



TRANSPORT  
**SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

**A96**  
**DUALLING**  
HARDMUIR TO FOCHABERS

# A96 Dualling

Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme

**Preferred option exhibition**

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



# Welcome

Transport Scotland has been taking forward options assessment work for the [A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme](#).

In [June 2017](#) and [February – March 2018](#), exhibitions and drop-in sessions were held to seek public feedback on options being developed. In [August 2018](#), details of the shortlisted options being assessed were publicised, circulated to interested parties and made available on the project website.

The purpose of today's exhibition is to display the preferred option that has been selected following detailed assessment and which is being taken forward for further design development.

Transport Scotland staff and their consultants [Mott MacDonald](#) [Sweco](#) will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have.


Further information can be found on the project website:

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

**Mott MacDonald**  
**Sweco**



A96 at Brodie looking west

 A summary overview leaflet is available for you to take away. There is also a feedback form where we would welcome your feedback and comments.



# Background

## 2011

The then Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment launched the 2011 [Infrastructure Investment Plan \(IIP\)](#) which provided an overview of the Scottish Government's plans for infrastructure investment over the coming decades. The document contains a commitment to complete the dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities.

## 2013

In May 2013, the then Minister for Transport and Veterans set out how the A96 Dualling Programme would be progressed over the coming years. The outline strategy identified a series of initial packages of design and development work to be developed over the next few years with the objective of completing full dualling between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. These packages of work included [Preliminary Engineering Services \(Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\) Stage 1 Assessment\)](#) and [Strategic Environmental Assessment](#) work along the A96 between east of Nairn and Aberdeen.

## 2015

Transport Scotland presented the outcome of the Preliminary Engineering and Strategic Environmental Assessment work along the route between east of Nairn and Aberdeen in May 2015 at a series of [public information exhibitions](#) along the A96 corridor between Forres and Aberdeen. Based on the outcome

of the preliminary work, the next stage of design was taken forward based on Western (46km), Central (31km) and Eastern (42km) Sections, starting with the Western Section (Hardmuir to Fochabers) in 2016.

## 2016

In June 2016, Transport Scotland appointed [Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture](#) to progress the design and assessment of the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme (the Western Section). A series of [“Meet the Team”](#) events were held in October 2016.

## 2017

Since being appointed, Mott MacDonald Sweco has progressed the [DMRB Stage 2 Assessment](#). Following initial options assessment, route options were presented at a series of [public information exhibitions](#) held at Elgin, Forres and Fochabers in June 2017.

## 2018

[Public drop-in sessions](#) were held in February and March 2018, providing a route options design update. A further [design update](#) was provided in August 2018, as both printed leaflets and also available online, highlighting de-selected options, providing information on further design development, and displaying the shortlisted options that remained for assessment. Following this, the [detailed options assessment](#) was completed.



A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen Programme



# Scheme assessment process

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

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

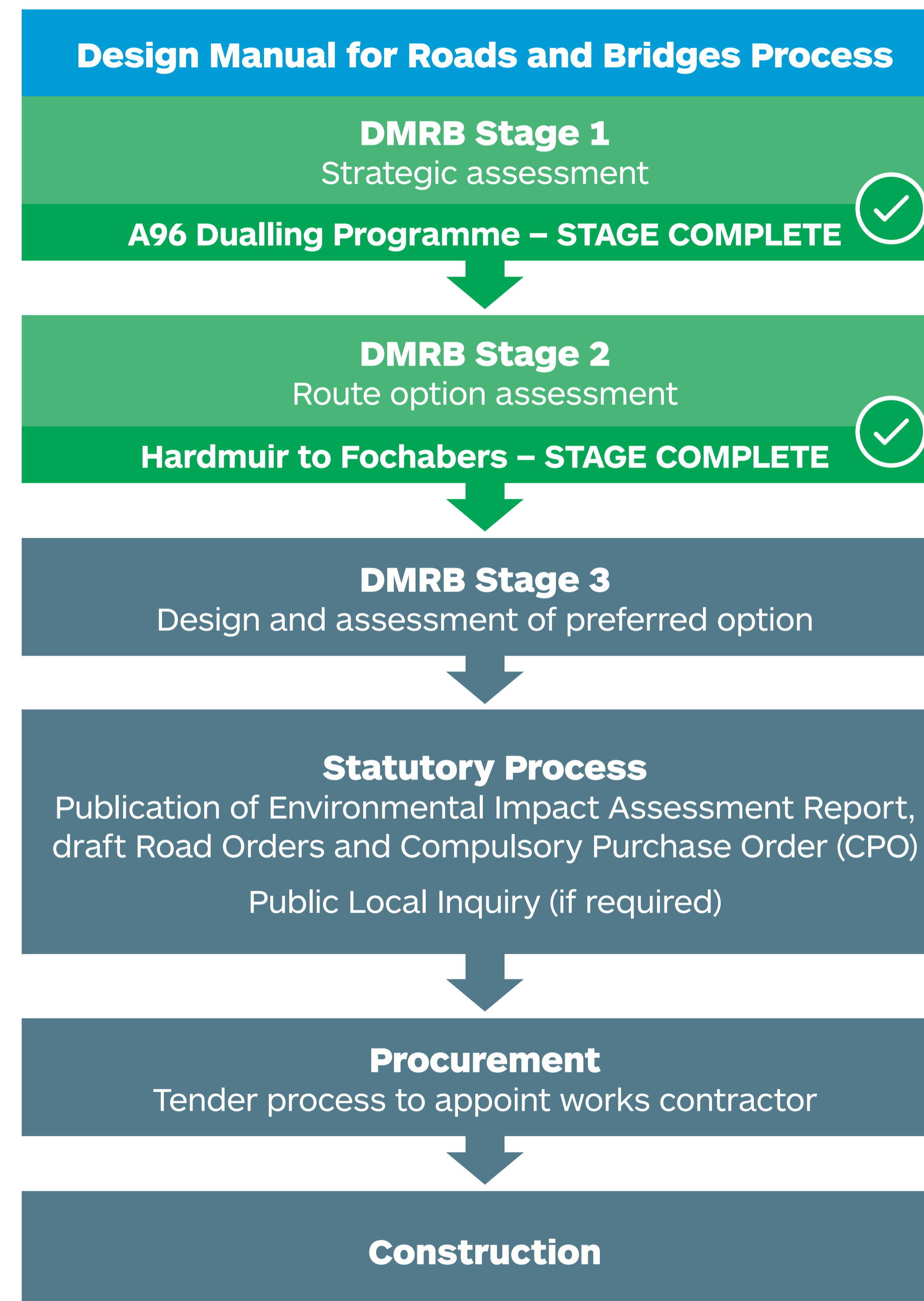
This is a three-stage assessment process that covers engineering, environmental, traffic and economic considerations.

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

The [DMRB Stage 1 Assessment](#) of the A96 Dualling Programme was completed in 2015 and the [DMRB Stage 2 Assessment](#) for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme is now complete.

The [preferred option](#) has been announced for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme and is available for you to view today.

The next step is to progress the design development and carry out the [DMRB Stage 3 Assessment](#). Transport Scotland aims for this process to be completed during the second half of 2020.



# Scheme objectives

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

## The scheme objectives are:

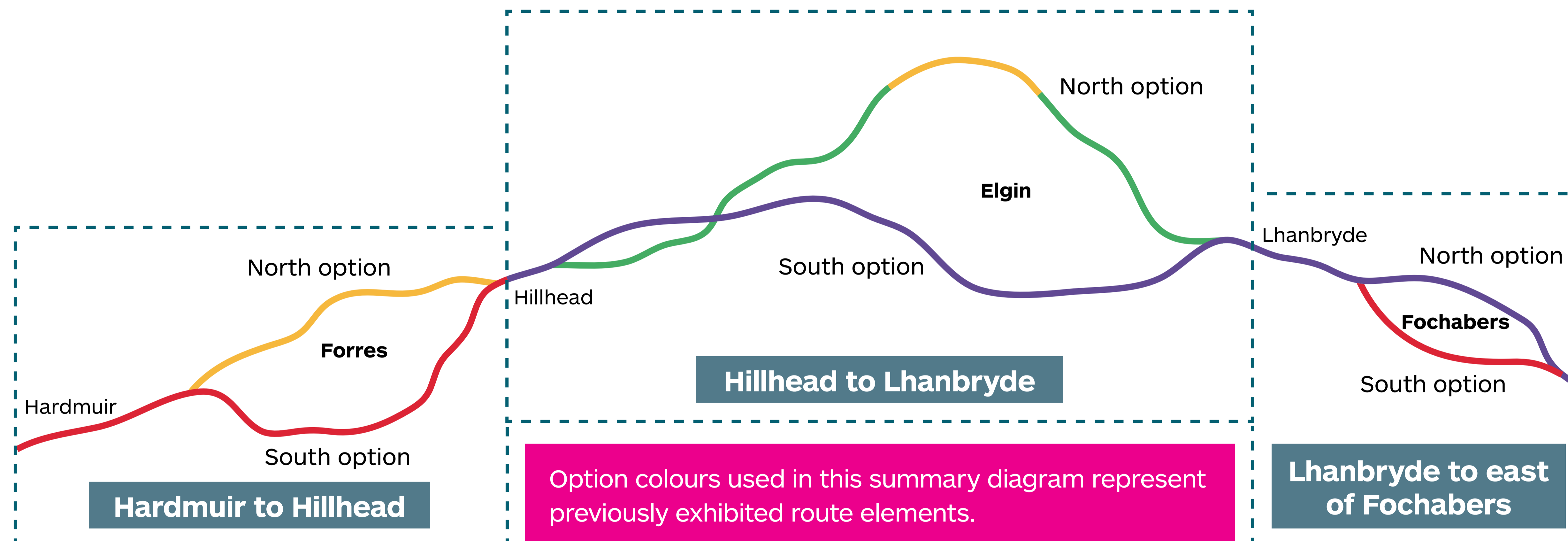
- To improve the operation of the A96 and inter-urban connectivity through:
  - Reduced journey times.
  - Improved journey time reliability.
  - Increased overtaking opportunities.
  - Improved efficiency of freight movements along the transport corridor.
  - Reduced conflicts between local traffic and other traffic in urban areas and strategic journeys.
- To improve safety for motorised and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) 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.



# Shortlisted options assessment

For the purpose of options assessment, the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme has been divided into three sections:



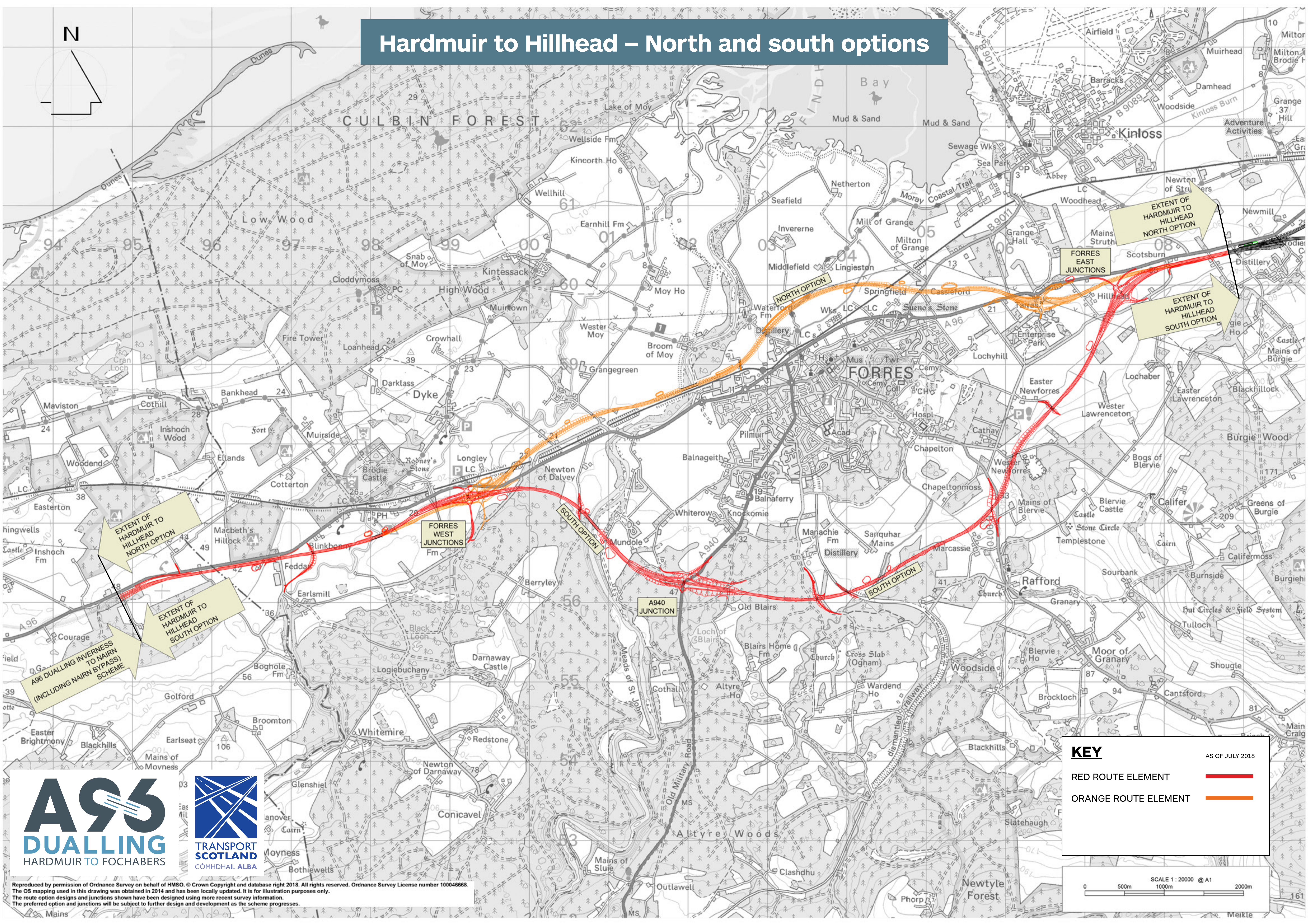
For each section, the performance of a **north** and a **south option** has been assessed to determine a preference.

The following panels summarise the outcome of the **engineering**, **environment**, **traffic** and **economic assessments** carried out and explain why a particular option is preferred.

The preferred option consists of a combination of the three section preferences from the assessment. The preferred option was then validated through an end-to-end economic assessment, which confirmed that it was the best performing option when compared to the other possible combinations.



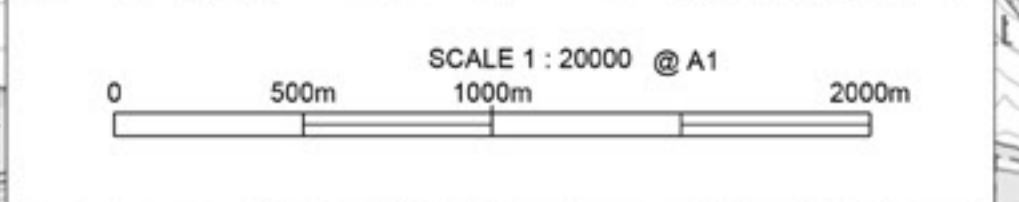
# Hardmuir to Hillhead – North and south options



**KEY** AS OF JULY 2018

RED ROUTE ELEMENT —

ORANGE ROUTE ELEMENT —



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 The route option designs and junctions shown have been designed using more recent survey information.  
 The preferred option and junctions will be subject to further design and development as the scheme progresses.



# Hardmuir to Hillhead

## NORTH OPTION PREFERRED

**The north option is preferred for the following key reasons:**

- Provides better journey time savings for all trunk road traffic, including freight.
- Accident potential is significantly reduced.
- Is located close to existing infrastructure and has less adverse landscape and visual effects.
- Has less impact on ancient woodland and less risk of disturbance to important areas of nature conservation.
- Does not affect woodland used by the community.
- Provides better opportunities to facilitate active travel.

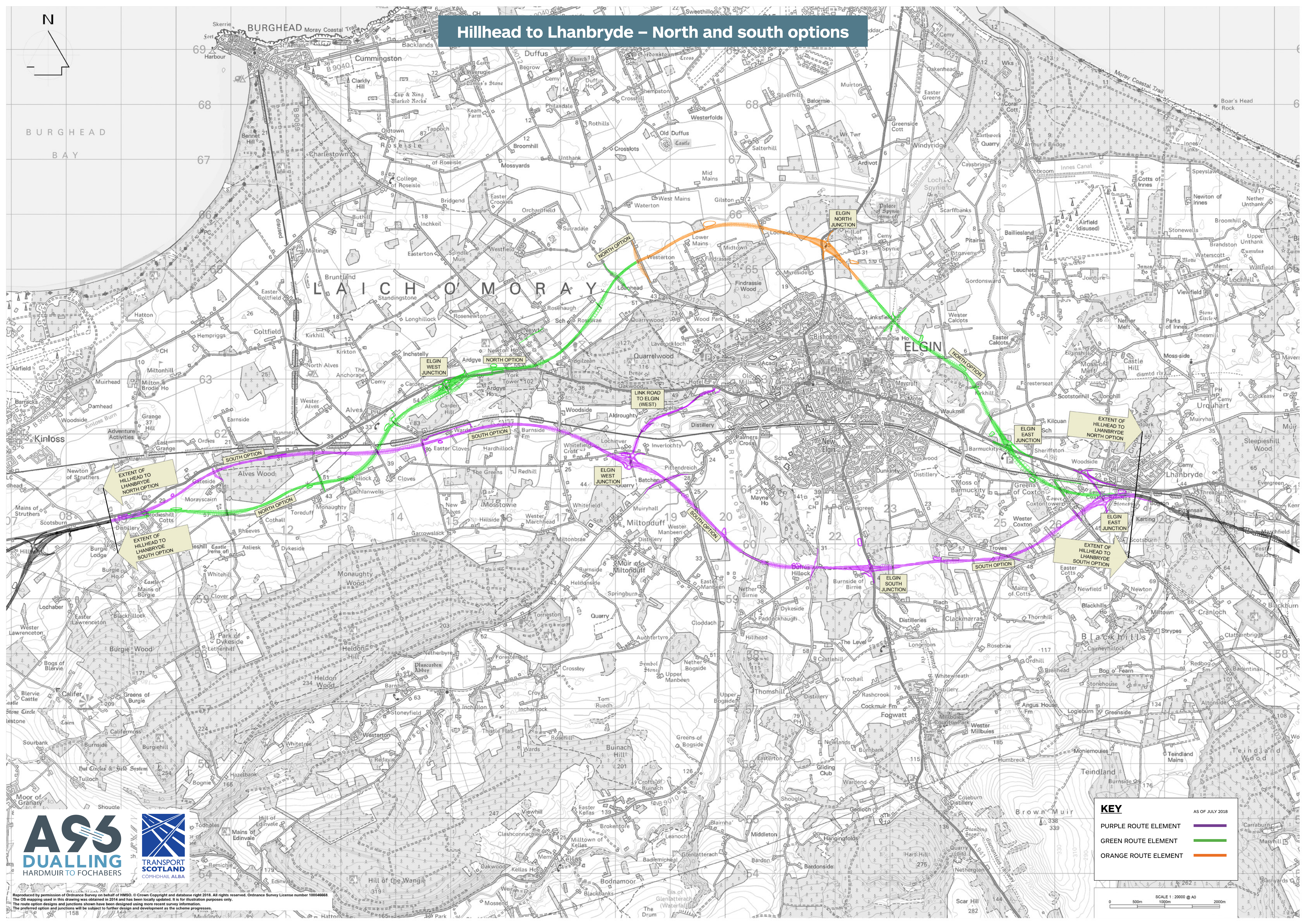
**It is also favoured for the following reasons:**

- Less requirement for the crossing of, and alterations to, minor watercourses.
- Avoids potentially contaminated land at the former RAF base in Forres.

The **north option** is slightly more expensive but provides significantly better value.



# Hillhead to Lhanbryde – North and south options



BURGHEAD BAY

LAICH O' MORAY

ELGIN

**KEY** AS OF JULY 2018

- PURPLE ROUTE ELEMENT
- GREEN ROUTE ELEMENT
- ORANGE ROUTE ELEMENT

SCALE 1:2000 @ A0



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# Hillhead to Lhanbryde

## SOUTH OPTION PREFERRED

### The south option is preferred for the following key reasons:

- Provides better journey time savings for all trunk road traffic, including freight.
- Accident potential is significantly reduced.
- Agricultural landtake is less, with less prime land affected.

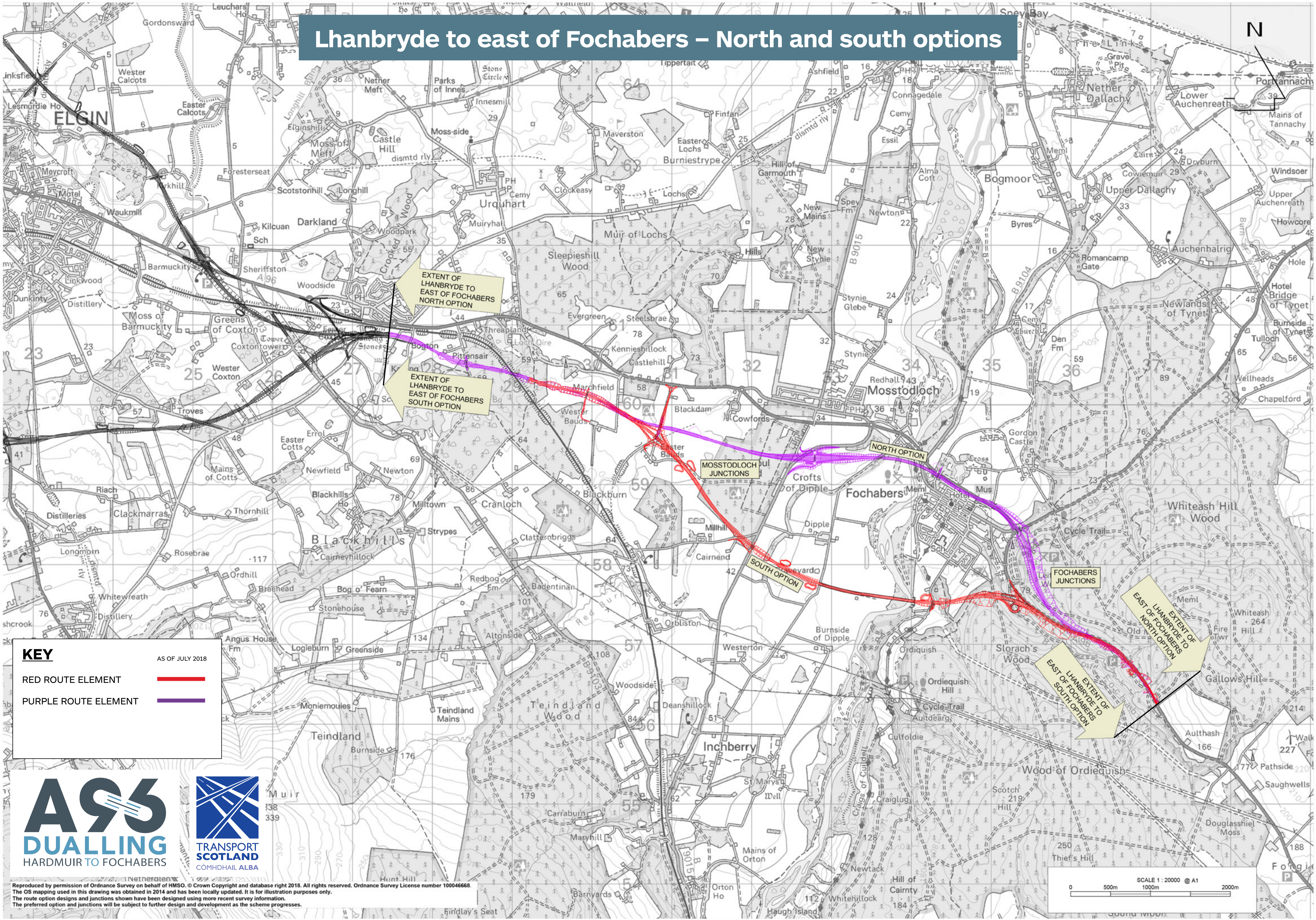
### It is also favoured for the following reasons:

- Requires less imported material and achieves a better earthworks balance.
- Has fewer interfaces with high voltage overhead power lines.
- Can be constructed with less disruption to existing A96 road users.
- Results in slightly less adverse effects due to traffic noise and vibration.
- Has slightly less landscape and visual effects particularly at the western and eastern extents of the section.

The **south option** is slightly less expensive and provides significantly better value.



# Lhanbryde to east of Fochabers – North and south options

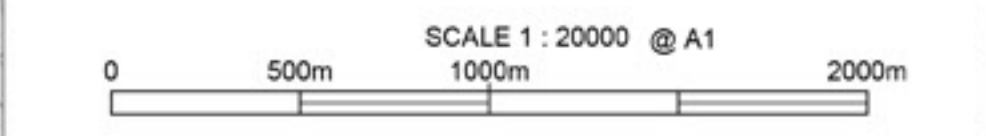


**KEY** AS OF JULY 2018

RED ROUTE ELEMENT

PURPLE ROUTE ELEMENT

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 The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in 2014 and has been locally updated. It is for illustration purposes only.  
 The route option designs and junctions shown have been designed using more recent survey information.  
 The preferred option and junctions will be subject to further design and development as the scheme progresses.





# Lhanbryde to East of Fochabers

## NORTH OPTION PREFERRED

**The north option is preferred for the following key reasons:**

- Results in significantly less mitigation costs and lower potential risks to the operation of the Spey water abstraction scheme.

**It is also favoured for the following reasons:**

- Generates more material and has greater opportunity for earthworks balance.
- Less requirement for the crossing of, and alterations to, minor watercourses.
- Shorter crossing of the River Spey and its flood plain.
- Lower requirement for concrete and steel.
- Less risk to contamination of the groundwater within the Spey valley.
- Less effect in respect of road drainage and the water environment.
- Provides better opportunities to facilitate active travel.

The **north option** is significantly less expensive and provides significantly better value.



# Preferred option

The preferred option for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme is shown on the following exhibition panels.

The drawing indicates the preferred option alignment, the designed layouts for all junctions and alterations to side roads. The location and layout of road drainage basins/ponds is indicative and will be subject to further design development.

These aspects will be subject to further design and development as the scheme progresses. Environmental mitigation and Non-Motorised User (NMU) facilities will also be incorporated into the scheme design as part of the **DMRB Stage 3 Assessment**.

## The design has the following key features:

- 46.4km of dual carriageway.
- Seven grade-separated junctions.
- New crossings of the Rivers Findhorn, Lossie and Spey.
- Five crossings of the Aberdeen – Inverness railway line.
- Major utility interfaces.

## On opening, some of the key benefits the new A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme will provide include:

- Improved journey times and reliability for all trunk road traffic, including freight.
- Significantly improved road safety.
- Better transport connections between settlements in Moray and to the wider strategic transport network.
- Opportunities to facilitate active travel.
- Relief to communities currently impacted by through traffic.



# What happens next?

Transport Scotland and its consultants Mott MacDonald Sweco will further develop the preferred option.

Transport Scotland will look to publish **draft Orders** and an **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme during the second half of 2020 for formal comment.

The **draft Road Orders** will define the line of the developed preferred option. The **draft Compulsory Purchase Order** will define the extent of land required to deliver, operate and maintain the scheme.

## The next stage of the assessment process will include:

- Consultation with affected parties.
- Further consultation with statutory bodies, community councils and other relevant interest groups.
- Design development of the preferred option.
- Design development of Non-Motorised User (NMU) facilities.
- Ground investigation works.
- Identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of draft Orders.
- Environmental assessment of the developed preferred option and preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment.



A96 at Elgin looking east

- Development of suitable mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environment. For example:
  - Appropriate construction management plans.
  - Mammal (e.g. badger and otter) underpasses, ledges and fences.
  - Landscape planting.
  - Noise barriers or environmental bunds.



# Comments and feedback

Transport Scotland welcomes your comments and feedback on the preferred option. Please take time to consider the information presented here today and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by:

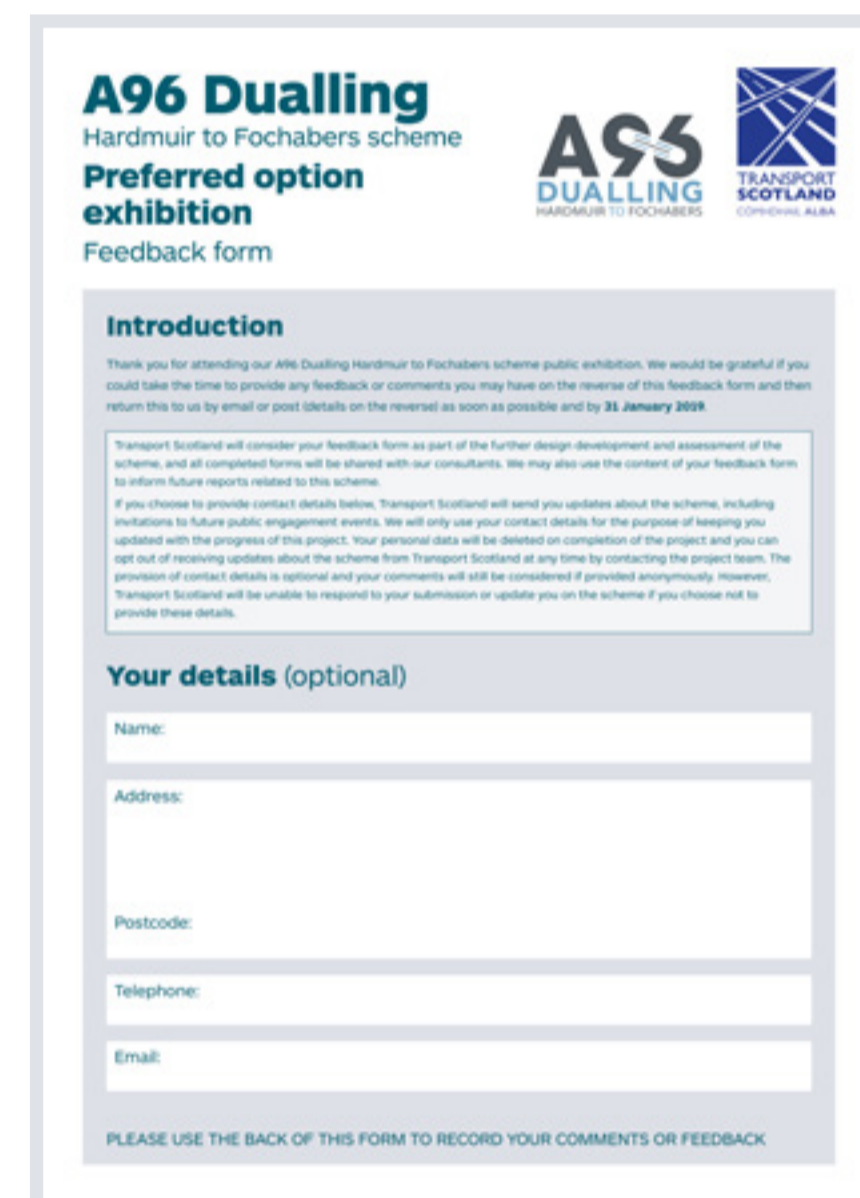
**31 January 2019**

Comments can be made on the feedback forms provided and placed in the feedback box at today's event, or sent by email or post.

Please email your comments to:  
**[a96dualling@transport.gov.scot](mailto:a96dualling@transport.gov.scot)**

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

Feedback forms are also available on the Transport Scotland website. Should you have any specific accessibility requirements, the summary leaflet and information panels presented at today's event can be made available in an appropriate format on request by contacting the project team.



**A96 Dualling**  
Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme  
**Preferred option**  
exhibition  
Feedback form

**Introduction**

Thank you for attending our A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme public exhibition. We would be grateful if you could take the time to provide any feedback or comments you may have on the reverse of this feedback form and then return this to us by email or post details on the reverse as soon as possible and by **31 January 2019**.

Transport Scotland will consider your feedback form as part of the further design development and assessment of the scheme, and all completed forms will be shared with our consultants. We may also use the content of your feedback form to inform future reports related to the scheme.

If you choose to provide contact details below, Transport Scotland will send you updates about the scheme, including invitations to future public engagement events. We will only use your contact details for the purpose of keeping you updated with the progress of this project. Your personal data will be deleted on completion of the project and you can opt out of receiving updates about the scheme from Transport Scotland at any time by contacting the project team. The provision of contact details is optional and your comments will still be considered if provided anonymously. However, Transport Scotland will be unable to respond to your submission or update you on the scheme if you choose not to provide these details.

**Your details (optional)**

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THIS FORM TO RECORD YOUR COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK

## Contact details

Should you wish to contact **Mott MacDonald Sweco**, details for the stakeholder team are:

Landowner and Communities Manager:

**Dave Gowans** Tel: **01309 250 380**

Email: **[dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk](mailto:dave.gowans@sweco.co.uk)**

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

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

For further information on the wider A96 Dualling Programme, please visit the Transport Scotland website at: **[transport.gov.scot/a96dualling](http://transport.gov.scot/a96dualling)**

**i** Transport Scotland will consider your comments and feedback as part of the further design development and assessment of the scheme, and all submissions will be shared with our design consultant for the project. We may also use your submission to inform future reports or public documents related to this scheme.

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