

Welcome

We started our programme of public engagement for the A96 Dualling Programme with a series of public exhibitions held in November 2013. At that time, we shared 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 have developed high level improvement strategies as part of the very early initial assessment work for the route.

Today's event gives you the opportunity to meet the Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture (MMS) team, which has been appointed to take forward the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme.

Transport Scotland officials and MMS representatives will be happy to assist you with any queries you may have.



A96 at Brodie looking west



Background

Transport Scotland is progressing an ambitious programme that will see the full length of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen upgraded to dual carriageway 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 carried out along the route east of Nairn to Aberdeen. The outcome of this preliminary work was presented at a series of public information exhibitions in May 2015.

For the next stage of design and assessment the A96 Dualling Programme has been divided into sections (i.e. individual schemes within the overall dualling programme). Each section will be further assessed 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, to the east of Fochabers - a distance of approximately 46km (28 miles).



Why are we here?

In June 2016, after the completion of the Preliminary Engineering and Strategic Environmental Assessment work, Transport Scotland appointed Mott MacDonald Sweco Joint Venture (MMS) to take forward route option assessment and design work on the section of the A96 Dualling between Hardmuir and Fochabers.

Since being appointed MMS has been mobilising their design and assessment teams and has commenced consultation with statutory bodies.

This 'Meet the Team' event gives you an opportunity to meet the Transport Scotland and MMS team members who are working on the Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme and to find out more about the process that will be followed to progress the design and assessment work.

Keeping local communities, landowners, stakeholders and members of the public informed is an essential and integral part of the design process. As the scheme progresses we will continue to provide you with updates and hold public events to allow you to have your say and give us your feedback.



A96-A941 roundabout, Elgin, looking west

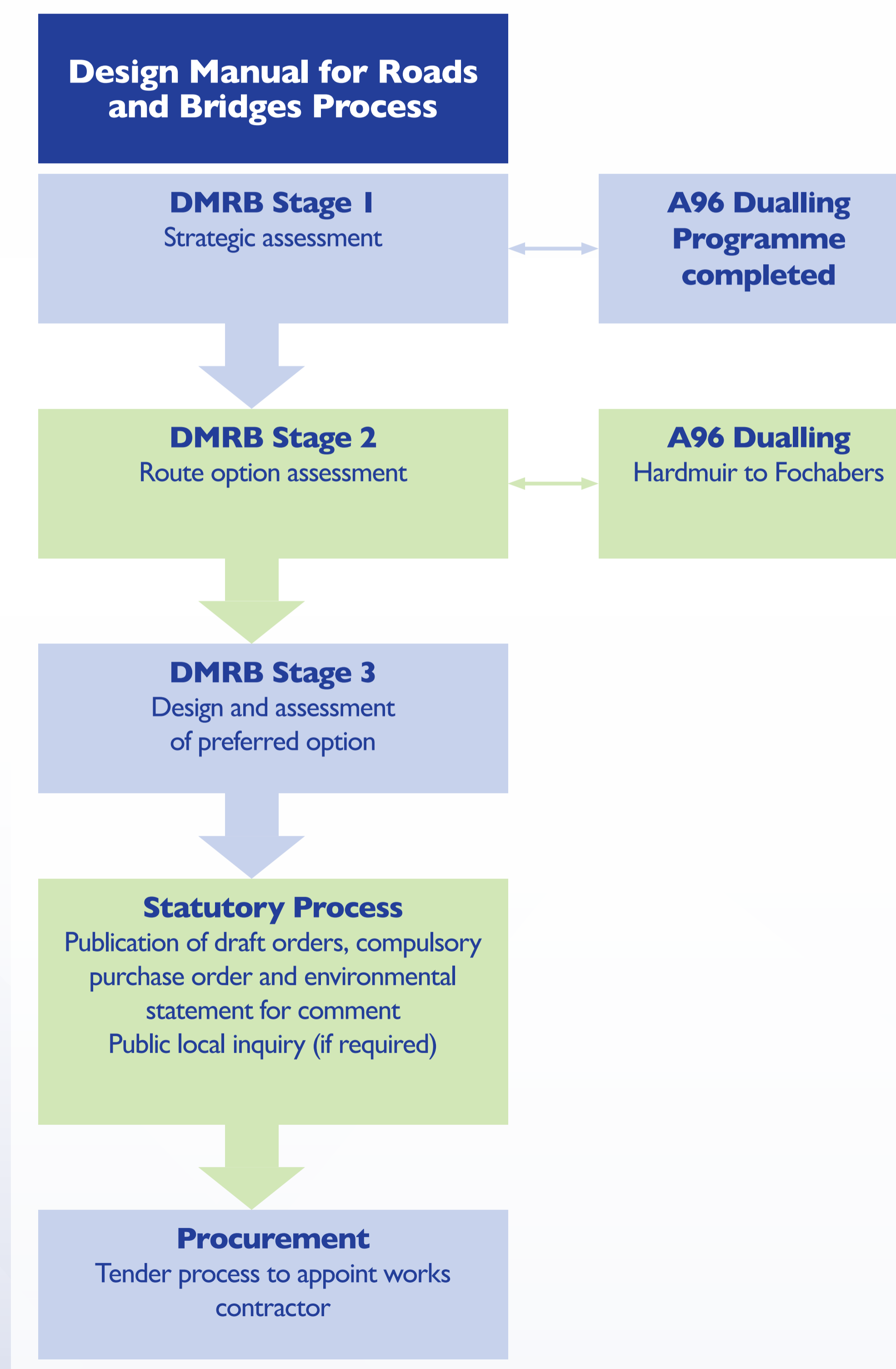
Scheme Assessment Process

Transport Scotland carries out a well-established assessment process to determine the preferred route for a trunk road improvement project.

The three-stage assessment process, based on the standard of good practice set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), covers environmental, engineering, traffic and economic considerations. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland will continue to consult with a large number of stakeholders and interested parties.

The DMRB Stage 1 (Strategic Assessment) of the A96 Dualling east of Nairn to Aberdeen has already been completed, with the outcome presented at a series of public exhibitions in May 2015.

The DMRB Stage 2 (Route Options Development and Assessment) has now commenced for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme, and is expected to take 18–24 months to complete.

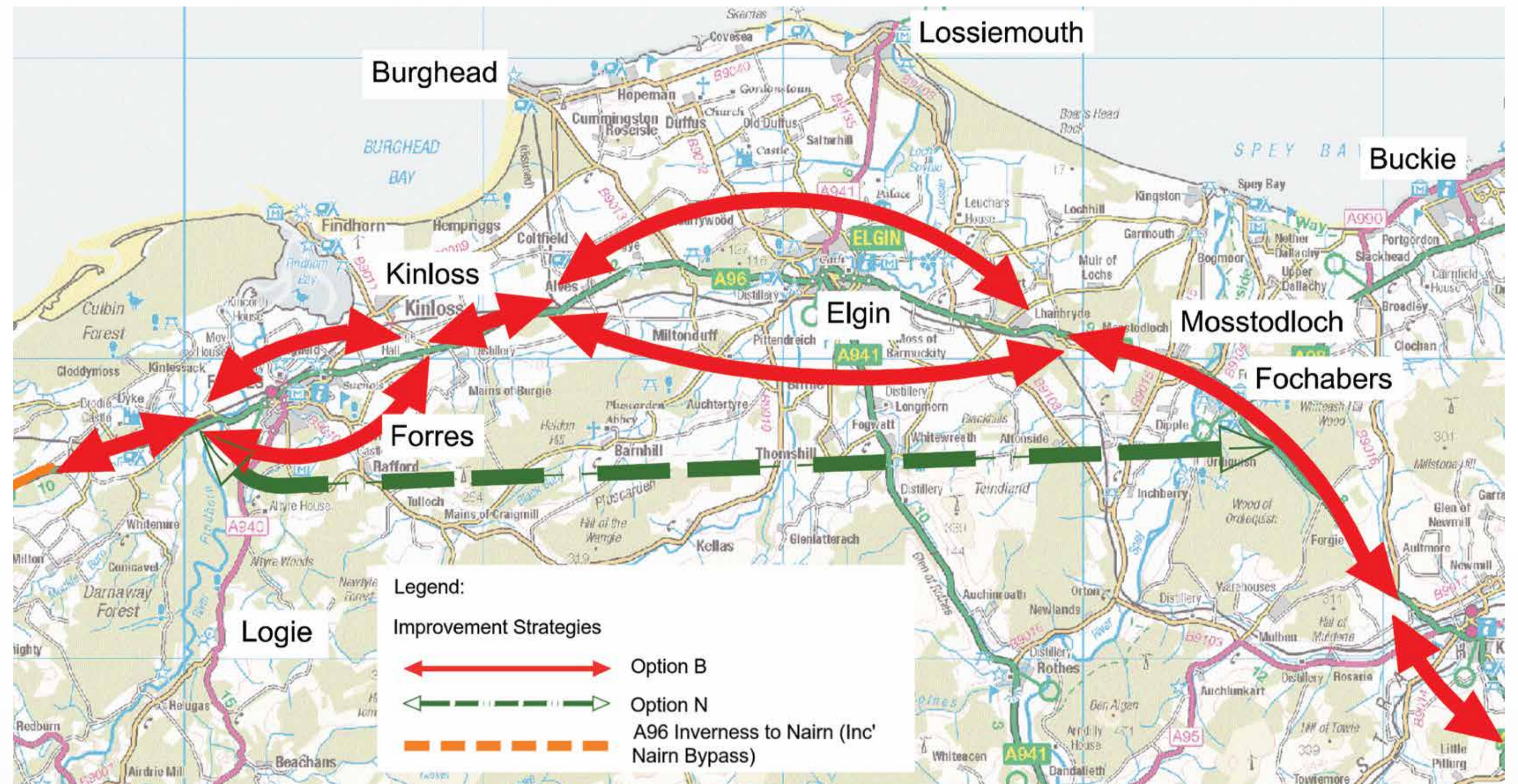


DMRB Stage I Assessment – improvement strategies

As part of the DMRB Stage I preliminary work, a range of broadly defined improvement strategies that could provide a dual carriageway between east of Nairn and Aberdeen were developed and assessed.

These improvement strategies were different high level approaches to providing a dual carriageway, for example a bypass north or south of towns along the existing A96. They did not represent specific corridors or route alignments.

As part of the DMRB Stage 2 Assessment, route options will now be developed and assessed for the section of the A96 between Hardmuir and Fochabers.



Outcome of DMRB Stage I Assessment for Hardmuir to Fochabers: take improvement strategy option B and option N into DMRB Stage 2 Assessment



Developing the scheme design

DMRB Stage 2 Assessment

MMS is taking forward the route options assessment, during which they will develop and assess route options for dualling the A96 between Hardmuir and Fochabers.

This will include an engineering, traffic, economic and environmental assessment of the potential impacts of each option to inform a preferred option choice. During this stage of assessment the route options under consideration will also be presented to members of the public for their feedback prior to the selection of a preferred option. It is expected that it will take approximately 18–24 months of assessment to identify the preferred option for the scheme.

We will use local feedback received following the series of exhibitions held in May 2015 to inform the development of route options. As part of the assessment process, we will consult with members of the local community, stakeholders, landowners and members of the public to seek their vital feedback on the route options. The feedback received on the route options will be considered, along with the engineering, traffic,



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

To inform the design development and environmental assessment of route options, MMS will gather information over the coming months about the current state of the natural environment in the area. This will include non-intrusive walkover surveys which will help increase the team’s understanding of existing conditions.

DMRB Stage 3 Assessment

Following selection of the preferred option, the design will be further developed and assessed with an Environmental Statement prepared and the land required for the dualling identified. During this stage of assessment, the preferred option will also be developed to take account of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other Non-Motorised Users (NMUs). The draft Statutory Orders will be prepared for publication at the same time as the Environmental Statement.

To inform the design development and environmental assessment of the scheme, MMS will in the coming years also carry out other surveys like ground investigation surveys which will inform the preliminary design of new earthworks and structures such as retaining walls and bridges. During these ground investigation surveys, boreholes and trial pits will be used to investigate both soils, and the underlying rock.

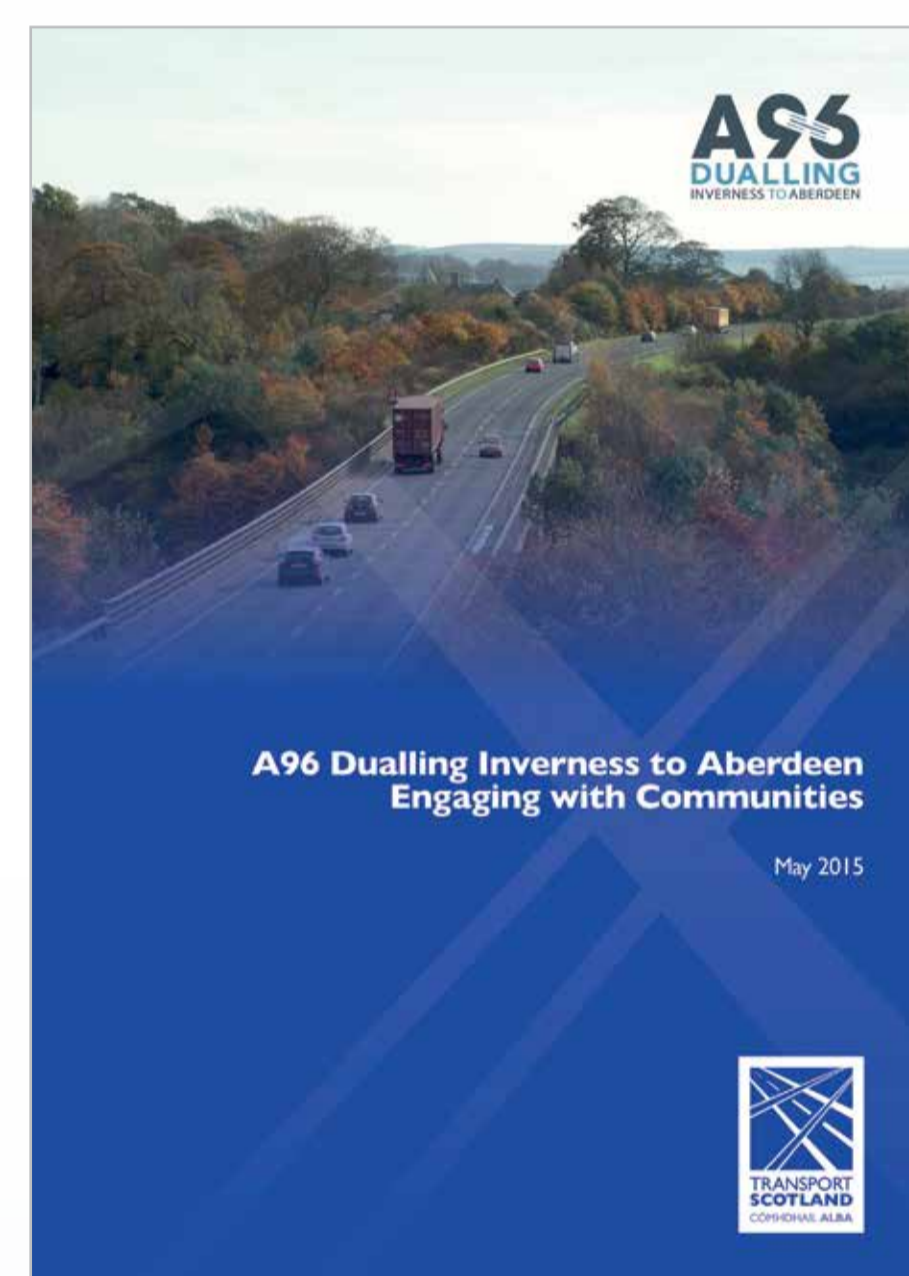
Stakeholder and community engagement team

Stakeholder and community engagement for the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme will be guided by our A96 Dualling *Engaging with Communities* document which is available to view on the A96 Dualling website: www.transport.gov.scot/a96dualling

A96 Dualling Engaging with Communities

In addition to meeting all statutory requirements, Transport Scotland will ensure that:

- arrangements for participation are inclusive, open and transparent
- a wide range of participations are encourage to get involved at the appropriate time
- information is provided at key stages to allow for full consideration
- communication is facilitated through a range of methods in a range of appropriate locations
- all representations are fully considered and feedback provided.



Keri will be supported by a team with experience of liaising with the local community and stakeholders in the area. Dave Gowans is the Landowner and Communities Manager and is based in the MMS local office near Forres. He will undertake consultation with landowners and tenants throughout the design process, including agreeing access arrangements for surveys. He will be assisted in this process by Fiona Drever.



Keri Stewart



Dave Gowans and Fiona Drever

Contact details

Should you wish to contact MMS, 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: MMS, Unit 9, Horizon Scotland, The Enterprise Park, Forres IV36 2AB

Managing and coordinating public engagement and ongoing dialogue on the A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme will be the responsibility of MMS' Stakeholder Coordinator, Keri Stewart.

Keri is committed to ensuring that Transport Scotland's principles for community engagement are followed throughout the lifetime of the scheme.

What happens next?

The MMS team is assessing the existing available information and identifying areas where more information needs to be collected before developing route options over the coming months. They are compiling a list of stakeholders (for example, community, local authority and environmental groups) who they will consult with during the assessment process.

Transport Scotland will give members of the public the opportunity to comment on route options in 2017 to ensure that all stakeholders and interested parties have the opportunity to give their feedback on the options under consideration.

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

Information on the wider A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen programme can be found at:
www.transport.gov.scot/a96dualling



A96 at Elgin looking east

