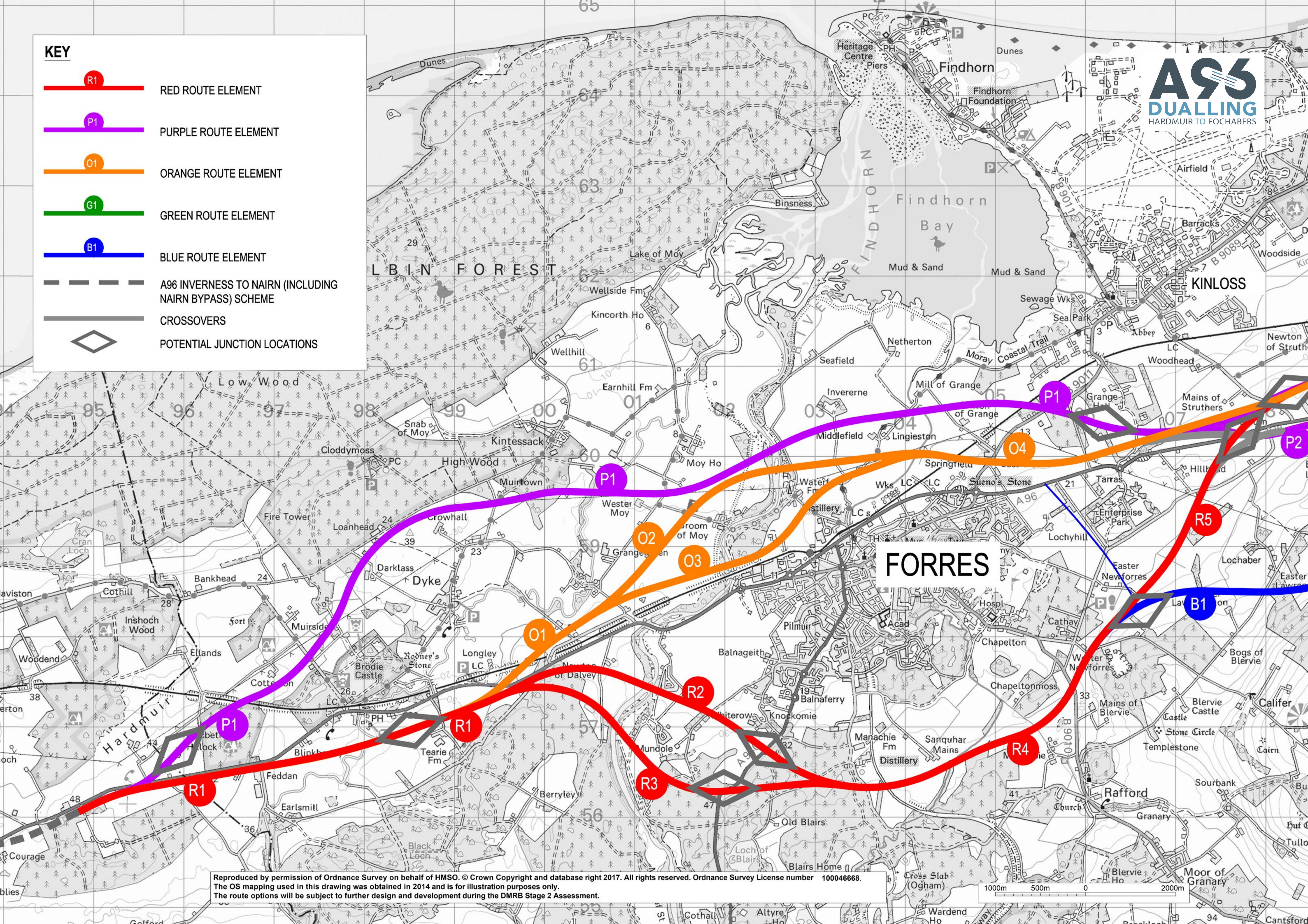
- The exact positioning of the route options will be subject to development and will depend on further geometric design, including consideration of cuttings and embankments, to provide an alignment that will integrate into the landscape and cross features such as rivers, the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line and local roads
- The location and style of junctions connecting the new dual carriageway to the local road network will be subject to consideration, design and assessment as the design process continues. These will be grade-separated junctions that will include slip roads and bridges. The drawings at today's exhibition show potential junction locations with a black diamond. These are indicative only and are subject to further design and assessment work
- We aim to avoid the potential for property demolition in the development of route options wherever possible.



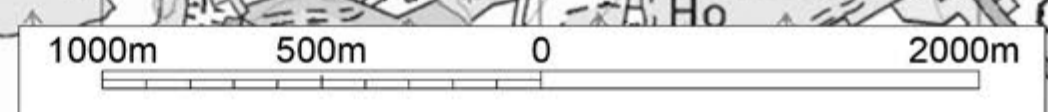
KEY

-  RED ROUTE ELEMENT
-  PURPLE ROUTE ELEMENT
-  ORANGE ROUTE ELEMENT
-  GREEN ROUTE ELEMENT
-  BLUE ROUTE ELEMENT
-  A96 INVERNESS TO NAIRN (INCLUDING NAIRN BYPASS) SCHEME
-  CROSSOVERS
-  POTENTIAL JUNCTION LOCATIONS








A95
DUALING
 HARDMUIR TO FOCHABERS

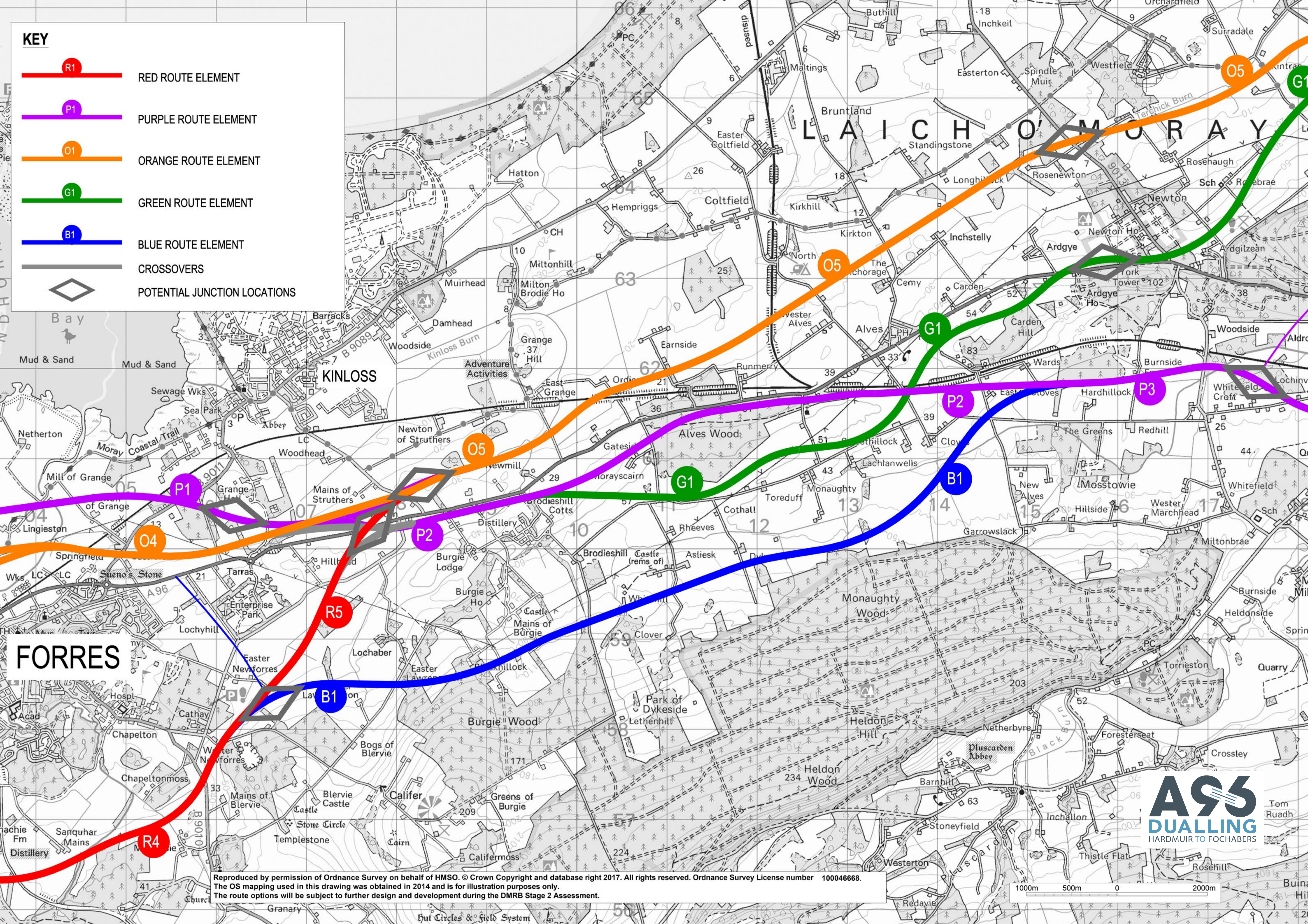


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KEY

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-  GREEN ROUTE ELEMENT
-  BLUE ROUTE ELEMENT
-  CROSSOVERS
-  POTENTIAL JUNCTION LOCATIONS



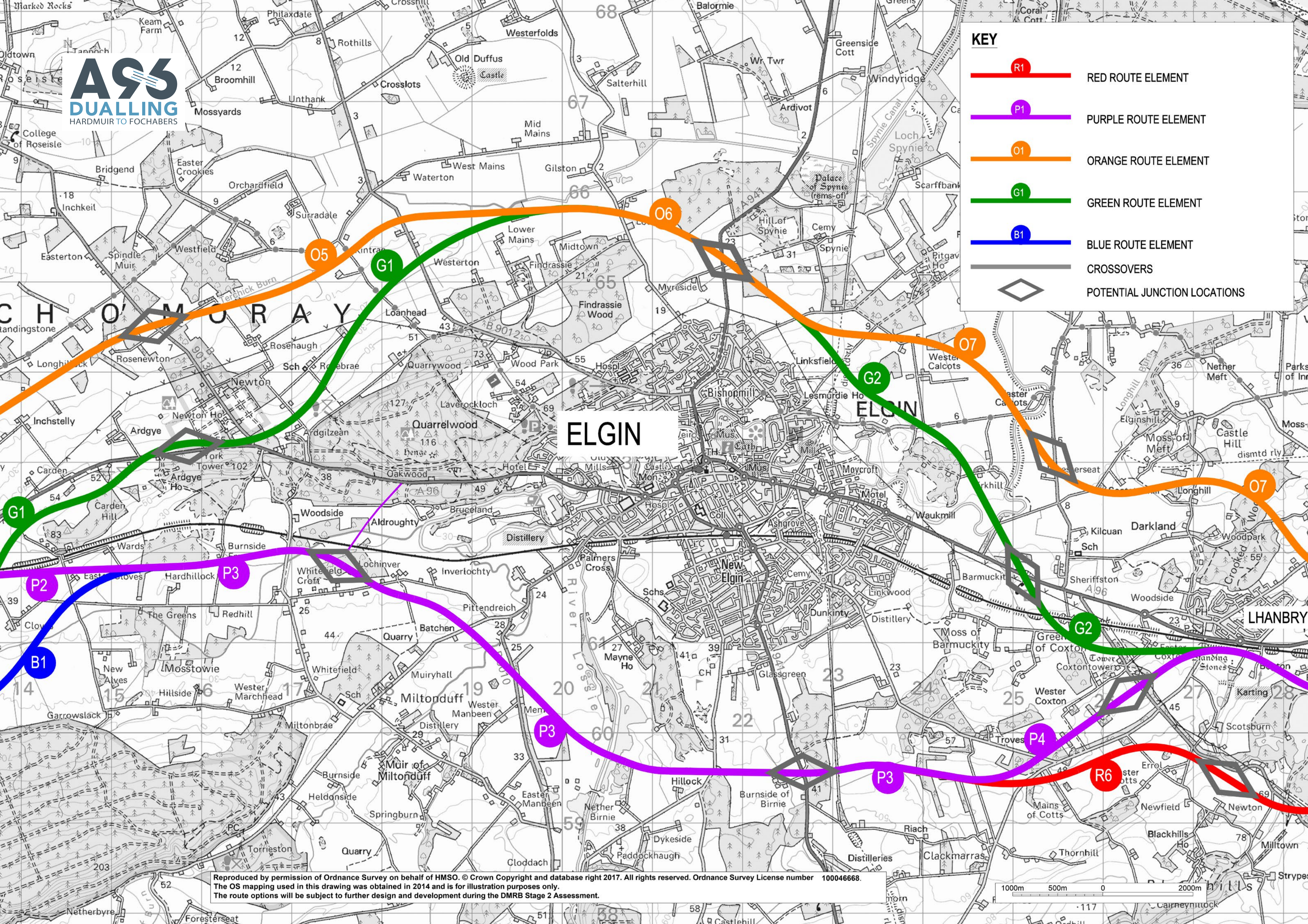
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A96
DUALING
HARDMUIR TO FOCHABERS



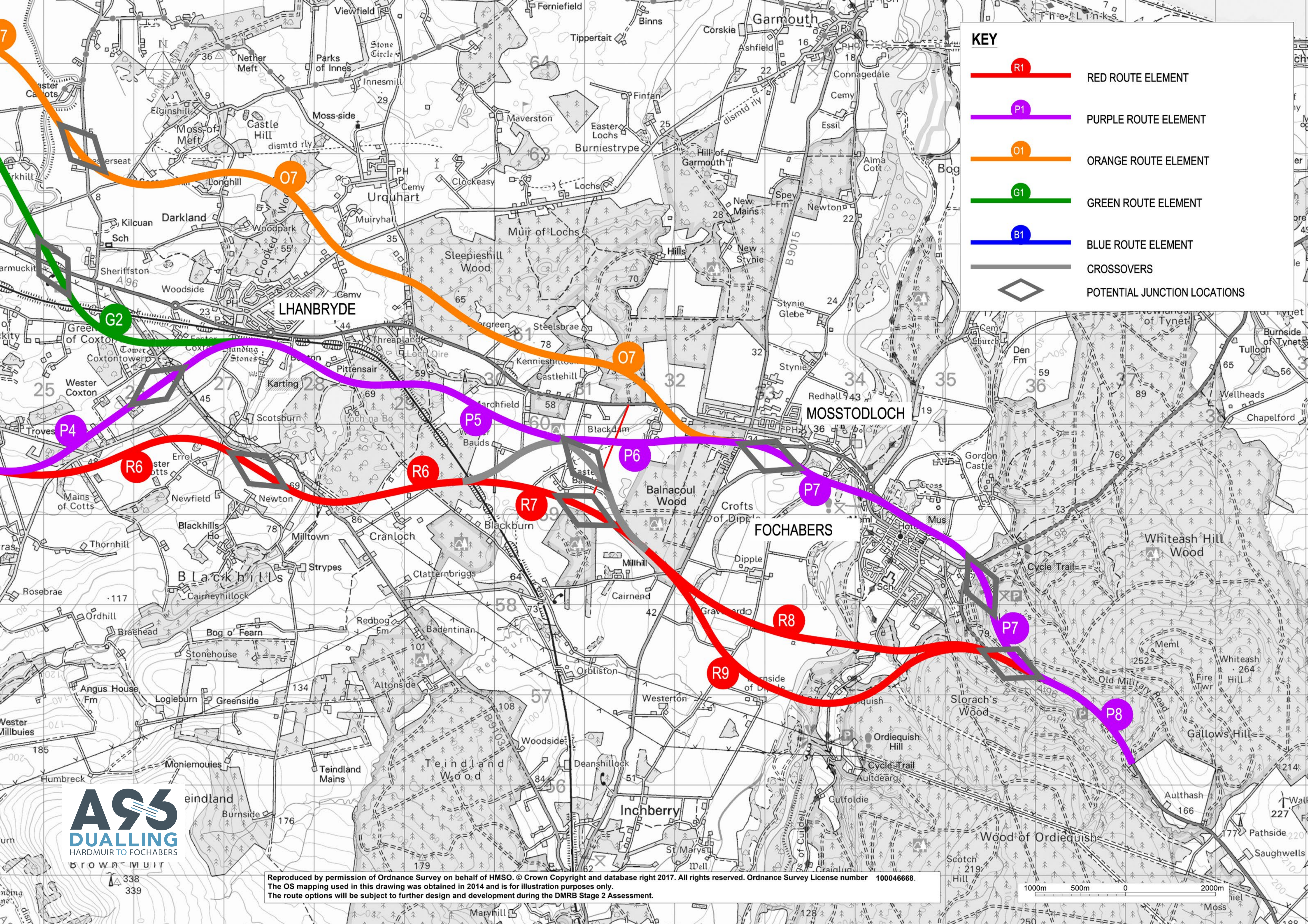
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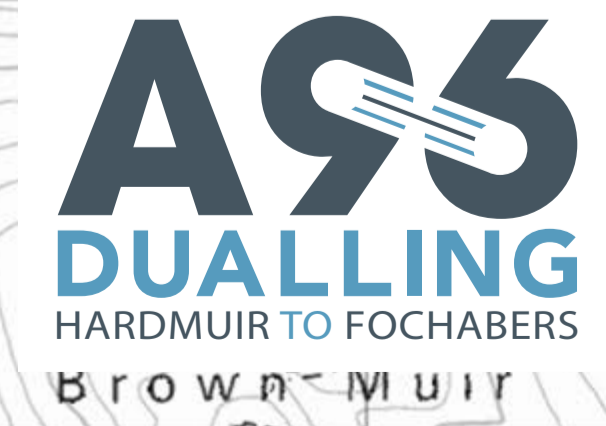
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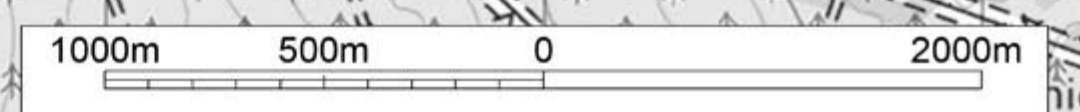


KEY

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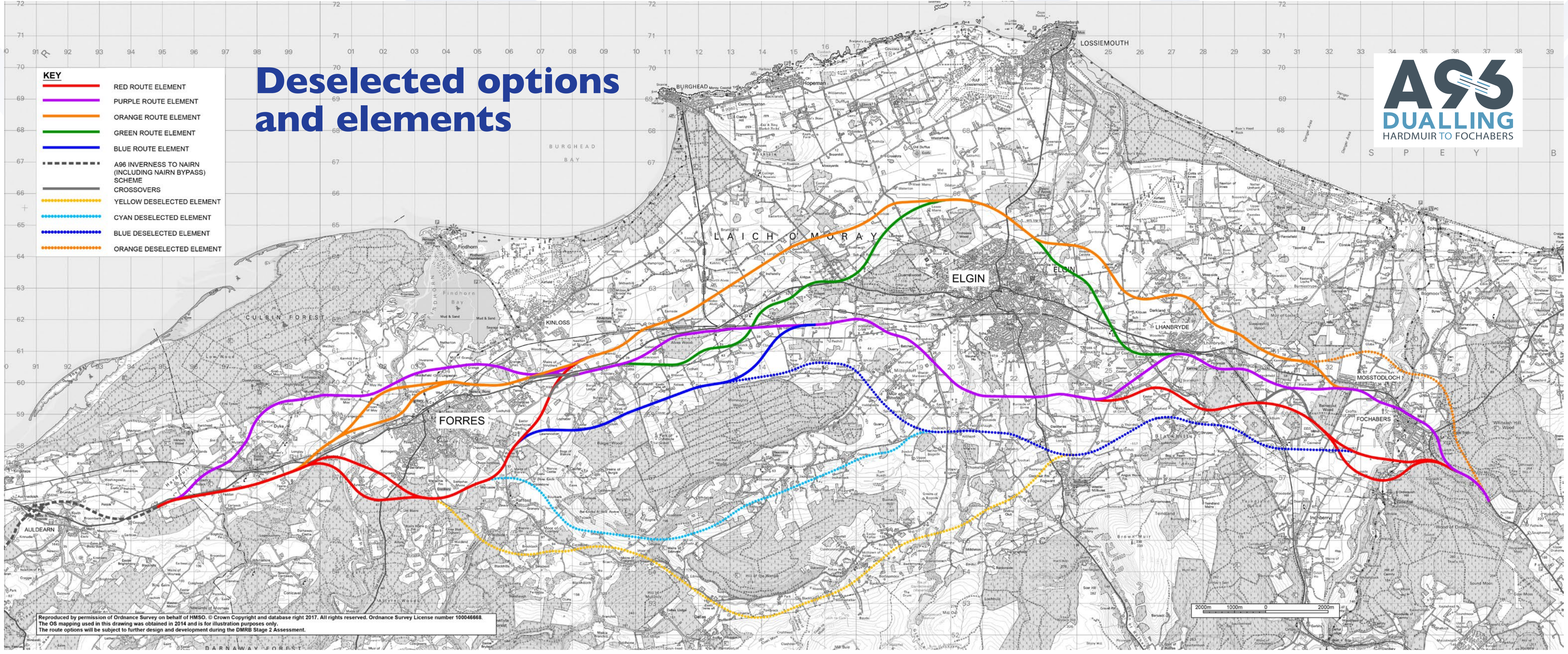


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Deselected options and elements

- KEY**
- RED ROUTE ELEMENT
 - PURPLE ROUTE ELEMENT
 - ORANGE ROUTE ELEMENT
 - GREEN ROUTE ELEMENT
 - BLUE ROUTE ELEMENT
 - - - A96 INVERNESS TO NAIRN (INCLUDING NAIRN BYPASS) SCHEME CROSSOVERS
 - - - YELLOW DESELECTED ELEMENT
 - - - CYAN DESELECTED ELEMENT
 - - - BLUE DESELECTED ELEMENT
 - - - ORANGE DESELECTED ELEMENT



Initial DMRB Stage 2 Assessment work showed that southerly options, including those in the Pluscarden area, performed poorly against the scheme objectives.

A number of options and elements have been ruled out as a result of this assessment and these are shown on the map in **yellow, cyan,** and the easternmost elements of the **blue.**

The **orange** element at Fochabers was also ruled out because of its poor performance against the scheme objectives.

The options and elements that have been ruled out are shown in dotted lines in the above drawing. These have been removed from further consideration.

Non-Motorised User (NMU) provision

Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) include pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. They may be recreational users of the route or active travellers and daily commuters.

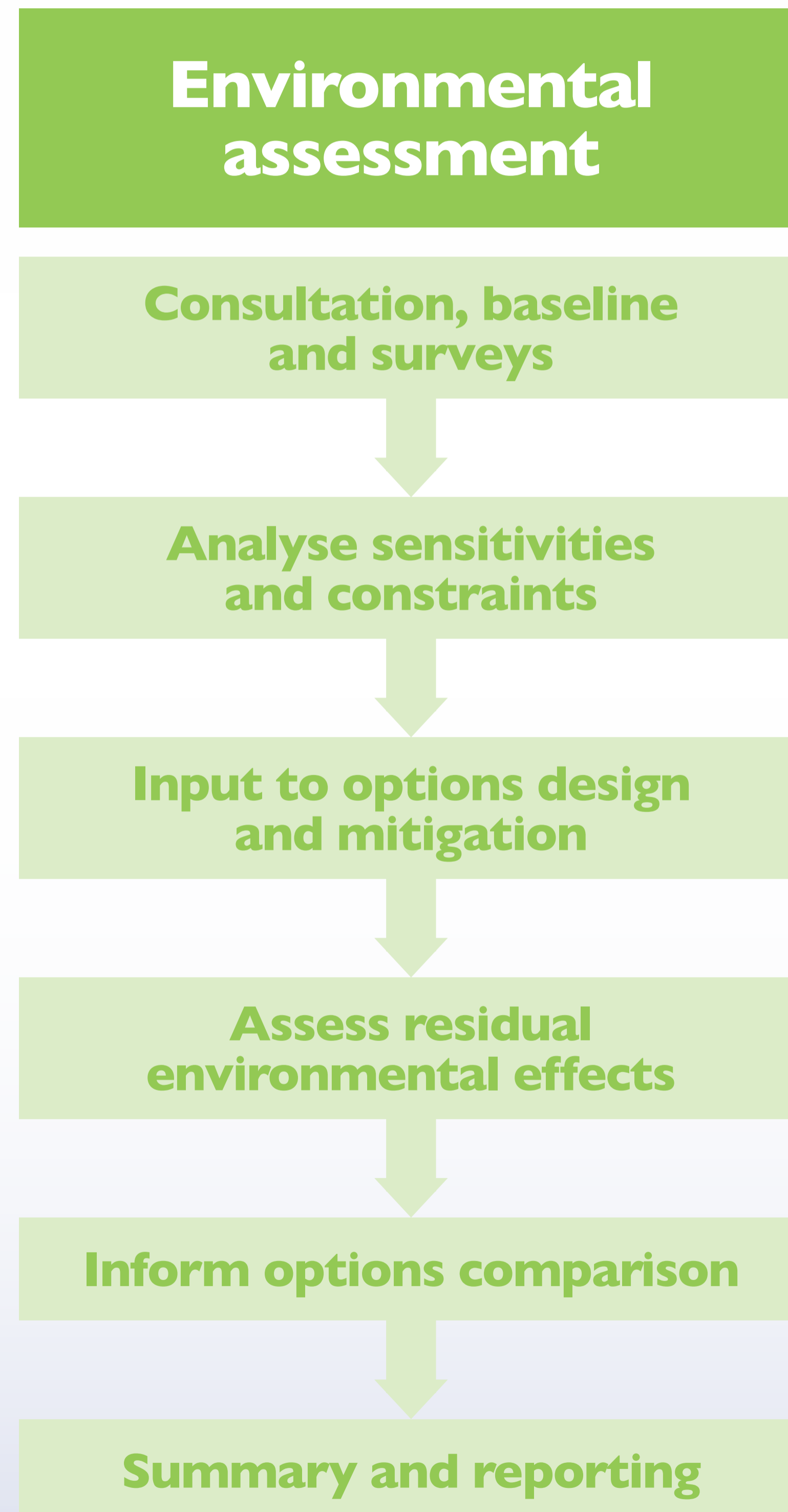
Suitable provision for NMUs is an important part of the A96 Dualling Programme and the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme. Provision for NMUs will be incorporated as the scheme develops, in consultation with local communities, members of the public and interest groups.



In line with the overall NMU strategy for the A96 Dualling Programme, we are considering NMU needs along the trunk road corridor. This includes an examination of existing facilities and likely future demand, so that potential issues can be identified and associated measures can be taken into account as the scheme develops.

Environmental assessment

The environmental impacts of the route options are being assessed following guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Key topics include:



Air quality – traffic related changes at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential areas close to roads, schools, hospitals)

Noise and vibration – traffic related changes at sensitive receptors (e.g. residential properties, schools, hospitals)

People and communities

- Land use changes, agriculture and forestry effects
- Non-Motorised Users and severance of routes used by the community
- Travellers using the new road

Policy and plans – land allocations for development, key planning proposals and development plan policy

Materials – material resources and waste management

Cultural heritage – archaeological remains, landscapes and historic buildings (e.g. scheduled monuments and listed buildings)

Landscape and visual – landscape character (including designated areas), effects on topography and potential visual impacts affecting views from properties and on people outdoors.

Nature conservation – effects on designated ecological sites, and on important habitats (including rivers and woodlands) and species

Geology, soils, hydrogeology and contaminated land

– geological and soil resources, groundwater, private water supplies and other sources of drinking water

Road drainage and the water environment

– flooding and flood risk, water quality, drainage and river processes, forms and sediments.

Environmental mitigation measures will be considered and designed after a preferred option has been identified.

What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its consultants will continue to progress the development and assessment of route options for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

We will provide updates during the process and further public exhibitions will be held when the preferred option is announced for stakeholder and public comment.



A96 at Elgin looking east



The route options presented at this exhibition will be subject to further design and development throughout the DMRB Stage 2 process, taking into account:

- feedback from these consultations
- environmental walk-over surveys
- ground investigation works
- consideration of junction locations using traffic modelling
- further design work on options
- preliminary earthworks and drainage design
- flood modelling to identify the type of structures required at major river crossings
- consideration of the needs of Non-Motorised Users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Comparative assessments will be carried out to select a preferred option. These 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 in 2018.



Comments and feedback

We welcome your comments and feedback. Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by **4 August 2017**.

Comments can be made on the feedback forms provided and placed in the feedback box at this exhibition, or sent by email or post.

Please email your comments to:
a96dualling@transport.gov.scot

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

Your comments will be taken into account during the route options assessment process.

Contact details

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**

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

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

All of the information presented at today's event is available on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers project website: **www.transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers**

For further information on the wider A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen programme, please visit the Transport Scotland website at:
www.transport.gov.scot/a96dualling

