

# A96 Dualling

Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme

**Preferred option**

**Public exhibitions**

December 2018



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



# Introduction

Transport Scotland is progressing an ambitious programme that will see the dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. The route is approximately 160km (99 miles) long, of which 138km (86 miles) is currently single carriageway.

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

In June 2017 and February – March 2018, public exhibitions and drop-in sessions were held to seek public feedback on the 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 present 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.

This leaflet provides a summary of the preferred option for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

A feedback form is available at the exhibition or on the project website: [transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers](https://transport.gov.scot/project/a96-hardmuir-fochabers)

# Scheme assessment process

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

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

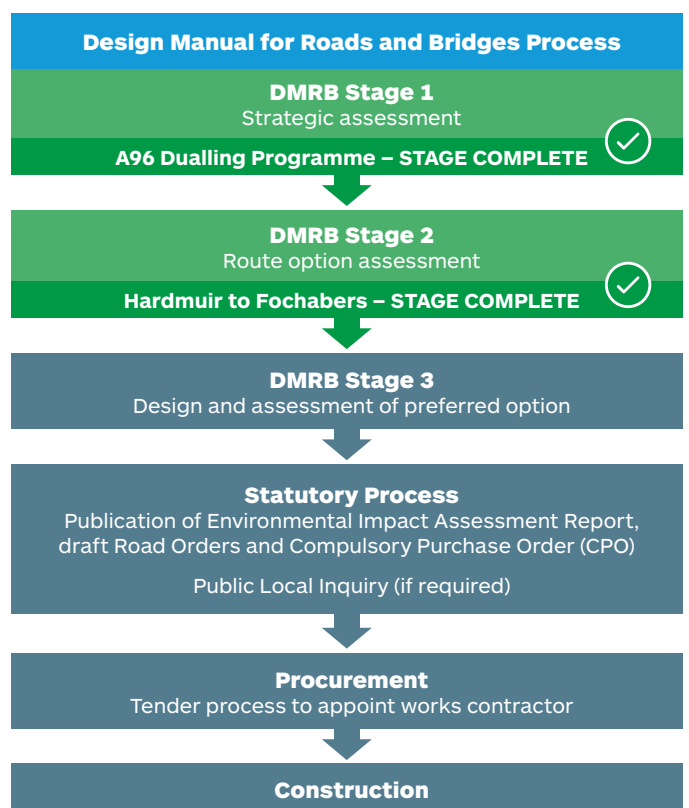
This is a three-stage assessment process that considers engineering, environmental, traffic and economic considerations.

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 and is available for you to view here today and on the project website.

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.



# PREFERRED OPTION

**KEY**

PREFERRED OPTION  
 DESELECTED OPTION  
 INDICATIVE ROAD  
 DRAINAGE BASIN/POND  
 A96 INVERNESS TO NAIRN  
 (INCLUDING NAIRN BYPASS)  
 SCHEME



**Hardmuir to Hillhead – preferred option**

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.

**Lhanbryde to East of Fochabers – preferred option**

The north option is preferred for the following key reasons:

- Would result in significantly less mitigation costs and 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 the road drainage and water environment.
- Provides better opportunities to facilitate active travel.

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

**Hillhead to Lhanbryde – preferred option**

The south option is preferred for the following key reasons:

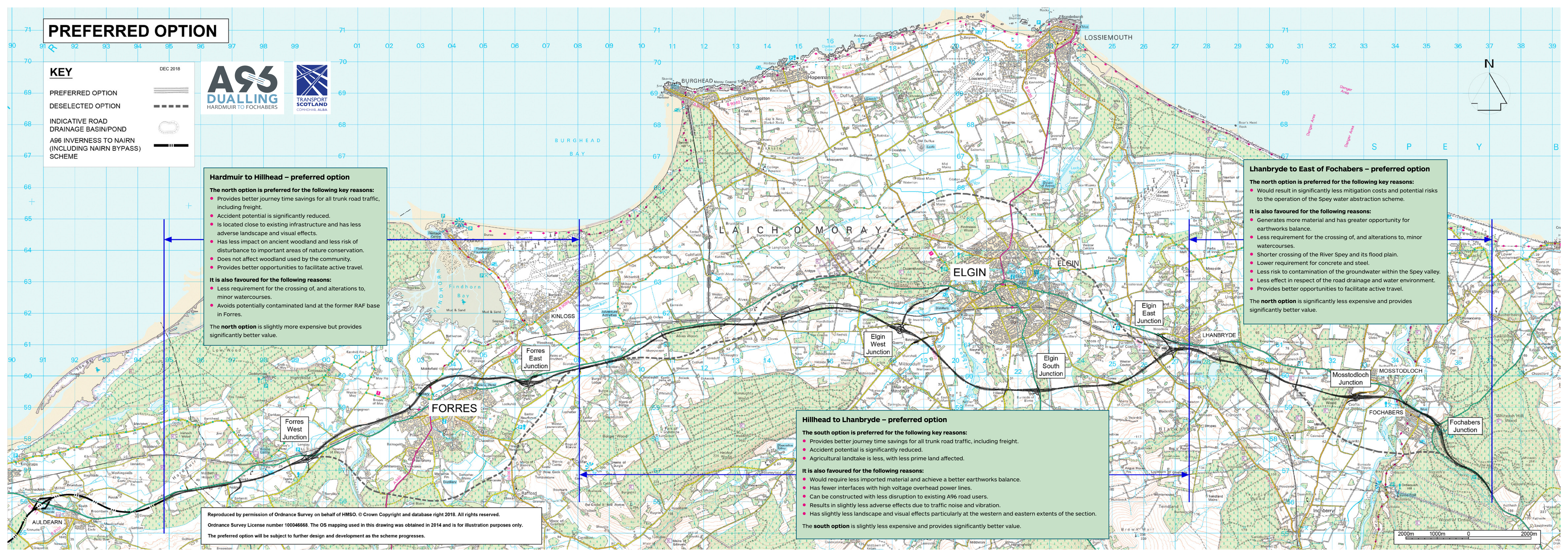
- Provides better journey time savings for all trunk road traffic, including freight.
- Accident potential is significantly reduced.
- Agricultural landtake is less, with less prime land affected.

It is also favoured for the following reasons:

- Would require less imported material and achieve 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.

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 Ordnance Survey License number 100046668. The OS mapping used in this drawing was obtained in 2014 and is for illustration purposes only.  
 The preferred option will be subject to further design and development as the scheme progresses.



# Shortlisted options assessment

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

- Hardmuir to Hillhead.
- Hillhead to Lhanbryde.
- Lhanbryde to East of Fochabers.

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

The preferred option drawing, shown overleaf, summarises the outcome of the **engineering, environment, traffic** and **economic assessments** carried out and explains 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.



## Preferred option

The preferred option for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme is shown overleaf.

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 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.
- 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. Your comments will be taken into account during development of the preferred option.

Comments can be made on the feedback forms provided and placed in the feedback box at this exhibition, or sent by email or post. Feedback forms are also available on the Transport Scotland website.

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

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



Please take time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by **31 January 2019**.

## Further information

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

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

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

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

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

## About your comments and feedback

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