Appendix A. StoryMap

A96 Corridor Review

Welcome to our Project Pages for the A96 Corridor Review.

The purpose of our Project Pages is to keep you informed of the A96 Corridor Review. They will provide you with an overview of the key stages of the A96 Corridor Review, the options that have been considered, and each of the outcomes.

The A96 Corridor Review has undertaken a comprehensive and thorough assessment of issues affecting current and future travel across the corridor.

The A96 Corridor Review is being carried out by design consultants Jacobs AECOM acting on behalf of Transport Scotland.

Please note that our consultation, which launched on 28 November 2024 has now closed. Thank you to everyone who visited this website, took the time to read the reports and provided feedback.

1 Background

2 Previous Consultation

3 How we did the Review

4 Transport Appraisal

5 Environmental Appraisal

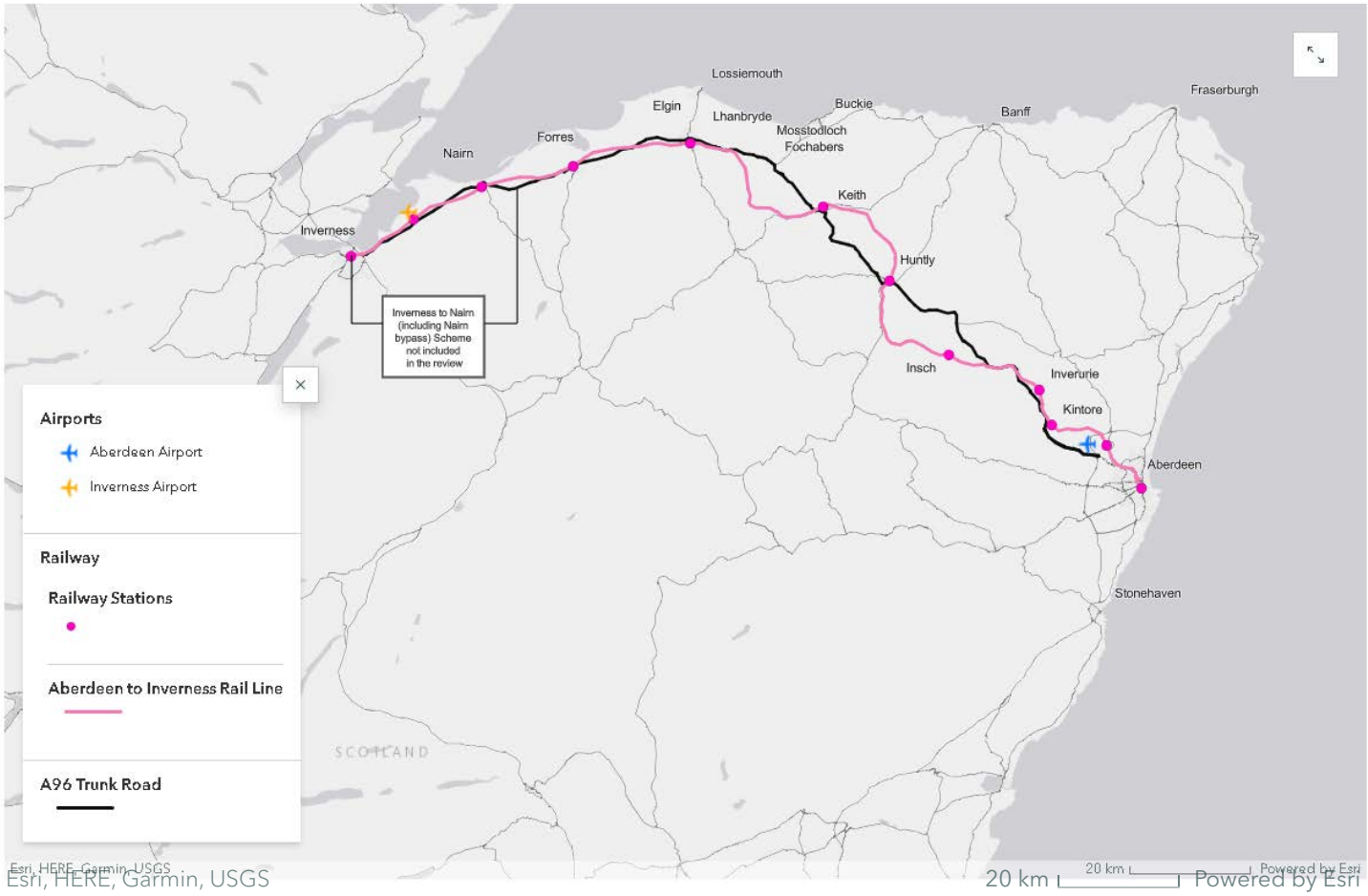
6 Summary of Outcomes

7 Reports and Assessments

8 Consultation

9 FAQ

Background



Background

The A96 is the trunk road linking Inverness and Aberdeen and it connects a number of communities along its length, including Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Fochabers, Keith, Huntly, Inverurie and Kintore.

In August 2021, it was agreed by the Scottish Government to take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues.

Whilst the current plan is to fully dual the A96 route, it was agreed as part of this process that there would be a transparent, evidence-

based review of the programme, to include a climate compatibility assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on the climate. Statutory assessments would also be undertaken that include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and social and equality related Statutory Impact Assessments (SIAs).

The A96 Corridor Review covers the transport corridor from Raigmore Interchange at Inverness to Craibstone Junction at Aberdeen. The review has been carried out in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and considers all transport modes including active travel, public transport, rail and road transport. More information on the STAG process is in the **How we did the Review section.**

The review considered transport problems and opportunities within the A96 corridor as well as the effects of the global climate emergency and the recovery from COVID-19 on how people work and travel along the corridor. The transport appraisal aspect of the A96 Corridor Review has assessed the performance of interventions (or package of interventions) against specific Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs), the five STAG criteria and also covered the deliverability, affordability and public acceptability elements associated with each intervention (or package).

The option for A96 Full Dualling has also been appraised to assess its performance against current appraisal criteria. Note that the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme has been excluded from the scope of the A96 Corridor Review as it already has ministerial consent.

Previous Consultation

Previous consultation

During the public consultation, which ran from 12 May to 10 June 2022, we received a total of 4,687 responses.

The online consultation feedback survey asked you to share your feedback on existing problems as well as opportunities across the full extent of the A96 corridor. We also asked about what transport-related suggestions, ideas or interventions you felt would best address the problems and opportunities for the corridor.

All responses received were analysed and results summarised in the Stakeholder & Public Engagement Consultation published on the Transport Scotland website.

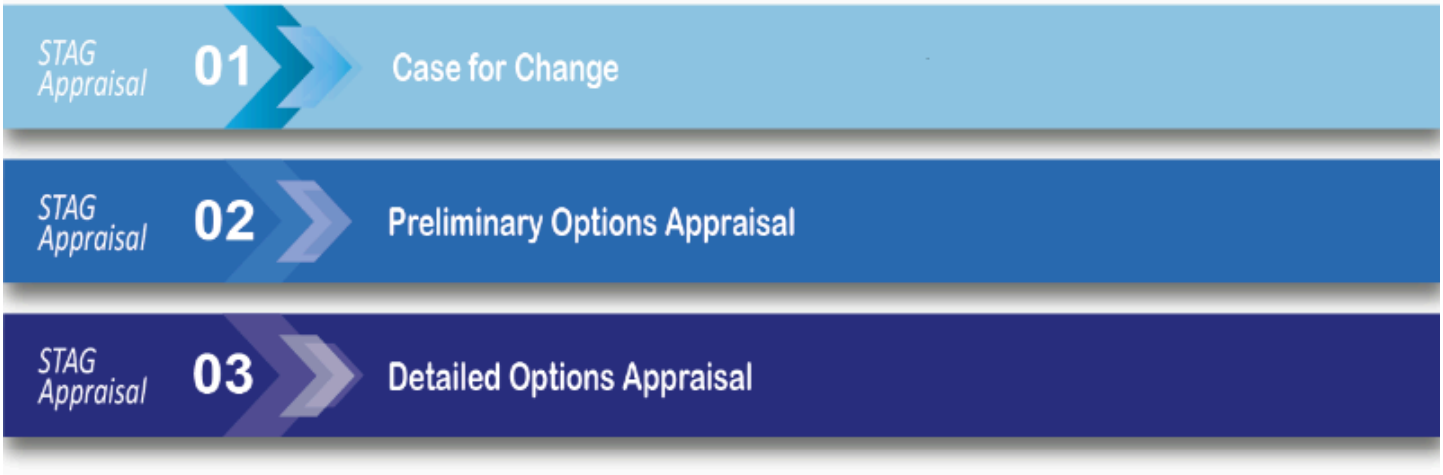
How your feedback was used

Your feedback received so far has been vital to the A96 Corridor Review as it gave the Review Team an understanding of the problems affecting the A96 corridor, and to identify opportunities. These problems and opportunities were used to inform the Transport Planning Objectives and to generate a long list of potential options at the Case for Change stage.

For more information, see **Introduction to STAG** within **How we did the Review** section.

The feedback received as part of the previous consultation also informed the assessment of whether there are likely to be any issues around public acceptability of each option or package at the Preliminary and Detailed Options Appraisal stages.

How we did the Review



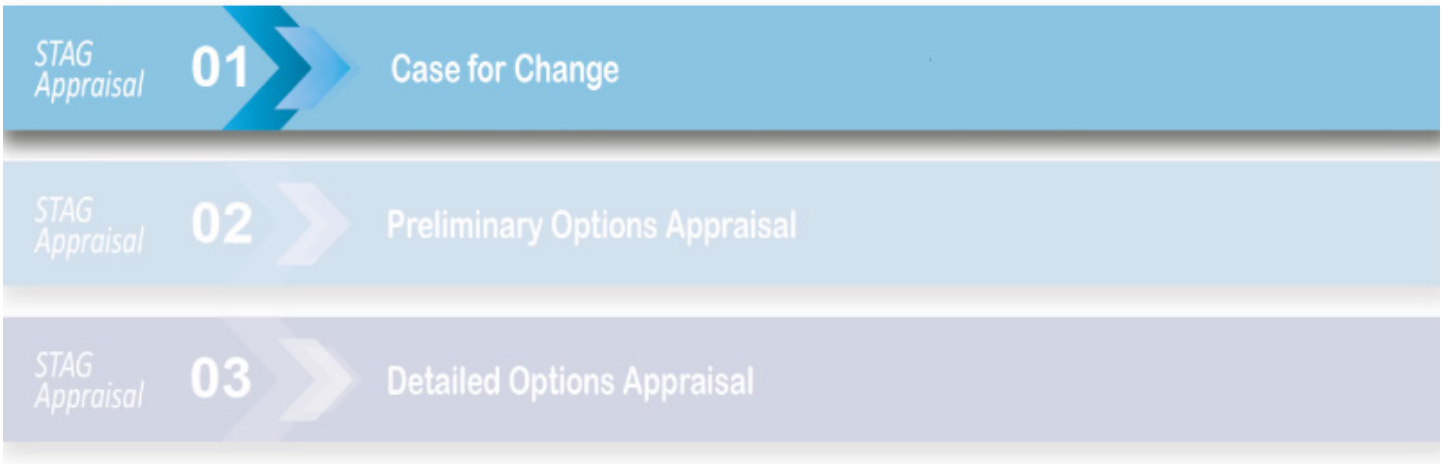
Introduction to STAG

The A96 Corridor Review has been undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG).

STAG is the best practice, objective-led approach to transport appraisal and provides a consistent framework to identify and appraise transport interventions. An appraisal using STAG is required whenever Scottish Government funding, support or approval is needed for a change to the transport system. Using STAG for the review ensures alignment with Transport Scotland's second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and industry best practice.

STAG defines a multi-criteria framework that appraises the ability of new transport options to meet specific Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs), and appraises their performance against the five key STAG criteria as well as established policy objectives.

The appraisal undertaken as part of the A96 Corridor Review involves the three core stages shown above.



STAG Case for Change

The Case for Change stage was completed, and the report detailing the outcomes published in December 2022.

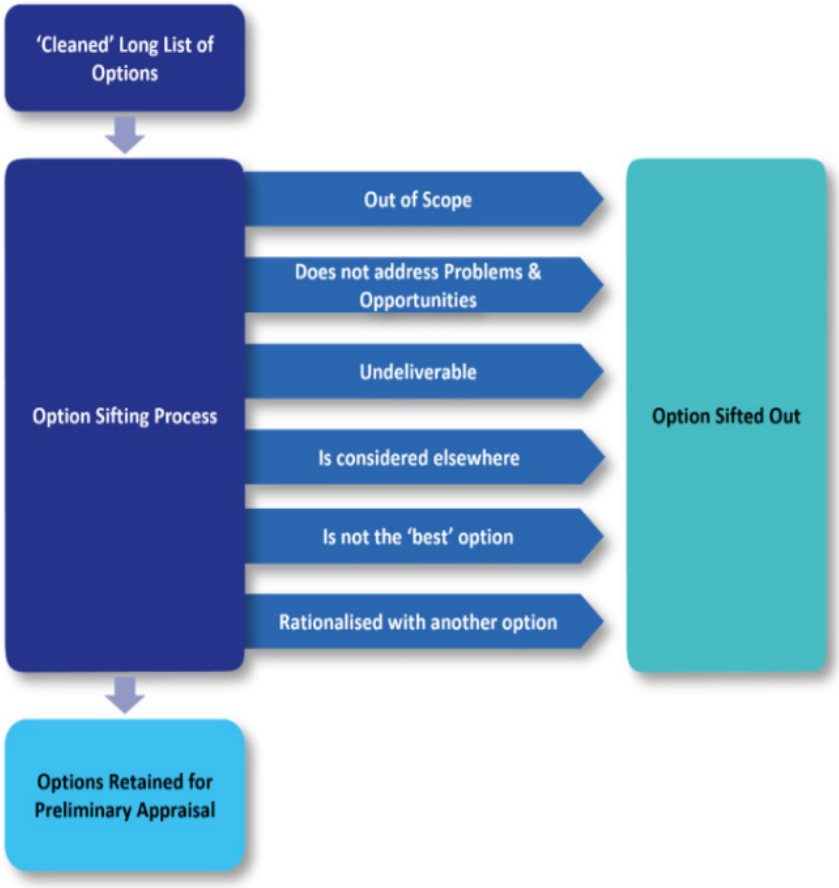
The report covers the identification of problems and opportunities linked to all modes of transport for the A96 corridor, drawing upon relevant data analyses, current policies and strategies and feedback from stakeholder engagement including workshops and public consultation. The report presents details of the Transport Planning Objectives and sub-objectives that have been developed

for the A96 Corridor Review. These objectives are based on a comprehensive understanding of the problems and opportunities in the transport corridor, informed by the feedback received during the public consultation in 2022.

The Transport Planning Objectives are a key element throughout the appraisal process, from initial option generation and sifting, through to preliminary and detailed appraisal.

A total of 11,091 suggestions for the transport corridor were generated from a variety of sources including previous studies, stakeholder workshop sessions, consultation feedback survey responses and the Jacobs AECOM A96 Corridor Review project team. A ‘cleaning’ exercise was undertaken to consolidate similar options and remove duplicates, resulting in 227 unique options being taken forward to the option sifting process. The options were then assessed against a range of criteria to ensure a robust and transparent sifting process was undertaken.

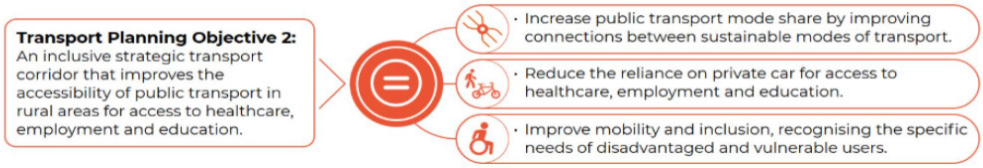
Following the ‘cleaning’ and sifting process, 16 options were retained and carried forward to the next stage of the STAG process.



A96 Corridor Review Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) and sub-objectives

⊕ Transport Planning Objective 1

⊕ Transport Planning Objective 2



⊕ Transport Planning Objective 3

⊕ Transport Planning Objective 4

⊕ Transport Planning Objective 5

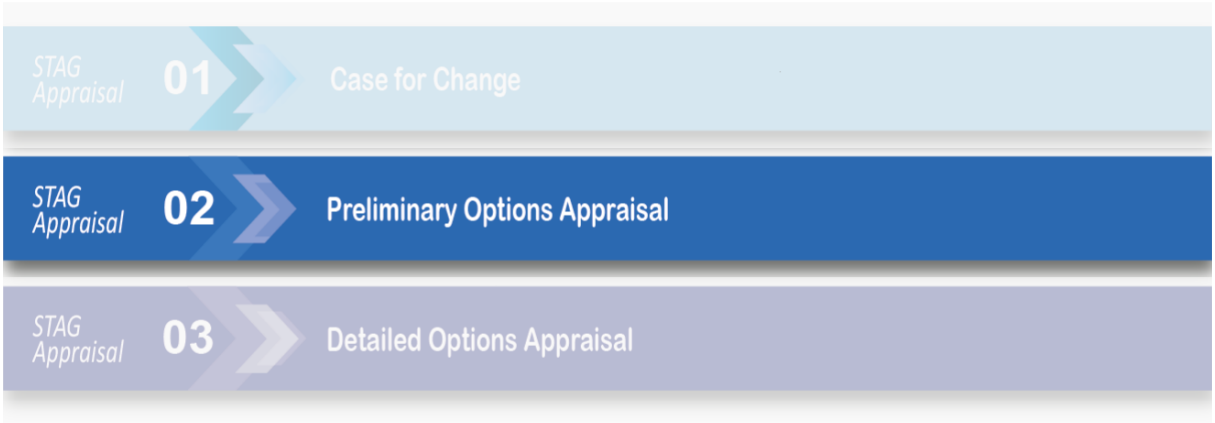
STAG Preliminary Options Appraisal

The Preliminary Appraisal of options was undertaken against the A96 Corridor Review TPOs, the STAG criteria (Environment, Climate Change, Health Safety & Wellbeing, Economy, Equality & Accessibility) and also informed by key findings from the relevant Statutory Impacts Assessments. At this stage the assessment of the options was largely qualitative and, as part of the appraisal options, was aligned with the second National Transport Strategy, in particular the sustainable travel hierarchy and the sustainable investment hierarchy.

As mentioned in the Background section the Scottish Government's current plan is to fully dual the A96 route between Inverness and Aberdeen. It was therefore considered appropriate that it progressed to the Detailed Appraisal stage as it has already been the subject of the appraisal undertaken in 2014 that established the Inverness to Aberdeen Corridor Study A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen Strategic Business Case. This option was therefore not considered as part of Preliminary Appraisal.

Early in the Preliminary Appraisal process it was identified that the Active Hubs option would clearly align with and sit within STPR2 Recommendation 22 (Framework for Delivery of Mobility Hubs). It was determined that STPR2 would be the most appropriate mechanism by which to progress this option at a national level. As such, the appraisal of Active Hubs was not completed within the A96 Corridor Review.

On completion of the Preliminary Options Appraisal stage, a further option, Improved Parking Provision at Railway Stations, did not progress to the next stage of appraisal. More information about this process, and the options which were retained, are in the Strategic Business Case – Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).



Based on the outcomes of the Preliminary Appraisal 13 options were retained to progress to the Detailed Appraisal stage along with the A96 Full Dualling option.

⊕ Active Travel

Option	Option Description	Estimated Cost Range
Active Communities	Deliver networks of high quality active travel routes and placemaking improvements within key communities along the A96 corridor such as Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Fochabers, Keith, Huntly and Inverurie.	£51m-100m
Active Connections	Deliver high quality active travel linkages for people walking, wheeling and cycling between settlements along the A96 corridor, which would combine to form a continuous traffic-free path all the way from Inverness to Aberdeen, either directly adjacent to, or close to, the A96.	£51m-100m

⊕ Public Transport

Option	Option Description	Estimated Cost Range
Bus Priority Measures and Park and Ride	Implement schemes targeted at delivering faster and more reliable journey times for bus passengers, coupled with the provision of new bus park and ride sites where appropriate.	£51m-100m
Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities	Improve public transport passenger facilities, including accessibility and quality enhancements at bus stations and railway stations.	<£25m
Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and MaaS	Improve access to travel opportunities in locations with low bus network connectivity or where conventional fixed route services may not be suitable or viable. In these areas, flexible services, such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) or Community Transport (CT), may be able to provide improved public transport links.	<£25m

⊕ Rail

Option	Option Description	Estimated Cost Range
Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements	Three distinct improvements to the railway between Aberdeen and Inverness; linespeed improvements to cut journey times, the provision of passing loops to enable a more frequent passenger service, and the provision of freight facilities to enable intermodal freight to operate.	£101m-£250m
Introduce Rail Freight Terminals	Facilitate the introduction, development and operation of rail freight terminals by the private sector at Inverness, Elgin and Keith, to facilitate freight movements to/from these locations by rail.	£25m-100m

⊕ Road

Option	Option Description	Estimated Cost Range
Targeted Road Safety Improvements	Improving the safety performance of the A96 Trunk Road to address both real and perceived road safety concerns (with potential measures ranging from minor improvements through to partial dualling).	£101m-£250m
Elgin Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 within the vicinity of Elgin through the provision of a bypass of the town.	£101m-£250m
Keith Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 within the vicinity of Keith through the provision of a bypass of the town.	£101m-£250m
Inverurie Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 within the vicinity of Inverurie through the provision of a bypass of the town.	£101m-£250m
Forres Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 in Forres through the provision of a bypass within the vicinity of the town	£101m-£250m

⊕ Technology

Option	Option Description	Estimated Cost Range
A96 Electric Corridor	Provision of alternative refuelling infrastructure and facilities along the A96 corridor, its interfacing local roads as well as, where appropriate, strategic economic and transport hubs. This option will directly facilitate the dispensation of alternative sources of fuel for various modes of sustainable transport although it is recognised that the option is likely to focus on road vehicles.	£51m-100m

STAG Detailed Options Appraisal

The 13 options assessed at the Preliminary Appraisal stage were brought forward to the Detailed Appraisal. In recognition that several of the options were complimentary and would therefore provide a greater net benefit if delivered as a ‘package’ rather than standalone options, five multi-modal packages were developed and assessed. The packages were developed using an ‘area based’ approach to suit the varying needs of local communities and businesses along the transport corridor, and ensured no areas were unduly prioritised over others. As the current plan, the option for A96 Full Dualling has also been assessed in the Detailed Appraisal.

Throughout the appraisal the options and packages were assessed against the following two travel demand scenarios representing different future transport behaviours.

The ‘With Policy’ Scenario considers a future demand that captures policy ambitions including a 20% reduction (from 2019 levels) in car kilometres travelled by 2030, and assumes significantly reduced levels of commuting/business journeys to reflect post COVID-19 working behaviours, leading to lower levels of motorised traffic demand and emissions.

The ‘Without Policy’ Scenario considers a future demand in which no policy ambitions are captured, with less significant reductions to levels of commuting/business journeys, leading to higher levels of motorised traffic demand and emissions.

Please note that for presentation purposes, the graphics presented in the **Transport Appraisal** and **Summary of Outcomes** sections only consider the outcomes of the Detailed Options Appraisal against the ‘With Policy’ Scenario. For full details on the ‘With Policy’ and ‘Without Policy’ scenarios and scoring, please refer to the Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).

Active Communities

Active Connections

Bus Priority Measures and Park and Ride

Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities

Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and MaaS

Introduce Rail Freight Terminals

Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements

Targeted Road Safety Improvements

Elgin Bypass

Keith Bypass

Inverurie Bypass

Forres Bypass

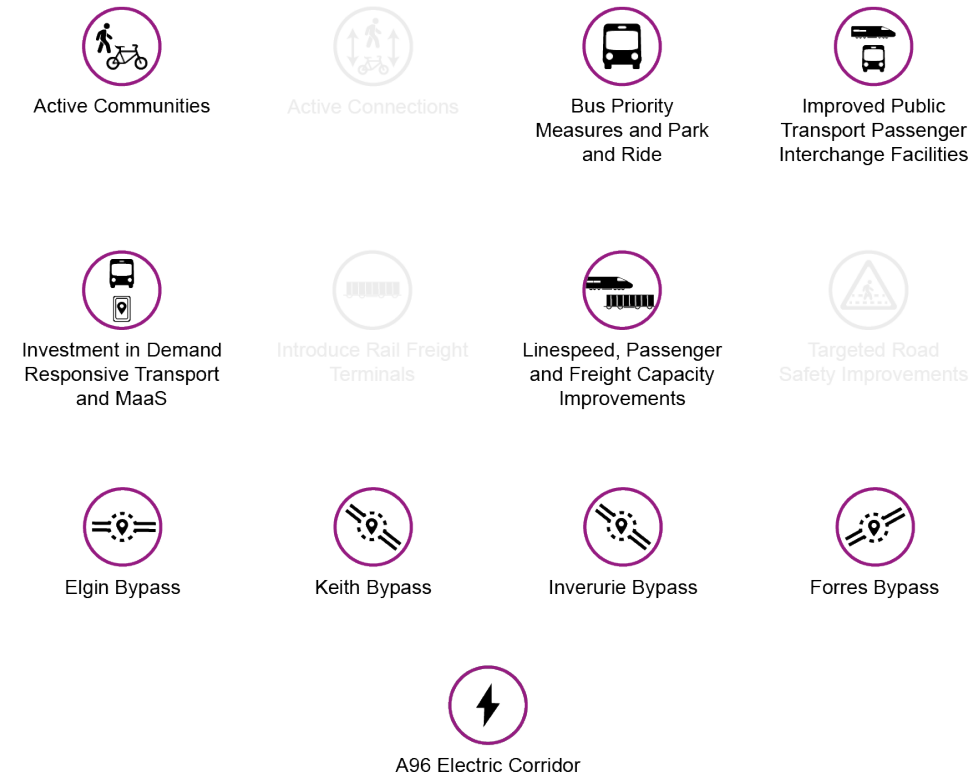
A96 Electric Corridor

Details of the five packages developed at this stage are set out below:

Package 1

Package 1 covers those towns along the A96 that include an option for a bypass, namely Forres, Elgin, Keith, Inverurie and Nairn. This package also focuses on delivering networks of high-quality active travel routes and placemaking improvements within the bypassed settlements, public transport interventions to deliver faster and more reliable journey times and improve the passenger experience, as well as the provision of alternative refuelling infrastructure and facilities throughout the corridor. It should be noted that the bypass of Nairn is being developed as part of a separate project, the A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass), and this review only considers interventions within Nairn itself.

Package 1



Package 2

Package 2 covers other settlements along the A96 where a bypass is not considered, including Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch, Fochabers, Huntly, Kintore and Blackburn. This package focuses on delivering networks of high-quality active travel routes and placemaking improvements, public transport interventions to deliver faster and more reliable journey times, targeted road safety improvements and alternative refuelling infrastructure and facilities throughout the corridor.

Package 2

Active Communities

Active Connections

Bus Priority Measures and Park and Ride

Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities

Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and MaaS

Introduce Rail Freight Terminals

Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements

Targeted Road Safety Improvements

Elgin Bypass

Keith Bypass

Inverurie Bypass

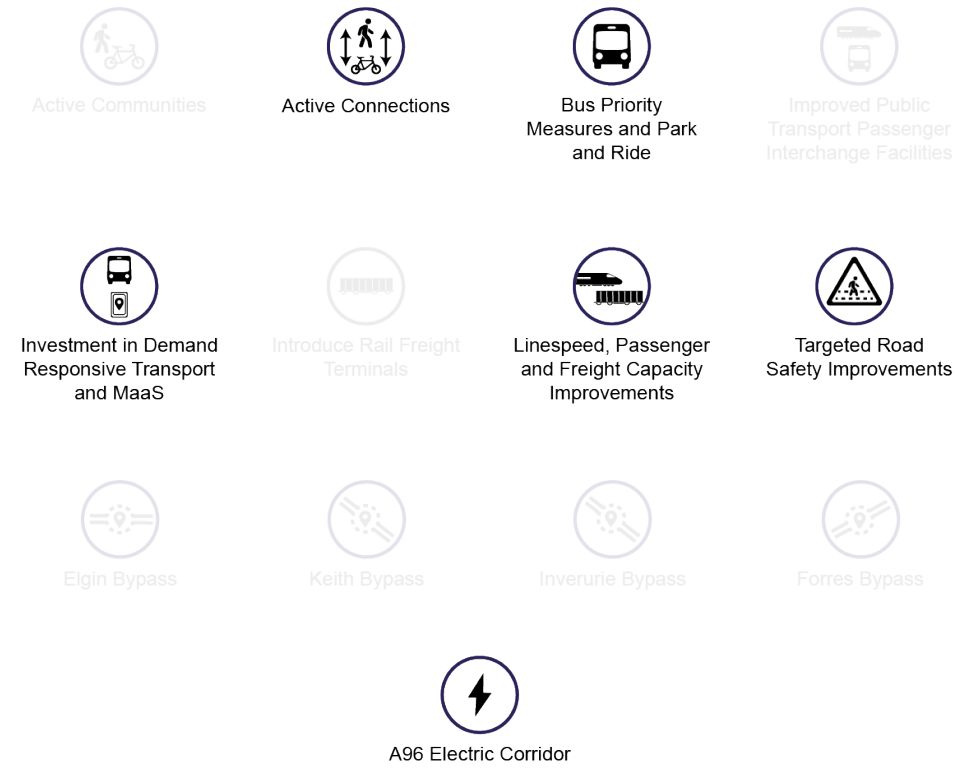
Forres Bypass

A96 Electric Corridor

Package 3

Package 3 covers the more rural sections of the transport corridor between settlements. This focuses on targeted road safety improvements, public transport interventions targeted at faster and more reliable journey times, high-quality active travel routes between settlements and the provision of alternative refuelling infrastructure and facilities throughout the corridor.

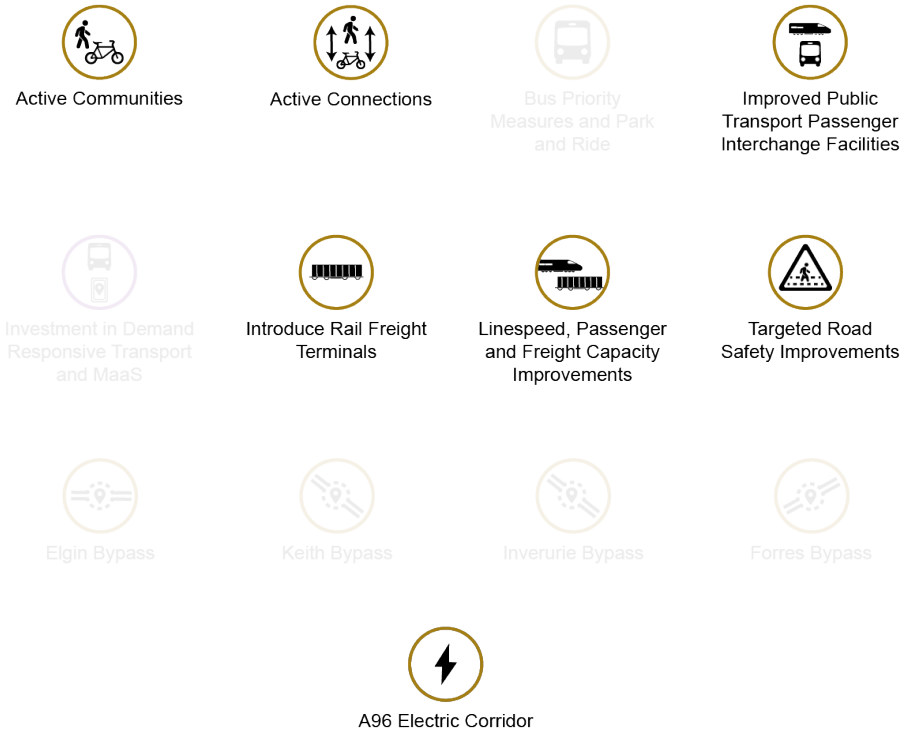
Package 3



Package 4

Package 4 covers longer distance components that may not be fully captured in the above three packages, including end-to-end movements.

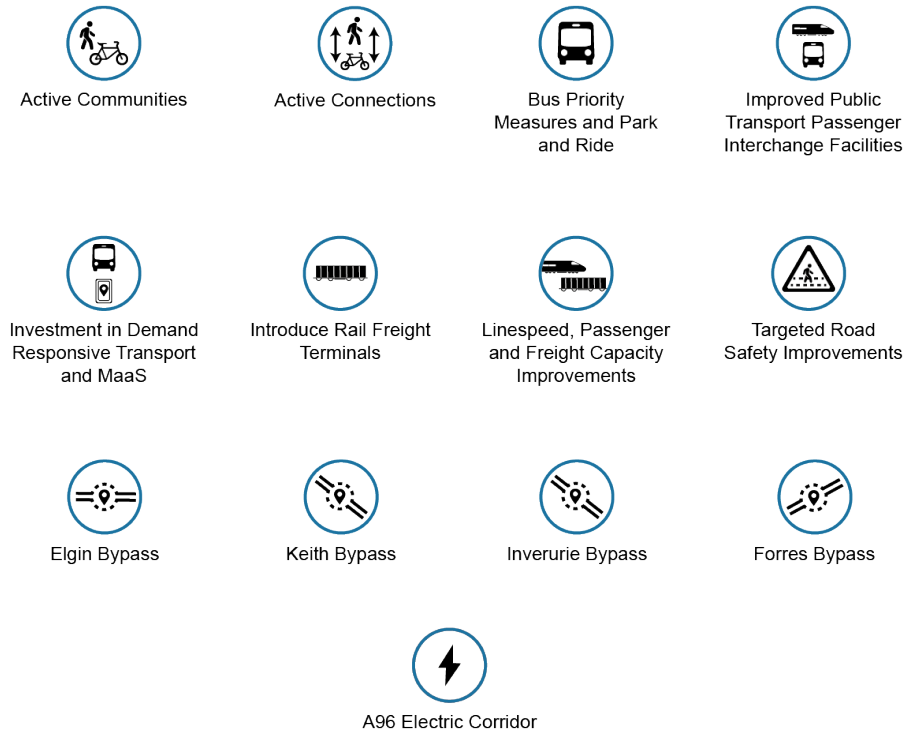
Package 4



Package 5

Package 5 comprises all the individual options brought forward from the Preliminary Appraisal.

Package 5



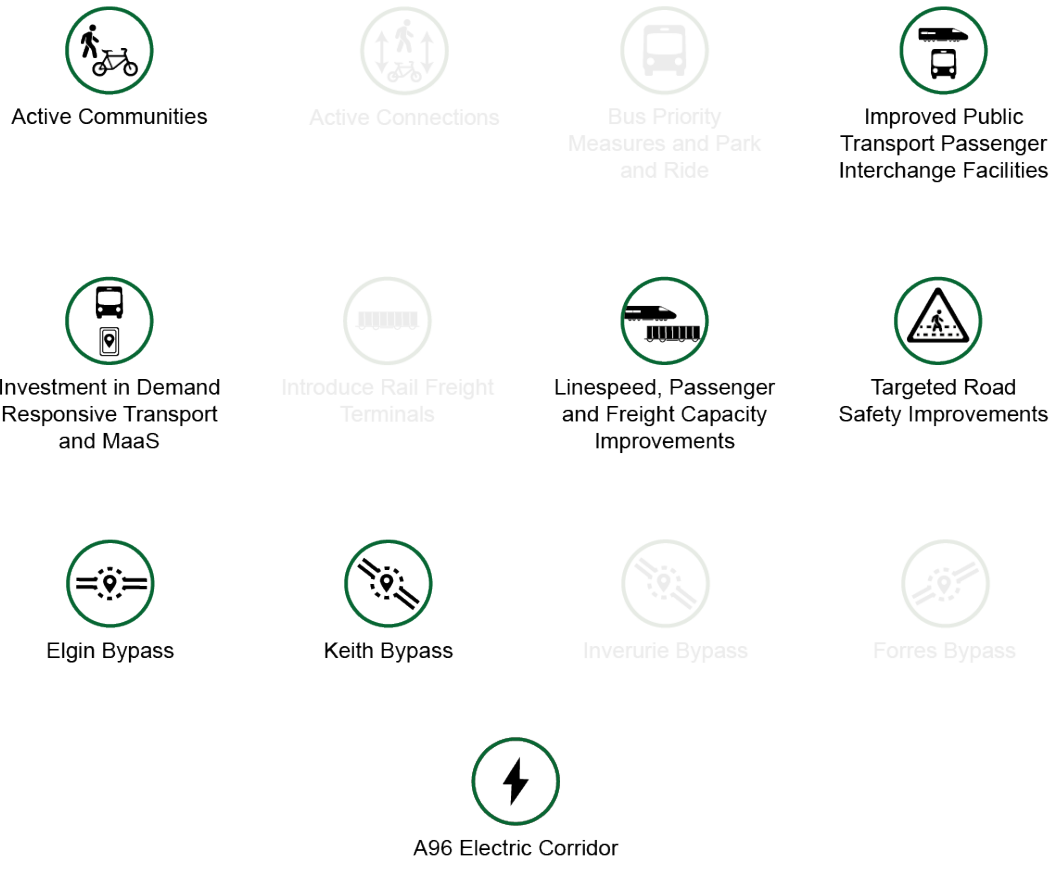
Refined Package

As the Detailed Appraisal progressed and the performance of the various options in each of the packages were explored, it was acknowledged that combining the best performing options from Packages 1 to 5 would provide the greatest contribution for both local communities and the wider corridor. An additional package, referred to as the 'Refined Package', was therefore created.

Refined Package aims to maximise the level of potential benefits in terms of contributions to the TPOs, STAG criteria and Statutory Impact Assessments, whilst optimising investment within the corridor and delivering the best value for money.

Further information on the options contained in Packages 1 to 5 and details of the options that are included within the Refined Package, as well as the rationale for those not included, are in the A96 Corridor Review Strategic Business Case – Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).

Refined Package



Full Dualling

Full Dualling of the A96, which was reaffirmed by the Scottish Government in 2021 as its current commitment, was also assessed as part of the Detailed Appraisal stage.

As with the packages, the option for Full Dualling was appraised to assess its performance against current appraisal criteria. For more information see the **Transport Appraisal** and **Environmental Appraisal** sections**.**

The full Strategic Business Case for the A96 dualling Inverness to Aberdeen is on the Transport Scotland website.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Environment is a key consideration of the A96 Corridor Review. Detailed assessments have been undertaken, where required, so that decision makers are able to consider all environmental impacts within the corridor. These detailed assessments have been undertaken as part of our Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Draft and its Non-Technical Summary (Draft).

SEA is a means of systematically assessing plans, programmes or strategies (PPS) that are likely to have significant environmental effects, if implemented. An SEA 'screening' exercise determined that the A96 Corridor Review could also potentially lead to significant environmental effects in the same way that PPS could.

Full Dualling and each of the packages were assessed against a series of SEA Objectives that covered a wide variety of environmental topics and associated sub-criteria. The SEA objectives were specifically developed to focus on the environmental conditions and issues most pertinent to the A96 Corridor Study Area. Digital mapping of all environmental constraints within the study area was used to inform the assessment.

The results of this matrix-based assessment showed that the Refined Package and Packages 2 and 4 are likely to have the lowest impact on the environment, with cumulative minor negative effects predicted. By comparison, Packages 1, 3 and 5 were assessed to lead to cumulative moderate negative effects and Full Dualling was assessed to potentially lead to major negative effects. A series of mitigation and enhancement measures were included in the SEA Main Report. Provisions for monitoring will be set out in an SEA Post Adoption Statement, which is the final stage of the SEA process.

Please read the SEA Main Report (Draft) for full details of the SEA process, findings and next steps.

Climate Compatibility Assessment

The A96 Climate Compatibility Assessment looks at how well the Detailed Appraisal packages align with climate change criteria.

A bespoke methodology and set of criteria were developed to undertake the assessment based on best practice and is informed by relevant national and local policy and strategy. The methodology includes a set of criteria under the two themes of climate change adaptation and resilience, and climate change mitigation. The assessment considered the extent to which:

- each package supported adaptation/resilience to the predicted impacts of climate change both within the package of measures itself and the surrounding environment
- packages were able to support decarbonisation efforts within the transport network and the associated construction sector
- the land use required for each package could have a positive contribution to carbon storage and sequestration

The methodology provides a narrative assessment that seeks to establish the alignment or otherwise of the proposals with the identified climate change criteria. As such, the narrative assessments do not provide a definitive ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to an option being compatible or aligned to the particular climate change criteria. The criteria assessments are not combined to provide a collective impact for a package. This is due to intricacies of the subject and because the assessment does not include consideration of wider economic or environmental impacts.

For more information about the climate impacts of the transport packages, please read the **Climate Compatibility Assessment Report (Draft).**

Statutory Impact Assessments and Partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment

Three assessments measuring the social and equality impacts of the transport options and packages were undertaken as part of the A96 Corridor Review. These were:

- Equality Impact Assessment (Draft Report)
- Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (Draft Report)
- Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (Draft Report)

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

As a public body, Transport Scotland has a legal responsibility when creating new plans and policies to pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) included within the Equality Act 2010. The PSED aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality and cohesion between different groups and advance equality of opportunity. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) report has been prepared to determine if the packages of transport interventions being considered might lead to any potential impacts on protected characteristic groups and helps demonstrate Transport Scotland's due regard to the PSED.

Each option was assigned a rating (ranging from major negative to major positive) to determine the likely impacts on protected characteristic groups through considering two criteria: magnitude of impacts and sensitivity of impacts. Overall, the EqIA concluded that there is likely to be a minor positive impact on protected characteristic groups contributing to improved accessibility of transport and key destinations along the corridor with implementation of Packages 2, 3, 4 or the Full Dualling option, and a moderate positive impact with implementation of Packages 1, 5 or the Refined package. However, there are a number of factors outside the scope of the A96 Corridor Review that could have an impact on protected characteristic groups with regards to the interventions. These include public transport fares, cost associated with bike ownership or hire, technological barriers to enhancing demand- responsive transport and ensuring the safety and accessibility of walking and cycling infrastructure.

The EqIA recommends that any individual transport interventions taken forward to enhance the A96 should undergo further detailed assessment, including engagement and consultation with protected characteristic groups to enhance the positive impacts and reduce any negative impacts.

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

As a public body, Transport Scotland has a legal duty when creating new plans and policies to pay due regard to children and young people, as per the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. A Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) Report (Draft) has been prepared to determine if the packages of transport intervention options being considered might lead to any potential impacts on children and young people and helps demonstrate Transport Scotland's due regard to Section 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act.

Each option was assigned a rating (ranging from major negative to major positive) to determine the likely impacts on children and young people through considering two criteria: magnitude of impacts and sensitivity of impacts. Overall, the CRWIA concluded that there is likely to be a minor positive impact on children and young people contributing to improved accessibility of transport and key destinations along the corridor with implementation of Packages 2, 3, 4 or the Full Dualling option, and a moderate

positive impact with implementation of Packages 1, 5 or the Refined Package. However, there are a number of factors outside the scope of the A96 Corridor Review that could have an impact on children and young people with regards to the interventions. These include public transport fares, cost associated with bike ownership or hire, technological barriers to enhancing demand responsive transport and ensuring the safety and accessibility of walking and cycling infrastructure.

The CRWIA recommends that any individual transport interventions taken forward to enhance the A96 should undergo further detailed assessment, including engagement and consultation with children and young people to enhance the positive impacts and reduce any negative impacts.

Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA)

As a public body, Transport Scotland has a legal responsibility when creating new plans and policies to pay due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty, set out in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010. A Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA) Report (Draft) has been prepared to determine if the packages of transport intervention

options being considered might lead to any potential impacts on socio-economically disadvantaged groups and help to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. It demonstrates Transport Scotland's due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Each option was assigned a rating (ranging from major negative to major positive) to determine the likely impacts on socio-economically disadvantaged groups through considering two criteria: magnitude of impacts and sensitivity of impacts. Overall, the FSDA concludes that there is likely to be a minor positive impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups with transport interventions contributing to reducing inequalities of outcome by increasing accessibility to a range of transport options and improving access to key destinations. However, there are a number of factors outside the scope of the A96 Corridor Review that could have an impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups. These include public transport fares, cost associated with bike ownership or hire, technological barriers to enhancing demand responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service and engaging social value or community benefit plans to promote opportunities within more deprived communities along the corridor.

The FSDA recommends that any individual transport interventions taken forward to enhance the A96 should undergo further detailed assessment, including engagement and consultation with socio-economically disadvantaged groups to enhance the positive impacts and reduce any negative impacts.

A summary of the assessment findings are covered in the **Summary of Outcomes** section, however please read the final reports for full details of the assessments.

In addition, a Partial Business Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) Report (Draft) that helps to assess the likely costs, benefits, and risks to the public, private or third sector has also been developed as part of the Review and can be viewed alongside the other published documents.

Partial Business Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA)

A Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) helps to assess the likely costs, benefits, and risks of any proposed primary or secondary legislation, voluntary regulation, codes of practice, guidance, or policy changes that may have an impact on the public, private or third sector (such as charities, community groups and other non-profit-making organisations). A BRIA Toolkit and Template have been developed by Scottish Government to provide guidance and information for completing a BRIA. This guidance encourages the preparation of a Partial BRIA to inform consultation with stakeholders. Due to the high-level nature of the A96 Corridor Review proposals at this stage, a Partial BRIA has been undertaken.

The Partial BRIA sets out the purpose, objective and rationale for the A96 Corridor Review, legislative context, a baseline summary of key business and economic issues and evidence, stakeholder engagement activities, a screening of potential impacts to businesses, consumers, and organisations in the public and third sector and high-level conclusions and considerations. The Partial

BRIA is to be used to consult more widely with stakeholders at this stage, with the expectation that more detailed work can be undertaken on any transport intervention options to be taken forward.

The six transport packages were evaluated collectively. Key interventions such as active travel, public transport, A96 Electric Corridor, rail freight terminals, and bypasses which aim to deliver network, safety, journey time, and reliability improvements were assessed. Full Dualling impacts were also reviewed as part of this assessment.

For businesses, interventions such as active travel and public transport could encourage a move away from car usage along the A96 for these short journeys, and therefore free -up the road for business vehicles, saving businesses time and money and increasing competitiveness. However, it is possible that some businesses could be disproportionately impacted by certain interventions. For example, the A96 Electric Corridor could cause a reduction in the need for consumers to purchase fuel for vehicles, impacting petrol stations. It must be noted however that with a shift to net zero expected in Scotland, it is likely that petrol-fuelled vehicles will be phased out by the government in coming years.

Furthermore, interventions such as rail freight improvements could enhance economic growth and private sector investment across Scotland. Businesses and enterprises that currently transport goods over medium to long distances via road could benefit from a shift to rail freight as a result of the line speed increases, additional passing loops and provision of freight terminals.

In addition, similar to potential impacts of the Full Dualling option, the transport packages could mean that the local authorities would assume responsibility for ownership of the road, consumers could experience an increase in the availability of goods, and trade could be improved.

In summary, it is recommended that the Partial BRIA, and the feedback from stakeholder and public consultation, be used to

inform the development of a full BRIA for transport options to be taken forward.

Note that an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) has not been undertaken due to the geographic location of the A96 corridor.

Appraisal of Packages 1 to 5

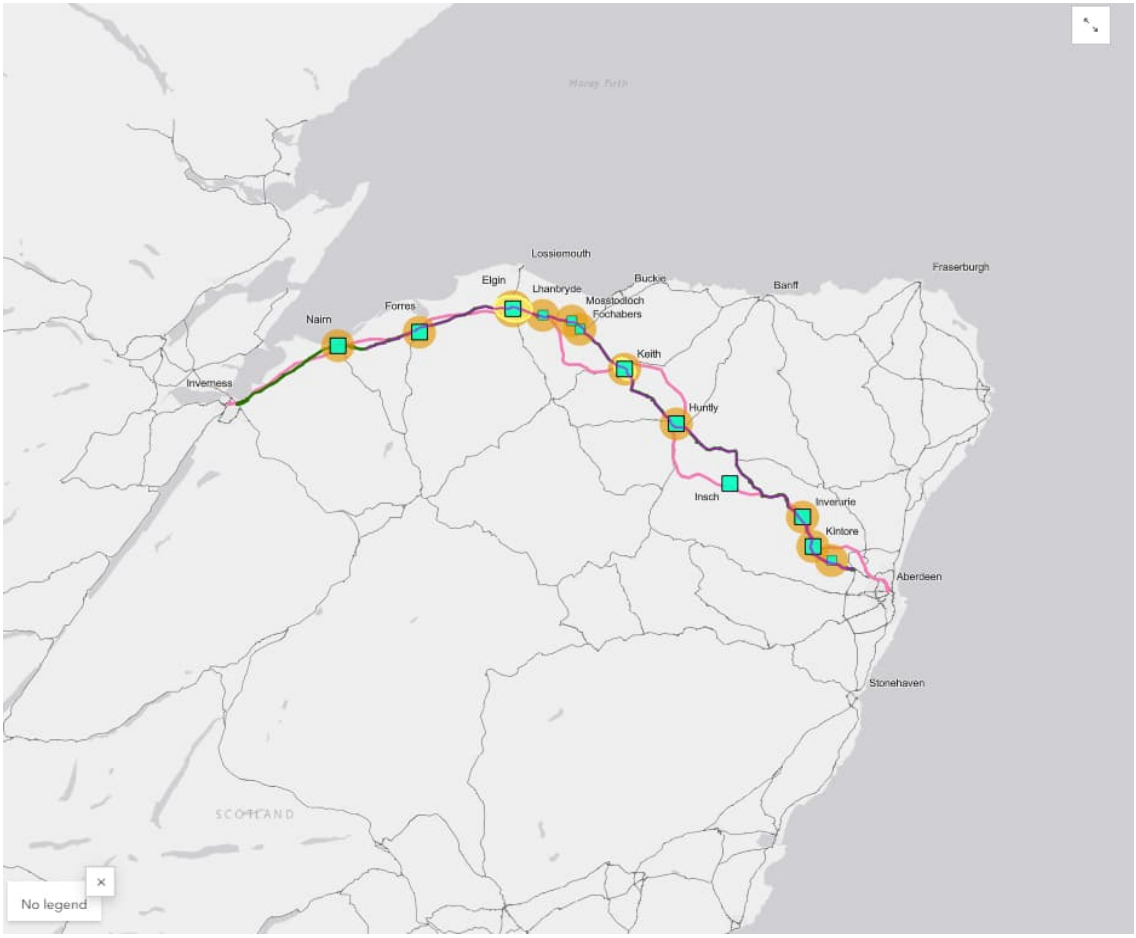
Packages 1 to 5 were created as part of the A96 Corridor Review process with the aim of addressing the identified problems and opportunities. Each package contains a range of interventions, with some overlap between packages.

The packages were assessed against the appraisal criteria, with varying levels of performance. Packages 1 and 5 performed well against the majority of the appraisal criteria, although both would have moderate negative impacts on the STAG Environment criterion and Package 5 would require a much higher capital cost. Packages 2 to 4 did not perform as well against the appraisal

criteria and would result in lower benefits as they cover areas with lower population sizes.

A detailed summary of Packages 1 to 5 can be viewed in the Strategic Business Case - Summary of Main Report (Draft).

To read more about the criteria used to assess the packages and Full Dualling, see the **How we did the review** section.



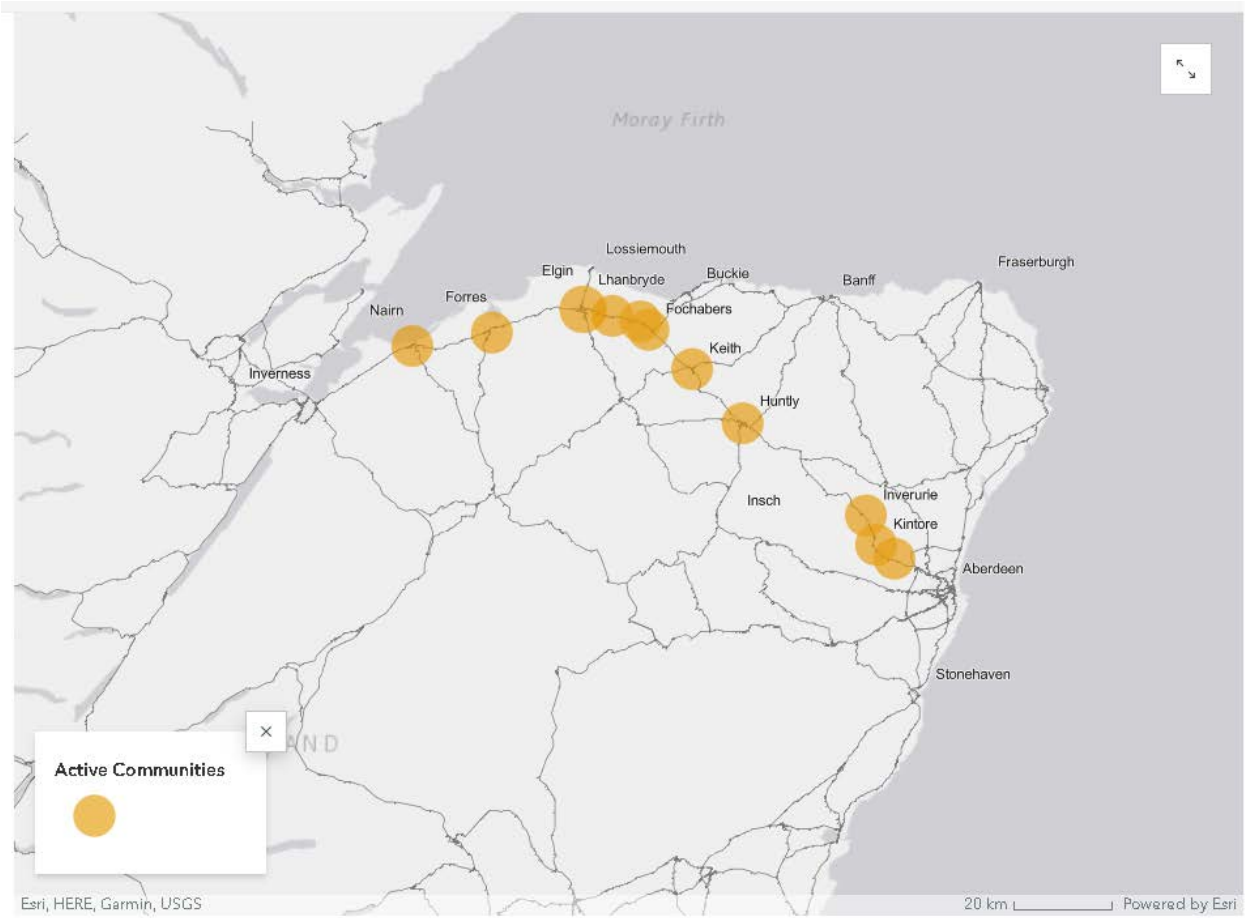
The Refined Package

The estimated cost range for the Refined Package is £501m – £1,000m.

The Refined Package looks to combine the best performing interventions from Packages 1 to 5, based on a consideration of the positive contribution each individual intervention would make and the estimated cost of the individual interventions.

The following interventions are included in the Refined Package:

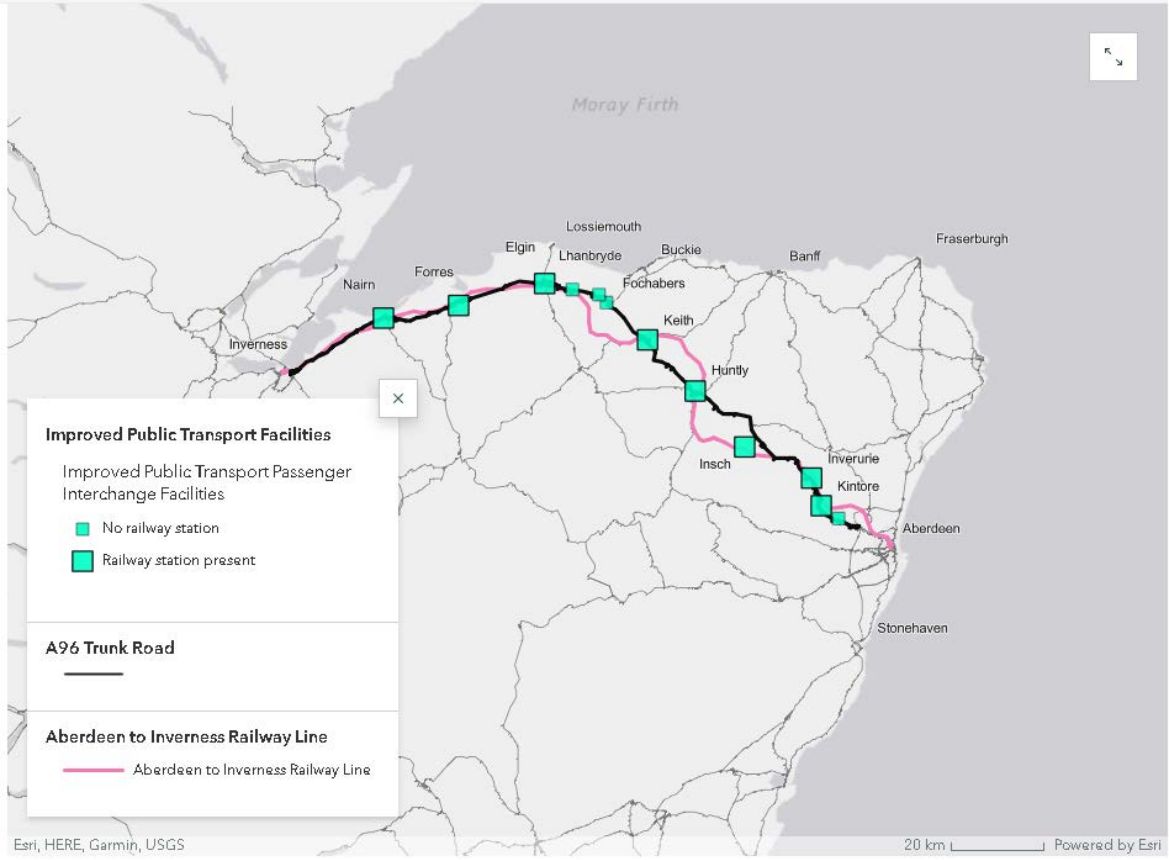
Active Communities



Delivery of networks of high-quality active travel routes and placemaking improvements within key communities along the A96 corridor such as Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch, Fochabers, Keith, Huntly, Inverurie, Kintore and Blackburn. These active travel interventions would:

- drive modal shift and reduce the need to travel unsustainably
- help reduce the number of short-distance car journeys
- improve air quality in town centres, contributing to Scotland's net zero emissions target
- contribute to place-making and 20-minute neighbourhoods
- deliver improvements to physical and mental wellbeing of those who adopt active travel modes
- potentially deliver economic benefits through increased cycling and walking tourism.

Improved Public Transport Interchanges



Improvements to public transport passenger facilities, including accessibility and quality enhancements at bus stations and railway stations. These are likely to include smaller scale interventions such as placemaking enhancements, improved wayfinding, enhancements to the waiting environment and / or improved accessibility, including lifts and step-free access. The option may also include the construction of new interchange facilities. These interventions would:

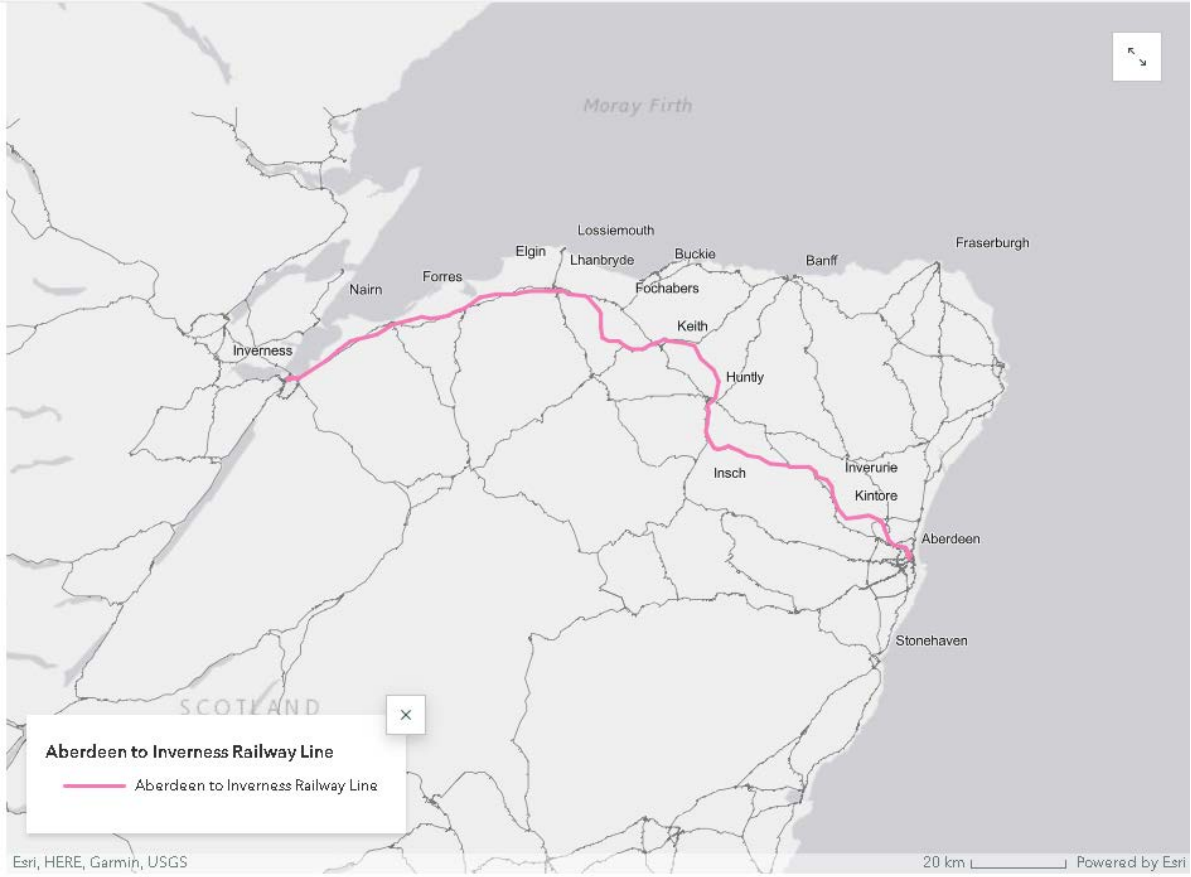
- deliver accessibility and inclusivity enhancements to the public transport network
- contribute towards Scottish net zero emissions targets by encouraging the use of public transport
- encourage modal shift away from car
- improve actual and perceived user safety and security
- promote interchange between sustainable travel modes.

Investment in DRT and MaaS

Improved access to flexible travel opportunities in locations with low bus network connectivity or where conventional fixed route services may not be suitable or viable, whilst improving digital transport services. New Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) would:

- improve travel accessibility and inclusivity by delivering more flexible transport options for those without access to a car or with limited transport options
- result in faster journeys and increased affordability for users due to improved integration of modes
- encourage modal shift away from car
- pilot a corridor-wide DRT and MaaS scheme, combining flexible services with a digital transport platform.

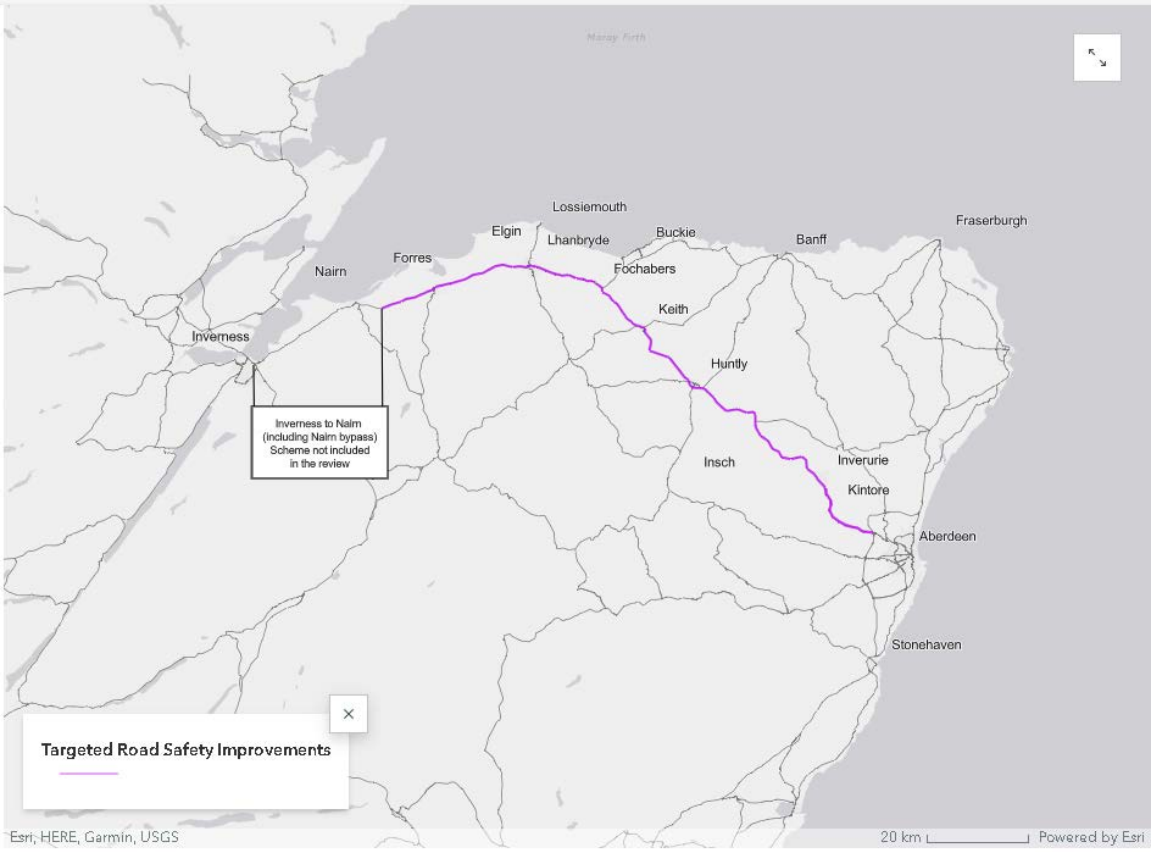
Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity



Improvements to the Aberdeen and Inverness rail line include three distinct interventions - linespeed improvements to reduce end-to-end journey times to two hours (currently approximately two hours and 25 minutes), the provision of passing loops to enable a more frequent passenger service and the provision of freight facilities to enable intermodal freight growth. These rail interventions would:

- deliver faster and more frequent journeys
- improve access to key settlements containing a rail station
- enhance reliability and network resilience
- improve connectivity between communities along the corridor
- contribute towards Scotland's net zero emissions targets by encouraging the use of public transport
- encourage modal shift away from car
- enhance freight capacity by introducing intermodal facilities.

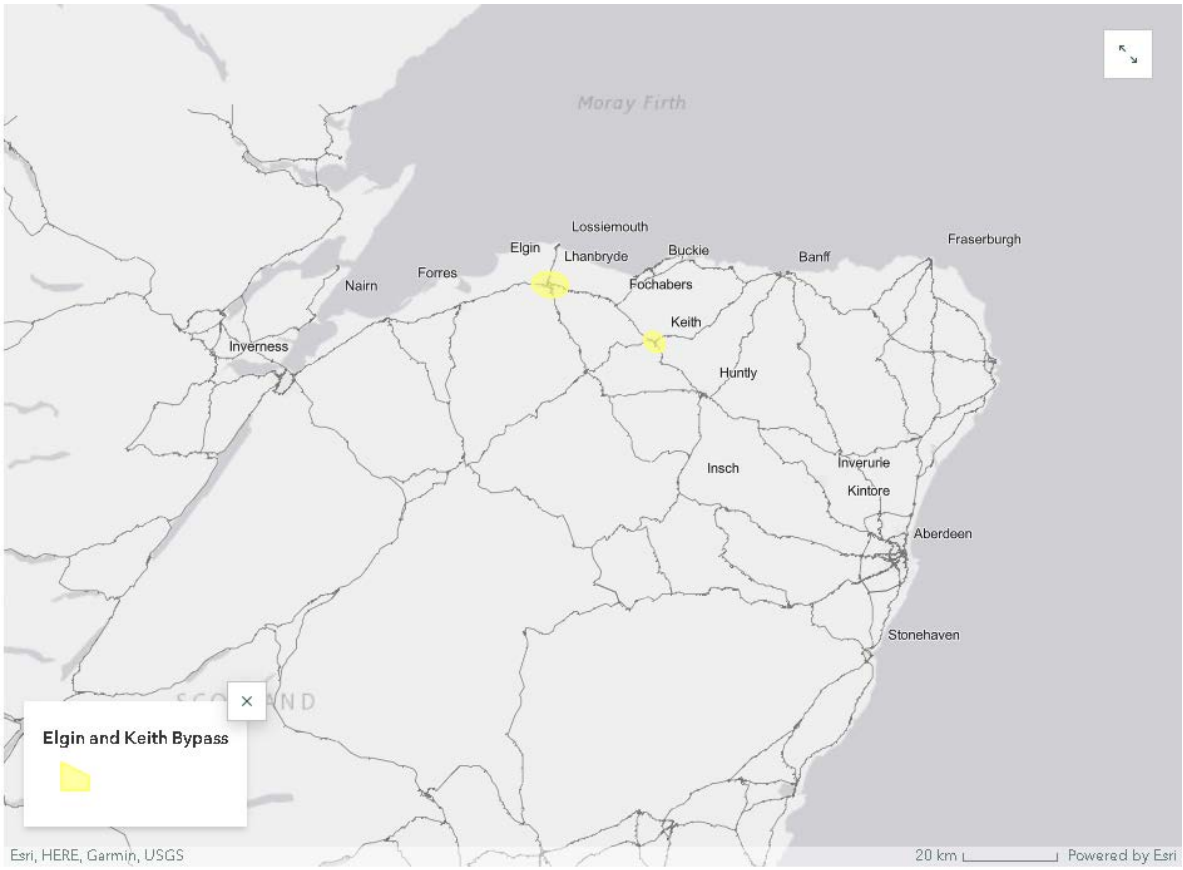
Targeted Road Safety Improvements



Improvements to the A96 Trunk Road to address both real and perceived road safety concerns. This could be achieved through the provision of improved overtaking opportunities, junction improvements and improvements to the alignment of the carriageway at targeted locations along the route. These safety interventions would:

- increase road safety through reduction of accidents and their severity
- improve resilience and reliability through reducing disruption should incidents occur
- deliver economic benefits due to improved reliability and less road closures.

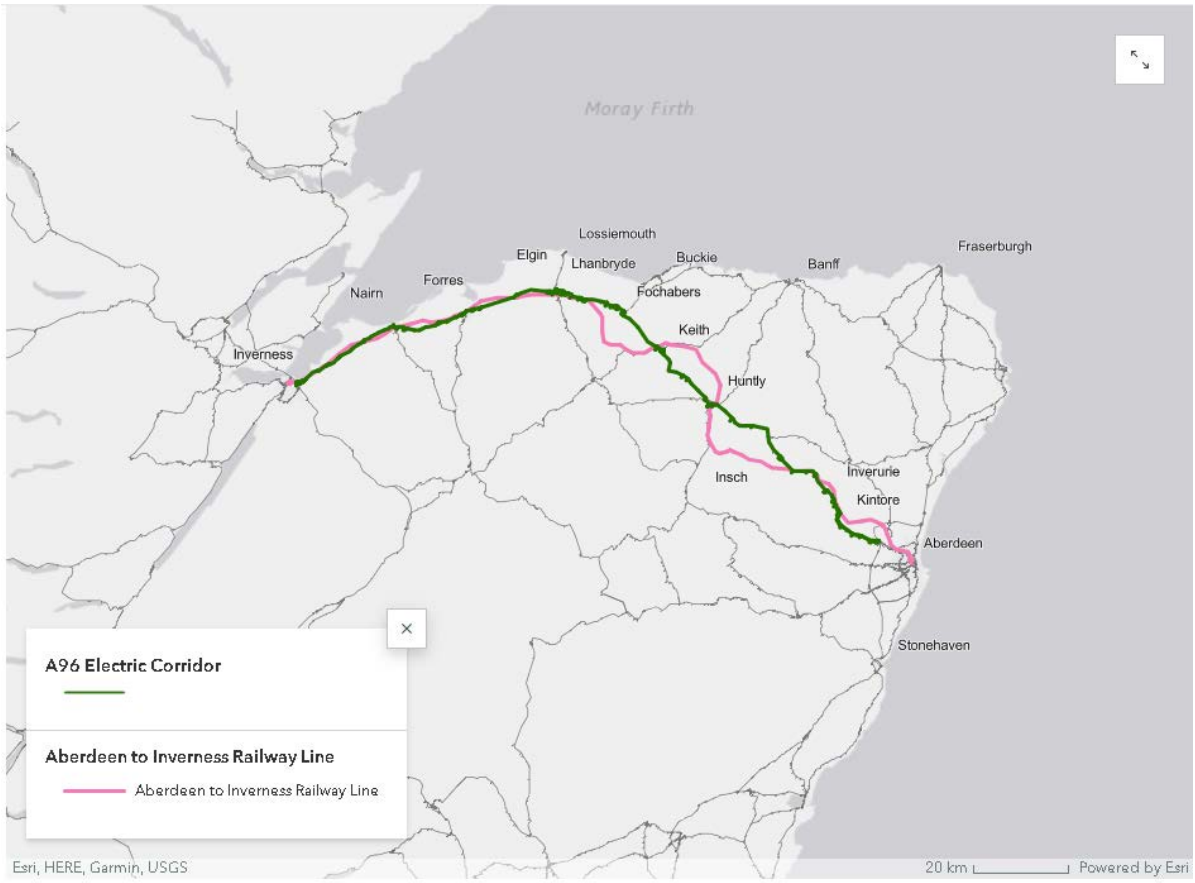
Elgin and Keith Bypasses



Provision of a bypass around the towns of Elgin and Keith. These bypasses would:

- improve safety, resilience and reliability of the A96
- improve air quality in the town centres
- support access to tourism and employment opportunities
- improve connectivity between towns
- deliver economic benefits for all car users through shorter journeys, reduced congestion and fewer delays
- address real and perceived severance within these communities by removing through trips
- potentially increase attractiveness of active travel and enhance placemaking by reducing through-traffic in town centres, thus facilitating the Active Communities intervention.

A96 Electric Corridor



Improve the provision of alternative refuelling infrastructure and facilities along the A96 corridor and its interfacing local roads. The Electric Corridor would:

- help support the decarbonisation of the transport sector

- improve resilience and standard of charging infrastructure along the route
- increase confidence in and uptake of zero-emission vehicles
- contribute towards Scotland’s net zero emissions targets
- improve air quality across the corridor.

Benefits

The Refined Package would deliver benefits for:

- active travel in communities
- those travelling by rail
- passengers who utilise public transport interchanges
- those living in rural areas through enhanced demand responsive travel
- road users through enhanced journey time reliability and improved road safety
- those wanting to travel more sustainably.

The Refined Package aims to maximise the level of potential benefits in terms of contribution to the TPOs, STAG criteria and impact assessments, whilst optimising investment within the corridor and delivering the best value for money. The interventions included within this package, aim to encourage a shift to sustainable modes of transport, increase connectivity for residents and businesses and improve road safety across the corridor.

A96 Full Dualling

The estimated cost to deliver A96 Full Dualling is £2,501m – £5,000m.

Full Dualling entails dualling the A96 from Hardmuir (east of Nairn) to Craibstone Roundabout (west of Aberdeen). The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, is not considered as part of Full Dualling as it already has Ministerial consent to provide a dual carriageway between Seafield Roundabout (east of Raigmore Interchange) and Hardmuir (east of Nairn).

Full Dualling would result in considerable benefits for road safety as well as benefits for the connectivity of the local communities within the corridor. However, there would be significant negative environmental effects in comparison with the Refined Package, such as the detrimental impact dualling would have on the physical environment and climate change and national targets for achieving net zero. The option would have economic benefits with the

majority arising from journey time improvements for road users, but at a significantly higher capital cost range estimate.

A summary and comparison of the performance of the Refined Package and Full Dualling is presented in the following sections. The TPOs, STAG criteria and SIAs have been grouped by theme for presentational purposes. These can be viewed by scrolling to the next slide using the arrow button to the right hand side of the screen.

To make the consultation as accessible as possible, the information presented is a summary of the key outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review. The full reports and summary reports are available on the Transport Scotland website and the Reports and Assessments section.

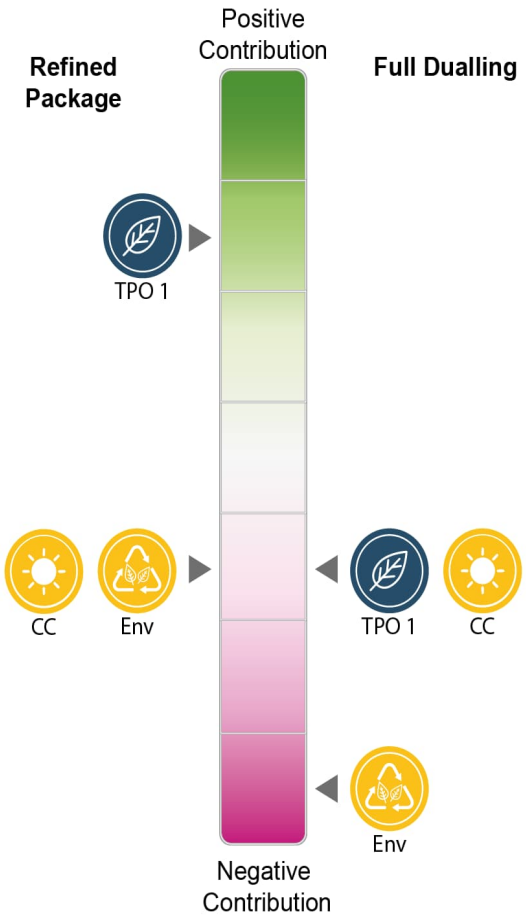
Climate Change and Environment

The Scottish Government has remained fully committed to its pledge to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with consideration given to this in the A96 Corridor Review and reflected in the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) and STAG criteria (Climate Change). Furthermore, the STAG Climate Change criterion also considers the importance of resilience to extreme weather conditions, which is further considered within TPO5.

It should be noted that a separate Climate Compatibility Assessment has been undertaken, independently from the transport appraisal. For full details, please read the Climate Compatibility Assessment Report (Draft).

Environmental considerations underpin the A96 Corridor Review, with a range of environmental impacts considered through the STAG Environment criterion.

The appraisal has identified that the Refined Package and Full Dualling would have the following **climate change** and **environmental** related impacts. It is worth noting that for large scale transport infrastructure projects such as this, a negative score under the Environment and Climate Change criteria of STAG is not unexpected.



Scoring represents the 'With Policy' Scenario only. For full details on the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios and scoring, please refer to the Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 1 - A sustainable strategic transport corridor that contributes to the Scottish Government's net zero emissions target

The Refined Package would have a moderate positive impact on this objective as it aims to encourage a shift towards sustainable modes of travel for both people and freight through improving sustainable travel provision. This package also encourages the adoption of low or zero emission vehicles by enhancing alternative refuelling facilities across the A96 corridor. However, the provision of bypasses would result in a marginal increase in vehicle kilometres travelled.

In contrast, Full Dualling would have a minor negative impact on this TPO as there is likely to be a more significant increase in the number of car journeys made and vehicle kilometres travelled once the scheme is in place, leading to a much more significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, dualling the A96 could make private vehicles more attractive, meaning users are less

likely to transfer to sustainable modes of travel. It is recognised that dualling the A96 would relieve congestion within the bypassed towns and that may encourage use of active modes. However, this and other benefits from the active travel provision that would be embedded in any dual carriageway route are unlikely to offset the significant negative impacts highlighted above.

STAG Environment

The Refined Package is likely to have a minor negative impact on the STAG Environment criterion. Construction of the interventions within the package, particularly the bypasses of Elgin and Keith and the rail intervention, would negatively affect natural resources, biodiversity, the water environment, geology and soils, cultural heritage and landscape. However, positive impacts are anticipated for noise and air quality in the bypassed settlements where there is a reduction in traffic volumes through Elgin and Keith.

The negative impact of A96 Full Dualling on the environment is anticipated to be much greater. A96 Full Dualling would have a major negative impact on the environment due to the much greater scale of construction that would adversely affect the natural environment, including biodiversity and habitats, geology and soils, landscape and potentially historic environment. These impacts would outweigh any benefits arising as a result of the removal of through traffic by bypassing communities along the route.

STAG Climate Change

While the Refined Package would have a positive impact on TPO1, the STAG Climate Change criteria focuses on greenhouse gases, vulnerability to the effects of climate change and the potential for climate change adaption only. The Refined Package would have a minor negative impact on this criterion as greenhouse gases are anticipated to increase slightly due to construction, largely associated with the Elgin and Keith bypasses and the rail improvements intervention, and the improvements to the road

network leading to increased vehicle kilometres travelled when in operation. The improved resilience to the effects of climate change, particularly for identified flood risk areas and other potential climate risks, would not be sufficient to fully offset these negative impacts.

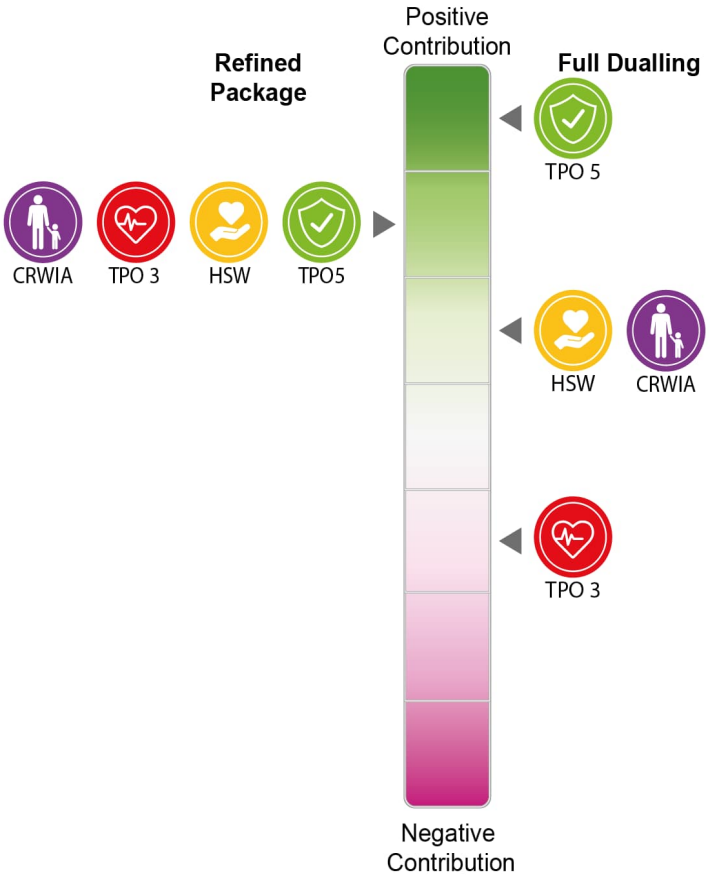
Full Dualling would have a minor negative impact on this criterion as a result of embodied carbon from construction and through the increase in vehicle kilometres travelled during its' operation. This would result in a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions. This negative impact would be of a magnitude greater than the expected resilience improvements to the effects of climate change, particularly for identified flood risk areas and other potential climate risks.

It is worth noting that both the Refined Package and Full Dualling have a minor negative impact on climate change criterion due to the potential for increased vehicle kilometres travelled and embodied carbon from construction of the new infrastructure. However, as the Refined Package proposes a smaller scale of new infrastructure and is anticipated to result in a smaller increase in vehicle kilometres travelled, it has less negative impact overall on this theme than Full Dualling.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The prioritisation of health, safety and wellbeing for those who live in close proximity to and use the A96 Trunk Road has been embedded in the Corridor Review. Consideration has been given to this within the Transport Planning Objectives (TPO3 and TPO5), STAG criteria (Health Safety and Wellbeing), and Statutory Impact Assessments (Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (Draft)).

The appraisal has identified that the Refined Package and Full Dualling would have the following **health, safety and wellbeing** related impacts.



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Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 3 - A coherent strategic transport corridor that enhances communities as places, supporting health, wellbeing and the environment

The Refined Package would have a moderate positive impact on this objective. The inclusion of bypasses at Keith and Elgin would remove through traffic from these towns, providing opportunities to

enhance the local environment and deliver an improved sense of place. This package also supports health and wellbeing outcomes through the provision of interventions to increase the number of active travel users in towns along the route and enhance the local communities, supporting health, wellbeing and the environment. Improvements to public transport interchange facilities and the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line, coupled with investment in DRT and MaaS would contribute to reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing through enhanced access to healthcare services. These positive improvements are expected to outweigh any negative impacts on the natural environment due to construction of the interventions as part of the Refined Package with regards to this TPO.

Full Dualling is likely to have a minor negative impact on this TPO. The provision of a dual carriageway would bypass the settlements on the existing A96 Trunk Road, providing opportunities to enhance the local environment, reduce severance and would have the potential to increase active travel within the bypassed town centres where traffic would be reduced. The active travel route embedded in the design of any dual carriageway route is anticipated to have minor benefits on improving health outcomes from increased physical activity. However, any positive effects are unlikely to offset the potentially significant negative impacts that construction of the dual carriageway would have on the natural environment and heritage as a result of the scale of the infrastructure required.

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 5 - A reliable and resilient transport system that is safe for users

The Refined Package would have a moderate positive impact on this objective. The provision of the Elgin and Keith bypasses should reduce the number and severity of road traffic accidents on the sections of the existing A96 Trunk Road which route through the towns. Furthermore, targeted road safety improvements would help reduce the number and severity of accidents where there is an identified risk, helping to address real and perceived safety concerns along the existing A96 and aiming to reduce accident and

severity rates in line with national reduction targets. Bypasses and any increased capacity as part of a targeted road safety improvement would also provide enhanced resilience against potential road closures, while the rail improvements as part of the Refined Package would increase the resilience of the rail network.

Full Dualling would likely result in major positive impacts on this TPO. The dual carriageway is likely to have greater benefits in reducing the number and severity of road traffic accidents and this would affect the whole transport corridor. The new dual carriageway would also provide enhanced resilience across the A96 corridor in the event of a closure due to incidents, including accidents, climate change events and maintenance activities.

STAG Health, Safety and Wellbeing criteria

Overall, the Refined Package is expected to have a moderate positive impact on health, safety and wellbeing. It would help deliver positive health outcomes by encouraging more people to use active travel and increasing levels of physical activity. The appraisal shows that increased physical activity would help reduce the number of premature deaths within the A96 corridor area. Accessibility to health and wellbeing facilities would be enhanced, including for those without access or unable to use a car through improvements for active modes and public transport. With regards to safety, the Refined Package would reduce the number and severity of road traffic accidents through targeted interventions and by removing vehicle trips from the centre of Elgin and Keith through the provision of bypasses. However interventions that involve larger scale construction or new infrastructure as part of the package, such as the bypasses, could impact on visual amenity.

Overall, Full Dualling is anticipated to have a minor positive impact on health, safety and wellbeing. It would improve the safety of the trunk road network, having a greater reduction in accident rates and severity than the Refined Package, as well as decreasing driver frustration by providing consistent overtaking opportunities. It would also improve access to health and wellbeing facilities across

the wider corridor, though most benefits would be felt by those with access to a car. Reducing congestion in towns through the removal of through traffic may allow for some improved health outcomes but this would not be as significant as the Refined Package that includes the active communities intervention with the settlements along the corridor. The negative impact of Full Dualling on visual amenity would also be more significant due to the scale of construction through what is likely to be rural areas.

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

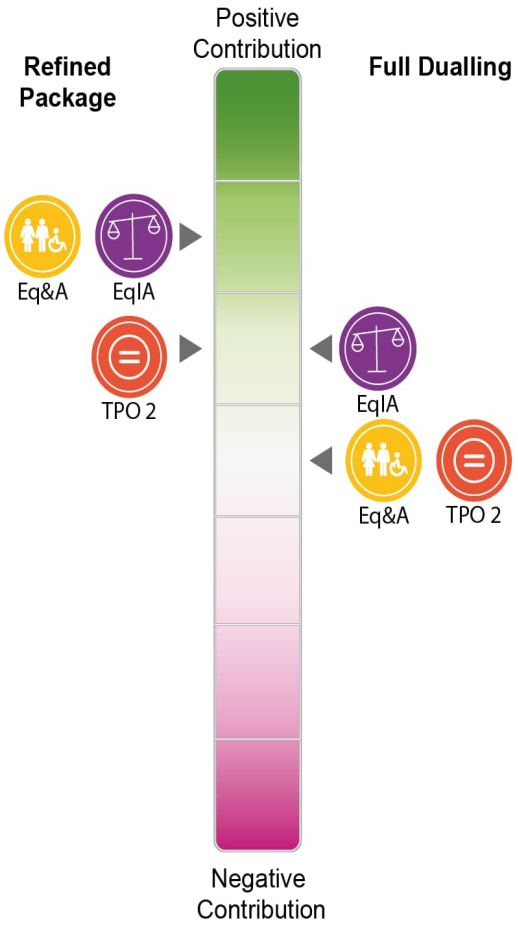
Overall, the Refined Package is expected to have a moderate positive impact on the CRWIA. Public transport improvements would improve the connectivity to leisure facilities, as well as higher and further education for children and younger people in the study area. The Elgin and Keith bypasses would reduce traffic related noise pollution in these communities, and in conjunction with the active travel improvements in communities along the corridor, would provide local air quality improvements, benefitting children as they are more vulnerable to the adverse health effects of greenhouse gas emissions and traffic noise. However, bypasses could result in adverse health outcomes for some children who live close to any bypass route, including noise, vibration and air quality impacts both during construction and when operational.

Overall, Full Dualling is anticipated to have a minor positive impact on the CRWIA. A96 Full Dualling would also improve access to education for children and young people, though this would predominantly benefit those with access to a car. The dual carriageway would reduce traffic volumes within communities through the removal of through trips, resulting in local air quality improvements and noise reductions. This would be of particular benefit for children living close to the existing A96 as they are more vulnerable to the adverse health effects of greenhouse gas emissions and traffic noise. However, the provision of a dual carriageway could potentially result in adverse health outcomes for children who would live close to any dual carriageway route, including noise, vibration and air quality impacts both during construction and when operational.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

With the comparatively low level of public transport service accessibility in relation to the rest of Scotland identified in the corridor, this led to the incorporation of inclusion and accessibility within the Transport Planning Objectives (TPO2). Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria also includes Equality and Accessibility, and one of the four Statutory Impact Assessments also relates to this topic (the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Draft)).

The appraisal has identified that the Refined Package and Full Dualling would have the following impacts on **accessibility and inclusivity**.



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Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 2: An inclusive strategic transport corridor that improves the accessibility of public transport in rural areas for access to healthcare, employment and education

The Refined Package would have a minor positive impact on this objective. Public transport improvements including to the linespeed and capacity on the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line would provide enhanced accessibility to key services throughout the corridor. The provision of improved interchange facilities for public transport users and active travel interventions within communities could encourage more people to walk, wheel and cycle to connect with public transport services, providing better travel options for those without access to a car. Furthermore, the inclusion of DRT and MaaS would enhance access by providing more flexible public transport services that are not fixed to a specific route, allowing services to reach those who need them.

Overall, Full Dualling has a neutral impact on this objective. While it may help public transport journey time reliability for longer distance trips, it is not expected to have a direct impact on the pubic transport network, service frequency and coverage, nor would it have a significant impact on the accessibility of public transport in the corridor. Full Dualling would reduce traffic volumes within towns which could reduce congestion that could subsequently have a slight impact in improving public transport journey times. However, it does not include direct interventions to the active travel network within communities or public transport interchange services, thus any benefits associated with encouraging more people to walk, wheel and cycle when connecting with public transport services are anticipated to be more limited.

STAG Equality and Accessibility

The Refined Package is expected to have a moderate positive impact on equality and accessibility. It would improve access to key services by public transport, including from more rural areas, and would help improve air quality which would benefit public health, especially for vulnerable groups in bypassed communities. It would also improve the active travel network in communities along the corridor, reducing road and personal safety concerns for active travel users, including children and women.

Overall, Full Dualling is expected to have a neutral impact on equality and accessibility within the corridor. The majority of benefits would be experienced by those with access to a car and it is considered unlikely this option would have a significant impact on public transport accessibility from rural areas to key services throughout the corridor. However, dualling would reduce traffic in towns which could enable placemaking to encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

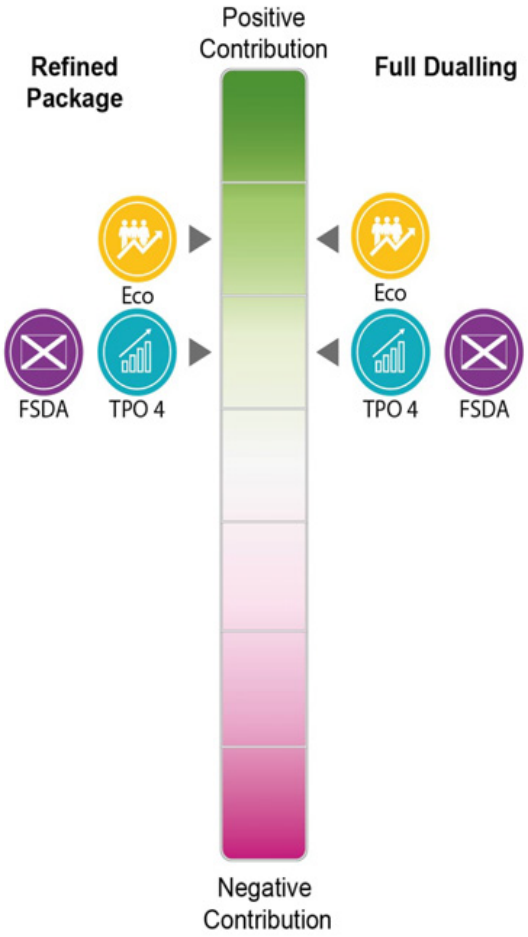
The Refined Package would have a moderate positive impact on the EqIA. Benefits include reduced traffic in bypassed communities and improved active travel provision within communities throughout the corridor that would improve safety for users. Encouraging a shift to using active modes would improve air quality along with physical and mental wellbeing. Access to essential services would be improved through interventions that improve active travel within communities and public transport services and facilities to benefit those experiencing transport poverty. Investment in DRT and MaaS would also benefit those unable to access existing public transport services, including vulnerable users. However, where bypasses are constructed there may be some localised negative impacts relating to noise, vibration, air quality and severance.

Overall, Full Dualling is expected to have a minor positive impact on the EqIA. It would improve safety and enhance access to essential services, although this would predominantly be for those with access to a car. It would also benefit vulnerable groups in towns bypassed by the dual carriageway due to the reduction in through traffic, that would improve local air quality. However, as this option does not include the provision for active travel enhancements within the bypassed towns, the benefits to vulnerable groups are more limited. It would also have negative impacts through increased noise, vibration, severance and air quality during construction and in operation, with the level of impact dependent on the route any dual carriageway may take.

Economy

An important requirement for any investment decision is the impact on the local and national economy, with a requirement to achieve sustainable growth. Consideration is given to this within the Transport Planning Objectives (TPO4), STAG criteria (Economy) and one of four Statutory Impact Assessments (Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (Draft)) included within the A96 Corridor Review.

The appraisal has identified that the Refined Package and Full Dualling would have the following **economy** related impacts.



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Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 4: An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth throughout the corridor and beyond

The Refined Package would have a minor positive impact on this objective. The appraisal shows a minor reduction in journey times for both business vehicles and general traffic due to the inclusion of bypasses at Elgin and Keith, helping create better access to employment and economic centres. The bypasses along with

targeted road safety improvements to reduce the number of accidents would also improve the reliability of road based freight trips. A reduction in through traffic within towns can also improve the local environment where high street businesses operate. Furthermore, the proposed improvements to public transport services, particularly to reduce rail journey times, would improve sustainable access to labour markets and key centres of employment, education and training, particularly for those without access to a car. Improved freight capacity on the rail line may also have benefits in encouraging more goods to be moved by rail instead of HGVs.

Full Dualling would also have a minor positive impact on this TPO. Several key business sectors along the A96 corridor rely on the existing A96 trunk road to transport goods, including food and drink production and agriculture, forestry and fishing. As transporters of perishable goods, these industries would likely benefit from the larger journey time improvements and increased journey time reliability associated with dualling. Benefits would also be felt across wider supply chains due to more reliable journey times, improving travel confidence across the freight sector. However, this option is more limited in terms of promoting sustainable access to labour markets and key centres of employment, education and training, and would not encourage a shift to sustainable modes of transport for freight.

STAG Economy

The Refined Package is expected to have a moderate positive impact on the economy criterion, with the main benefits derived from sustainable transport modes including rail journey time savings and health benefits from the improvements to active travel. The package would improve the resilience and reliability of the rail network, encouraging a shift from road to rail for both passengers and freight, and would aim to attract further cycling and walking tourism to the area. The active travel improvements within towns are also anticipated to have health benefits for local residents that would reduce the economic impact associated with premature

deaths. Other economic benefits result from journey time savings as a result of the bypasses at Elgin and Keith reducing congestion, delays and disruption on the road network. These factors may increase confidence in the trunk road network and encourage economic growth in the area. Furthermore, the Refined Package is anticipated to improve the economic performance of local retail centres. The level of quantifiable economic benefits achieved is lower than that of Full Dualling, but the Refined Package has a significantly lower estimated capital cost range.

Overall Full Dualling is also expected to have a moderate positive impact on the Economy criterion. The appraisal shows it would provide significant journey time savings for road users including through reduced congestion, delays and disruption. Full Dualling would also reduce accidents and levels of driver frustration significantly by increasing overtaking opportunities, whilst also delivering wider economic benefits to markets outside of the transport system. Whilst Full Dualling is anticipated to provide greater economic benefits than the Refined Package, it has a much larger estimated cost range.

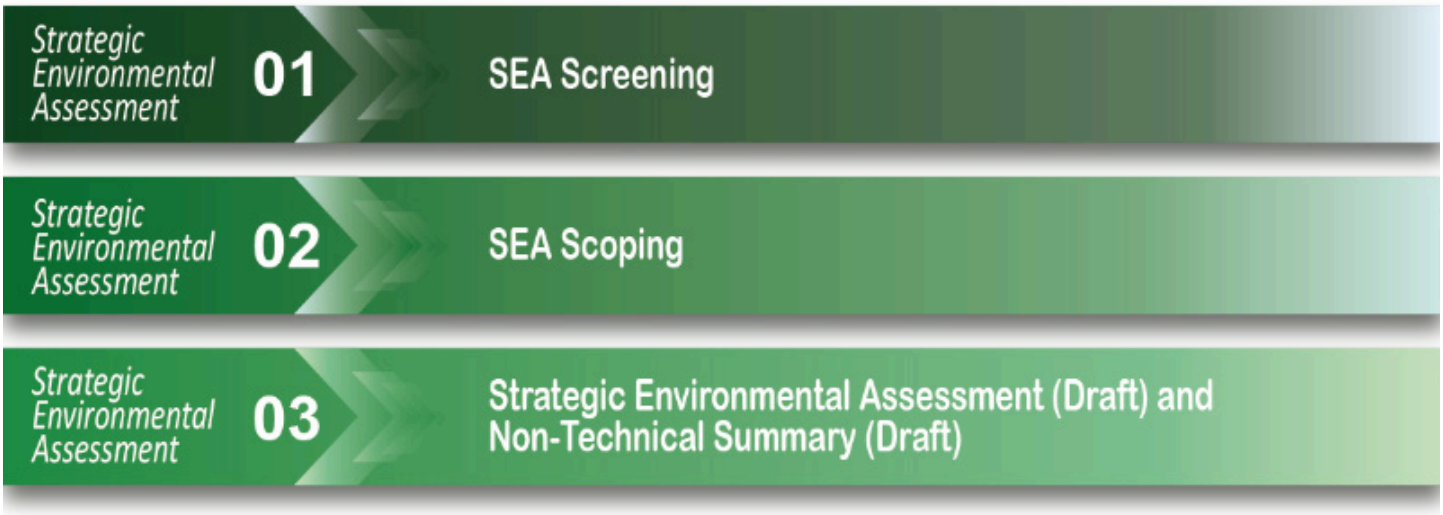
Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA)

The Refined Package is expected to have a minor positive impact on the FSDA. Benefits would be experienced by socio-economically disadvantaged groups through improving journey times and access to essential services and key destinations by road and public transport. A reduction in traffic within the bypassed towns would also benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups by reducing health inequalities through improvements to the local air quality and environment. These improvements coupled with the inclusion of active travel interventions would enhance the safety and security for those walking, wheeling, and cycling, making active travel more attractive as a mode of transport. There could be a large beneficial impact in tackling inequality, with improved public transport connectivity reducing social isolation and improving health and wellbeing. The barriers for those without access to a car are exacerbated in communities where public transport service

levels are lower, so the positive contribution of improved public transport in the Refined Package for socially excluded groups in these areas is likely to be greater. The scale of positive impacts is dependent on the location and adoption of interventions, their proximity to local services and the ability for disadvantaged communities to access the transport networks.

Full Dualling is also anticipated to have a minor positive impact on the FSDA. The provision of a dual carriageway between Hardmuir and Craibstone could improve access to places of employment and education, increasing opportunities for those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. There would be journey time benefits and an improvement in the reliability of journey times providing more economical and efficient journeys. However, the option predominantly benefits those with access to a car, which may not be available or affordable to some socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Environmental Appraisal



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Environment is a key consideration of the A96 Corridor Review. Detailed assessments have been undertaken, where required, to ensure that decision makers are able to consider all environmental impacts within the corridor. These detailed assessments have been undertaken as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Draft and its Non-Technical Summary (Draft).

SEA is a means of systematically assessing plans, programmes or strategies (PPS) that are likely to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

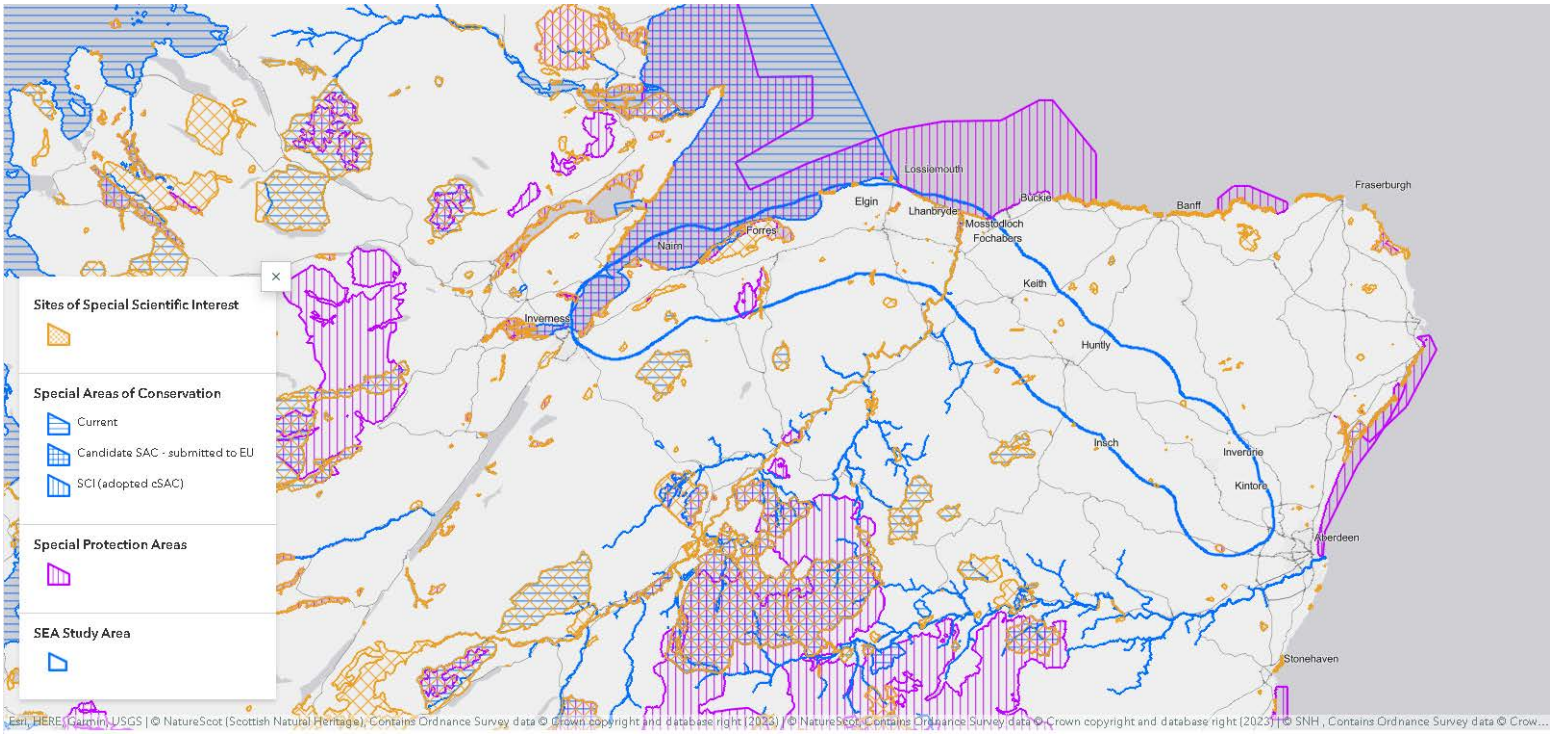
The SEA process has considerable overlap with the appraisal of the 'Environment' criterion within the wider STAG appraisal. The same topic specialists therefore worked on both appraisals and the results of the STAG environment criterion appraisal directly fed into the SEA for all environmental topics and their corresponding 'SEA Objectives'. The appraisal of the STAG 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing' criterion also fed into the SEA topic of Population and Human Health, specifically the SEA objective relating to safety. It is considered that this is the best way to ensure SEA influence throughout the development of the A96 Corridor Review and has also facilitated the identification and assessment of reasonable alternatives at each stage of the STAG process.

As part of the STAG appraisal process, the Preliminary Appraisal options and Detailed Appraisal packages (and Full Dualling) require assessment under environmental and climate change criteria. These criteria and the related sub criteria are very similar to the SEA topics and objectives. The STAG appraisal and assessment in the SEA are broadly consistent with each other, except where the SEA objectives cover different topics to the STAG criteria.

The SEA follows these key stages:

SEA Screening: An SEA 'screening' exercise determined that the A96 Corridor Review could potentially lead to significant environmental effects in the same way that a PPS could.

SEA Scoping: An SEA Scoping Report was produced and consulted on. This included a project description, environmental baseline review, a PPS review and a proposed methodology to use in the Draft Environmental Report.



Environmental Designations

Environmental designations are located throughout the full extent of the A96 Corridor Review SEA study area. The number, frequency and density of environmental designations is notably higher at the western end, particularly between Inverness and Huntly where there are a number of designations covering a large area. The full extent of the Moray Firth coastline within the SEA study area has national environmental protection. The SEA study area crosses the River Spey at Fochabers; the river is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for much of its length.

There are no areas of national landscape protection, such as National Scenic Areas or National Parks, within the SEA study area although the northern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park is approximately 10km to the south.

SEA Draft Environmental Report

Full Dualling and each of the packages were assessed against a series of 14 overarching SEA Objectives that covered a suite of environmental topics. The SEA objectives were specifically developed to focus on the environmental conditions and issues most pertinent to the A96 Corridor Study Area. Digital mapping of all environmental constraints within the Study Area was used to inform the assessment. The results of this matrix-based assessment are provided in the **Summary of Outcomes** section under **Summary of SEA Outcomes.**

The environmental baseline data and PPS review from the Scoping Report were updated and included in the Draft Environmental Report. A series of proposed mitigation and enhancement measures were also included.

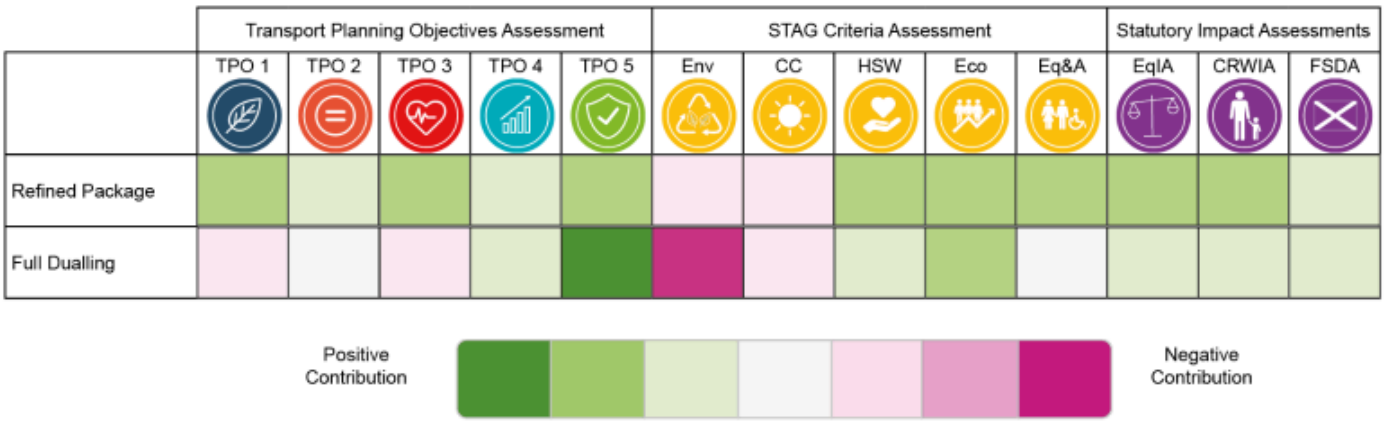
The Draft Environmental Report is being consulted on for 12 weeks, after which time it will be updated to respond to consultation feedback.

SEA Post Adoption Statement

Provisions for monitoring will be set out in an SEA Post Adoption Statement, which is the final stage of the SEA process. The Post Adoption Statement will also set out how the SEA has influenced the A96 Corridor Review.

Please read the SEA Main Draft Environmental Report for full details of the SEA process, findings and next steps.

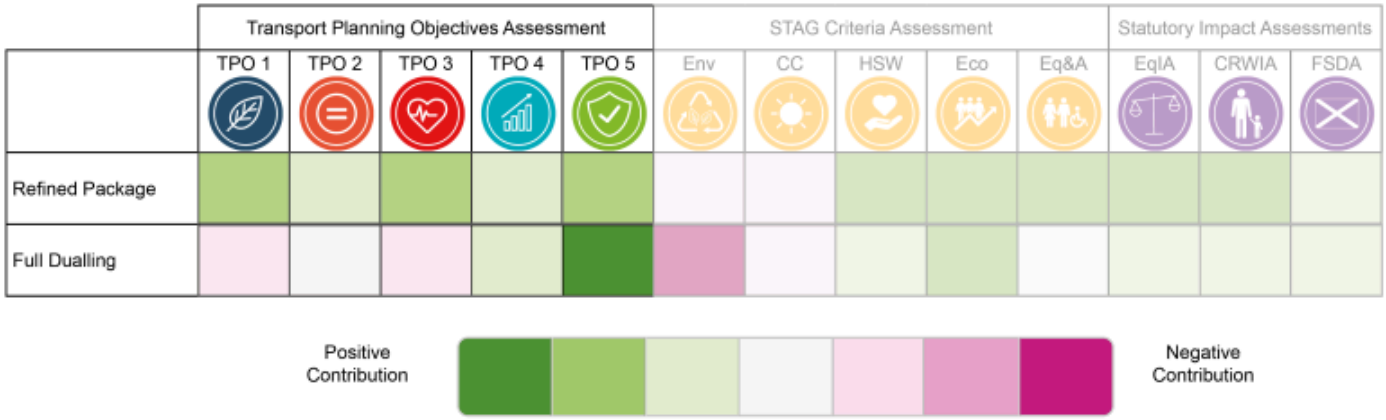
Summary of Outcomes



Scoring in the table represents the 'With Policy' Scenario only. For full details on information on the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios and scoring, please refer to the Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).

Summary of Transport Appraisal Outcomes

The following provides a comparative overview of the key outcomes from the appraisal of the Refined Package and Full Dualling against the appraisal criteria. Each assessment criterion was evaluated without applying any weighting, and both the Full Dualling and Refined Package options were independently appraised against a Reference Case (i.e. assuming no improvements or enhancements to the corridor).



Scoring in the table represents the 'With Policy' Scenario only. For full details on information on the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios and scoring, please refer to the Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).

Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs)

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 1 - A sustainable strategic transport corridor that contributes to the Scottish Government's net zero emissions target

TPO1 (Sustainable Transport): The Refined Package would result in a marginal increase in vehicle kilometres travelled (with a marginal increase in greenhouse gas emissions), however the Refined Package includes measures to promote a shift towards sustainable transport modes throughout the corridor. Full Dualling would have a much larger increase in vehicle kilometres travelled and an increase in emissions approximately 15 to 65 times larger than the Refined Package.

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 2: An inclusive strategic transport corridor that improves the accessibility of public transport in rural areas for access to healthcare, employment and education

TPO2 (Inclusive Transport): The Refined Package would make public transport more accessible, especially with improvements to

rail services and investment in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS). This would help encourage people to use public transport instead of driving. Full Dualling would not significantly improve access to public transport. However, it might slightly reduce traffic and congestion in towns, leading to minor improvements in public transport travel times.

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 3 - A coherent strategic transport corridor that enhances communities as places, supporting health, wellbeing and the environment

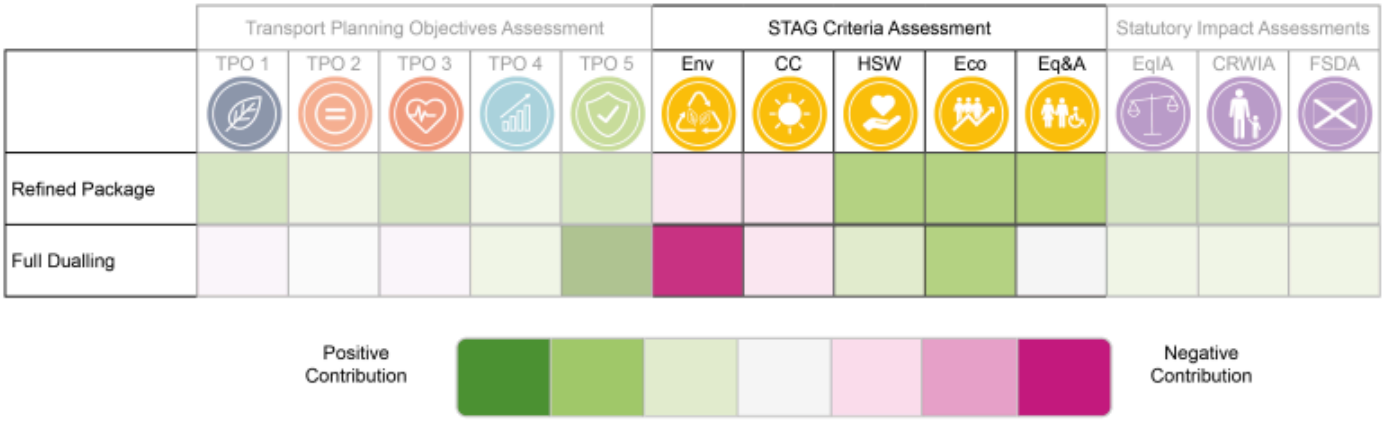
TPO3 (Community Enhancement): The Refined Package would have some environmental impact during construction, but it would benefit communities by encouraging more walking and cycling in towns, which supports better health, wellbeing, and environmental outcomes. Improvements in public transport would also help reduce social isolation and make it easier for people to access healthcare services. Full Dualling would have more significant adverse environmental effects and outweigh any benefits to communities such as improved air quality, reduced division and the potential for increased active travel within the bypassed town centres.

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 4: An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth throughout the corridor and beyond

TPO4 (Inclusive Growth): Both provide minor positive contributions. The Refined Package would provide a degree of journey time benefits to business road users and would provide businesses with sustainable access to job opportunities and improved rail freight capacity encouraging more sustainable movement of goods. Full Dualling would provide greater benefits in terms of reliability and efficiency for business road users and road freight movements, however it would predominantly benefit road users and would be unlikely to increase sustainable transport choices.

Transport Planning Objective (TPO) 5 - A reliable and resilient transport system that is safe for users

TPO5 (Safety and Resilience): The Refined Package would reduce accidents at specific locations through the targeted road safety improvements intervention and the bypasses of Elgin and Keith, whilst also enhancing the resilience of the road and rail networks. Full Dualling would result in a larger reduction in accidents overall as well as a greater reduction in high severity accidents and would improve the resilience of the road network to disruption through the provision of a new dual carriageway.



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STAG Criteria

STAG Environment

The Refined Package would have a minor negative impact on the environment although the scale of infrastructure and the physical works required would be much less significant than Full Dualling. This would outweigh any benefits of reduced noise and air quality impacts, such as those resulting from traffic reductions within Elgin and Keith. Full Dualling would have major negative impacts on the environment as the scale of physical works required for the new

infrastructure is much greater than for the Refined Package. This would significantly outweigh any benefits attributed to reduced noise and air quality impacts from the traffic reductions created as a result of bypassing communities along the route.

STAG Climate Change

The Refined Package would result in an increase in greenhouse gases including emissions from the materials and energy used in construction associated with the Elgin and Keith bypasses and the rail intervention, and through the minor increase in vehicle kilometres travelled during operation. There would be some benefits in terms of adaptation of the transport network to the effects of climate change where infrastructure improvements are introduced. Full Dualling would result in a significantly greater increase in greenhouse gases in comparison to the Refined Package, including both emissions from the materials and energy used from construction and through the larger increase in vehicle kilometres travelled during operation. Similarly, the new route would provide benefits in terms of adaptation of the trunk road network to the effects of climate change.

STAG Health, Safety and Wellbeing criteria

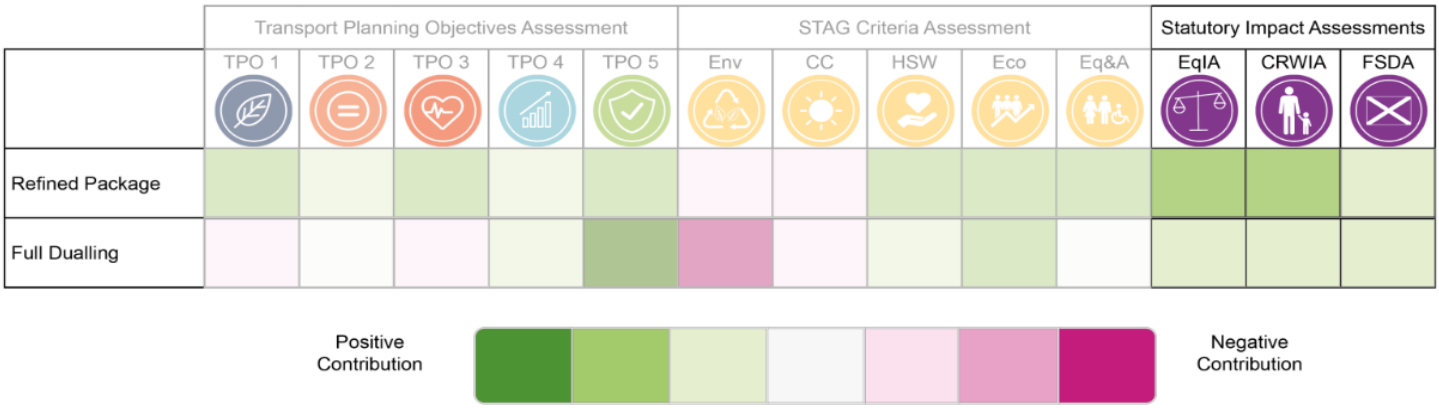
The Refined Package would reduce accidents, improve health outcomes through active travel improvements within towns, and improve access to health services by active modes and public transport. There would be some adverse impacts on visual amenity through the construction of selected interventions including the Elgin and Keith bypasses. Full Dualling would provide greater accident reductions and improved reliability to access health services by road but would have a much greater negative impact on visual amenity and a more limited effect on improving health outcomes.

STAG Economy

The Refined Package would provide a lower value of economic benefits but at a significantly lower estimated cost than Full Dualling, and the benefits are largely derived from the sustainable transport modes, including rail journey time savings and health benefits from the active travel intervention. Full Dualling is estimated to cost significantly more than the Refined Package and although it would provide a higher value of total benefits, these predominantly arise from road journey time savings as well as accident benefits and a reduction in driver frustration.

STAG Equality and Accessibility

The Refined Package would increase the active travel network coverage and make it easier to access key services by public transport, which would be of particular benefit for disadvantaged and vulnerable users. The rail and DRT interventions would contribute to expanding public transport accessibility into more rural areas along the corridor. Full Dualling would largely benefit those who have access to a private car and although bypassing communities could enable placemaking to encourage more active travel, it is unlikely to have a direct impact on improving the accessibility to key services by public transport, with improvements in rural areas likely to be minimal.



Scoring in the table represents the 'With Policy' Scenario only. For full details on information on the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios and scoring, please refer to the Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).

Statutory Impact Assessments

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

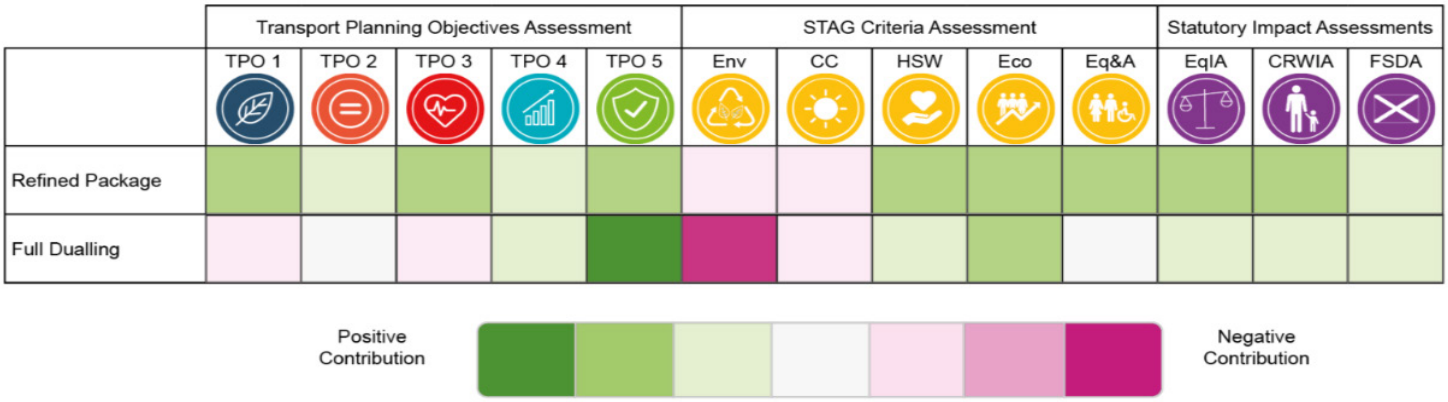
The Refined Package would provide safer and more affordable access to key services through improvements to active travel and public transport modes, benefiting those in transport poverty and more vulnerable users. The Elgin and Keith bypasses would provide air quality benefits by reducing through traffic but would also have negative impacts on noise, vibration, air quality and division during construction and in operation. Full Dualling would also improve safety of road users and air quality in bypassed settlements by reducing through traffic, but the accessibility benefits of the option would mostly impact those with access to a car. It would have negative impacts on noise, vibration, air quality and severance during construction and in operation.

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

The Refined Package would improve public transport connectivity to education for children and young people, with the public transport improvements also benefitting leisure travel as children and young people are more likely to depend on buses. The Elgin and Keith bypasses would reduce traffic-related health impacts where through trips are removed and there is an uptake in active travel, though there could also be adverse health outcomes for children living in local communities close to the realigned routes. Full Dualling would improve access to education for children and young people however this is likely to be minor and would mainly affect those with access to a car. It would reduce traffic-related health impacts in bypassed communities with reduced traffic volumes, but the provision of a dual carriageway could also result in adverse health outcomes for children living in local communities close to the realigned route.

Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA)

The Refined Package would improve public transport access to essential services such as education and employment that would particularly benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups across the corridor. The improved public transport connectivity would help to reduce social isolation and the active travel interventions in conjunction with bypasses could remove barriers to the uptake of active travel and reduce health inequalities in disadvantaged communities through improved air quality. Full Dualling would improve access to employment and education for those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups through reductions in journey times and improved reliability, but this would mainly benefit those with access to a car. There would be limited direct benefits for public transport and active travel through reduced levels of congestion.



Scoring in the table represents the 'With Policy' Scenario only. For full details on information on the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios and scoring, please refer to the Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report (Draft).

Summary of Assessments

Overall, the Refined Package performs better than Full Dualling in terms of the appraisal criteria, particularly with respect to the impact on the environment, sustainability, equality and inclusivity.

Summary of SEA Baseline

A summary of the key baseline findings for each SEA topic is provided in the following sections.

Climatic Factors

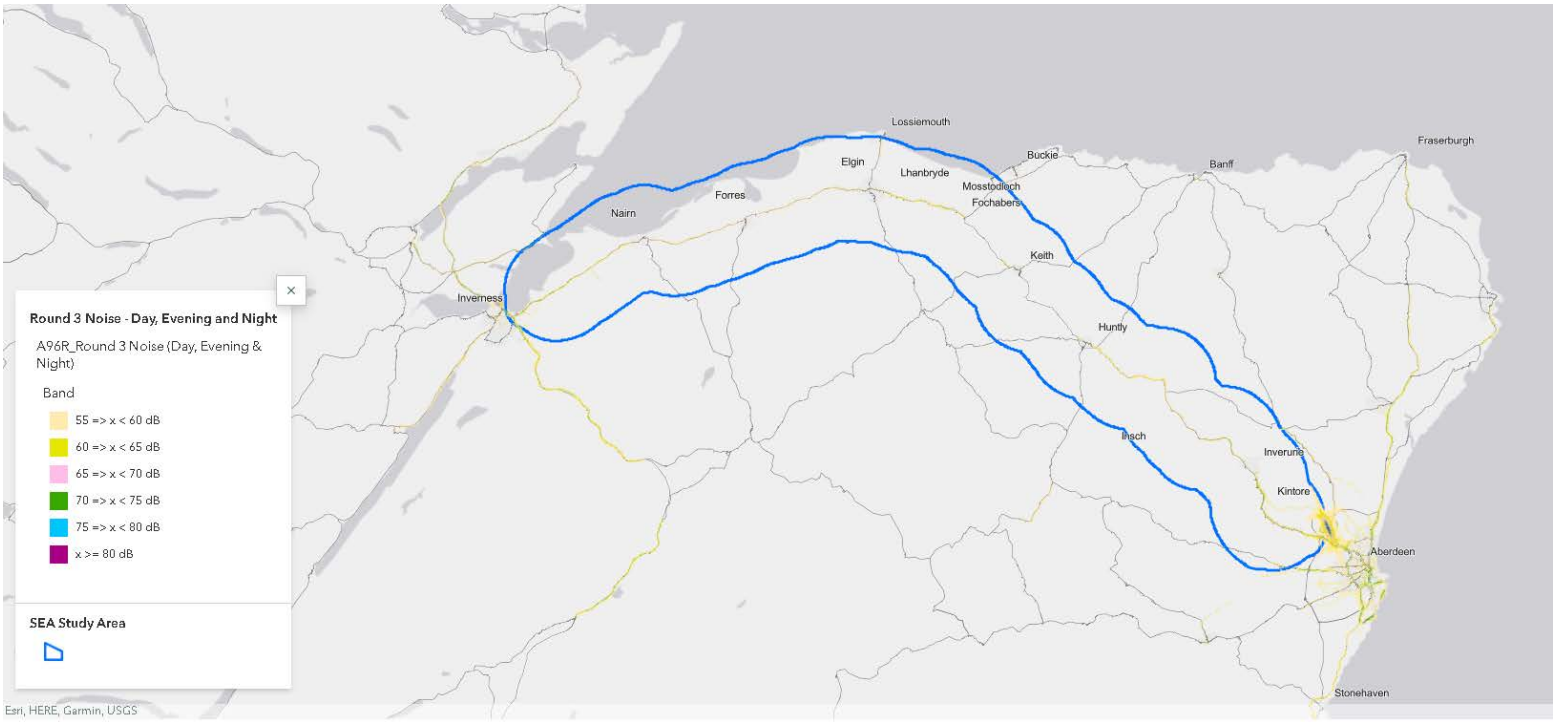
According to the Scottish Transport Statistics 2021, transport accounted for 29.2% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. The largest source of transport emissions is cars at 38%, followed by HGVs at 25%, and aviation at 16%. The proportion of single occupancy car trips also shows an underlying increasing trend, with 66% in 2018 compared with a figure of 65% in 2013 and 60% in 2008.

Over the last few decades, Scotland has experienced a warming trend, shifting rainfall patterns, and rising sea levels. The Met Office historic 10-year averages from the stations in Kinloss, Keith and Aberdeen Airport identify gradual warming and increased rainfall between 1961 and 2020 in the study area.

Air Quality

A review of air quality monitoring data collected within the corridor between 2015 and 2019 for the council administrative areas of Moray and Aberdeenshire show that annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) remained stable and well below the Air Quality Objective (AQO) or Limit Value across the years reviewed. Air quality within the Highland Council area is also generally good, with the exception of the existing Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared for the potential exceedance of NO_2 within Inverness city centre, however this is beyond the corridor area.

There are no declared AQMAs within the SEA study area, however there are three declared within Aberdeen City Council area, all to the east, and one to the west within Inverness. Anderson Drive AQMA within Aberdeen City was declared for the potential exceedance of annual mean NO_2 and Particulate Matter (PM10) AQOs.



Noise

The main sources of noise within the SEA study area are sections of the A96 itself, A941 towards Rothes, A944 towards Kingsford, A940 towards Grantown-on-Spey and B9013 towards Burghead. There are large areas of noise sources within Aberdeen and Inverness, however this is beyond the extent of the study corridor. Sections of the Aberdeen – Inverness rail line are also a contributor of noise in the SEA study area. As expected, the greatest consolidated noise sources are at the eastern end of the A96 due to proximity to Aberdeen and its associated various industrial land uses and main transport routes entering and exiting the city (outwith the SEA study area).

Within the SEA study area, the main sources of noise are from the A96 and the railway line which both follow a similar east-west alignment. There are some peripheral roads which are also noise sources, however these are more scattered in the western extent or form direct connections with the A96. Noise emissions from airports and industry outside of Aberdeen have not been modelled as they do not meet the criteria set out in the Environmental Noise Directive.

Population and Human Health

Aberdeen is Scotland's third largest city by population and its fourth most densely populated area. The largest settlement in Aberdeenshire is Peterhead, which has a population of 19,060. Approximately 48.4%, 47.4% and 41.6% of the populations of Aberdeenshire, Moray and Highland council areas respectively live in areas classified by the Scottish Government as 'rural'.

The largest settlement in The Highland Council area is Inverness, which has a population of 82,383 and is the fifth largest of Scotland's eight cities by population. The Highland Council is also Scotland's largest local authority by area, with a total land area (including all islands at low water) of 26,484km^2.

The largest settlement in Moray is Elgin, with a population of 24,760.

There are a number of areas of high deprivation within Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray and Highland Councils' administrative areas. These areas would be more vulnerable to changes in the

environment as the communities living within deprived areas are more likely to have social and environmental characteristics that present risks to health for example, poor housing, lack of green spaces, and poorer air quality. However, the proportion of data zones within the study area that rank within the 20% most deprived in Scotland is relatively small at 6.9%. Alongside this, 27.2% of data zones are ranked within the 20% least deprived zones across Scotland, suggesting an overall trend of lower deprivation across the study area.

Access to services is an important consideration for rural communities and improved connectivity can reduce health inequalities. There are multiple core paths concentrated in and around the towns of Inverness, Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Keith, Huntly and Inverurie, and along the coast from Findhorn to Portgordon, as well as core paths in forests (Culbin Forest, Bennachie Forest) and along lochs (Loch of Blairs, Millbuies Loch, Loch na Bo, Loch Oire) within the study area. Additionally, there are Rights of Way (ROWs) around the towns of Forres and Elgin, north-west from Keith and ROWs along the coast from Burghead to Lossiemouth.

Air quality and noise from transport could result in significant impacts on human health on the population, particularly the more urban areas within the study area. Air quality and noise is discussed above.

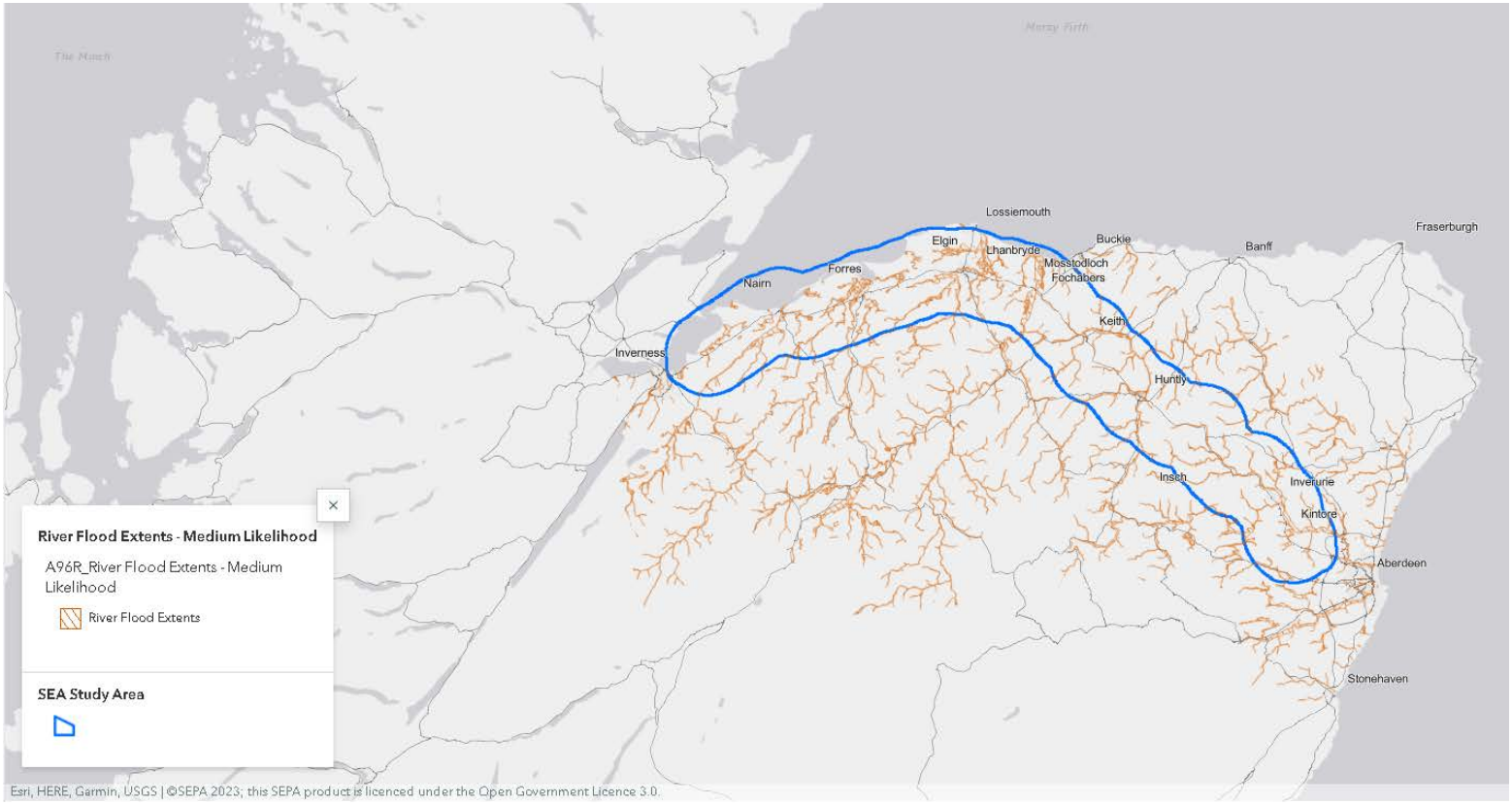
Material Assets

The main transport infrastructure within the study area includes:

- The A96 Trunk Road (between Inverness and Aberdeen)
- Other A-class roads
- The rail network between Aberdeen and Inverness, which includes 12 rail stations
- Airports and associated infrastructure, including Inverness and Aberdeen international airports.

Natural assets within the study area include:

- 294 surface waterbodies within the study area, including the River Ness, River Nairn, River Findhorn, River Lossie, River Spey, River Don and River Dee
- Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory and Native Woodland Survey of Scotland sites
- Various soil types, including some nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland
- Land of varying degrees of agricultural value, including approximately 53.7km^2 and 174.6km^2 of Class 2 and Class 3.1 prime agricultural land respectively.



Water Environment

There is a total of approximately 294 surface water features within the A96 Study Corridor, which includes rivers, lochs, water bodies and coastal waters. There are 11 surface water catchments within the corridor which are traversed by the A96.

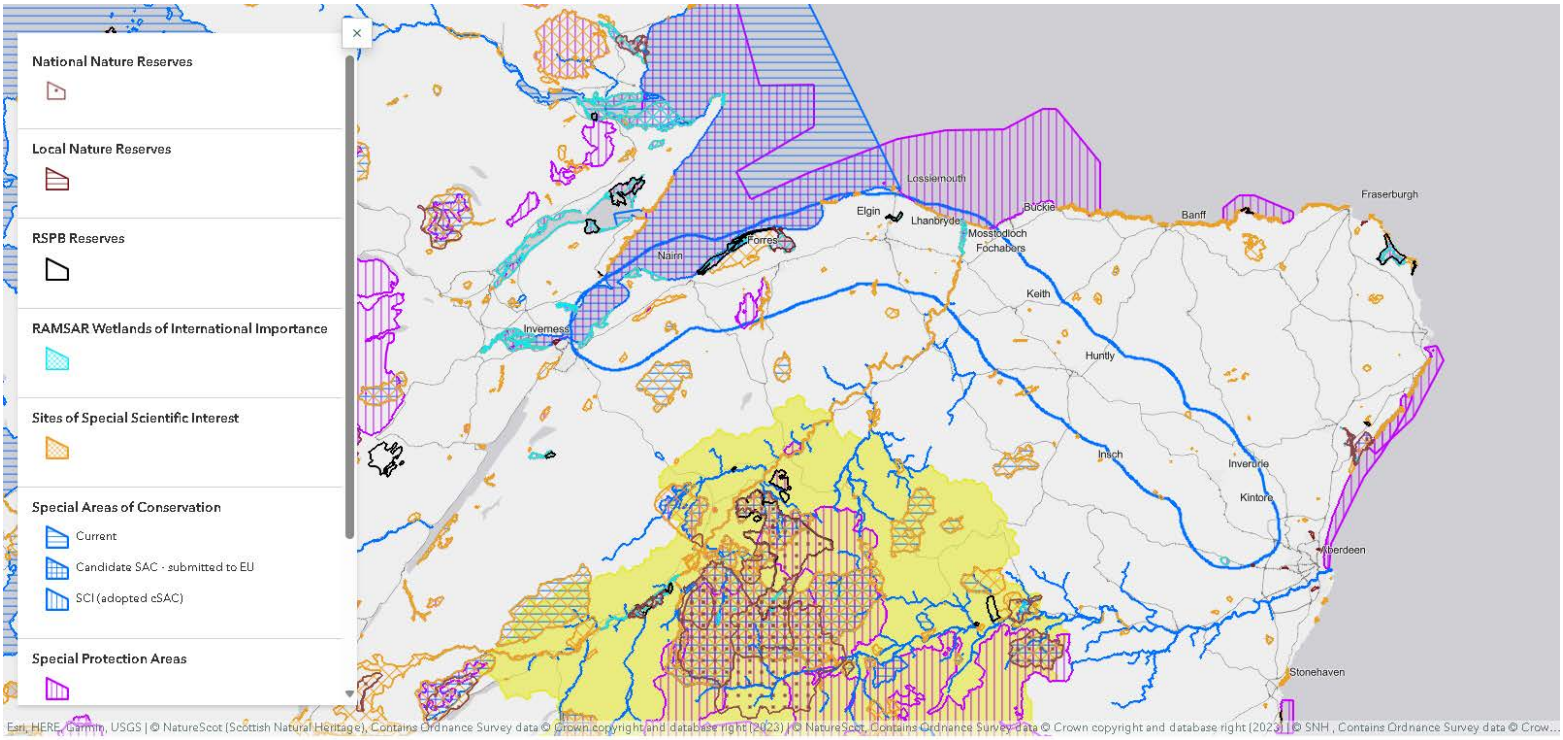
A significant number of watercourses flow through the corridor and are bridged/crossed by the A96 itself. The largest watercourses in the corridor are the River Spey, to the immediate west of Fochabers, and the Riven Don (and its tributary, the River Urie) at Inverurie. Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) classifications, these designated river catchments range from having ’Bad’ to ‘Good’ Ecological Status, with the main reasons for not achieving ‘Good’ status being physical modification and chemical failings. These are large watercourses which range from having sections that are more laterally dynamic to sections that have been heavily modified, as illustrated by the existing A96

crossing of the River Urie. Most river crossings are at points where the rivers are fresh water, with the exception of the River Nairn which is tidal where it is crossed by the A96.

Within the corridor, there are 14 WFD Designated Groundwater Bodies and 34 WFD Surface Watercourses (based on crossing locations). There are also eight Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and three Bathing Water Areas (where there may be interactions with the corridor).The corridor lies across several WFD Designated Groundwater Bodies which range from ‘Good’ to ‘Poor’ condition. Those waterbodies not achieving ‘Good’ status are generally because of chemical failings. Licenced water abstractions and private water supplies may also be important receptors within the corridor, though are yet to be fully identified.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) flood mapping identifies flood risk from river, coastal and surface water flooding at low (1-in-1000 year), medium (1-in-200 year) and high (1-in-10 year) likelihood of flooding.

Given the significant number of watercourses, the main risk of flooding within the A96 corridor is from river flooding. This includes the current route of the A96 itself. The flood mapping illustrates that the River Don poses significant flood risk to roads and settlements between Old Rayne and Dyce, with Kintore and Inverurie at significant risk. The other main settlements within the corridor of Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Fochabers, Huntly and Blackburn show significant areas of flood risk from various watercourses, including the River Spey and River Deveron. Keith, however, is deemed to be at low risk. Flood protection schemes have been implemented within the corridor, including at Forres, Elgin and Huntly. Coastal flood risk is confined to the coastal settlements within the wider study area of Findhorn, Burghead and Lossiemouth, although the estuary at Findhorn does allow for a greater extent of coastal flood risk inland. There is also some potential coastal flood risk for Nairn.



Biodiversity

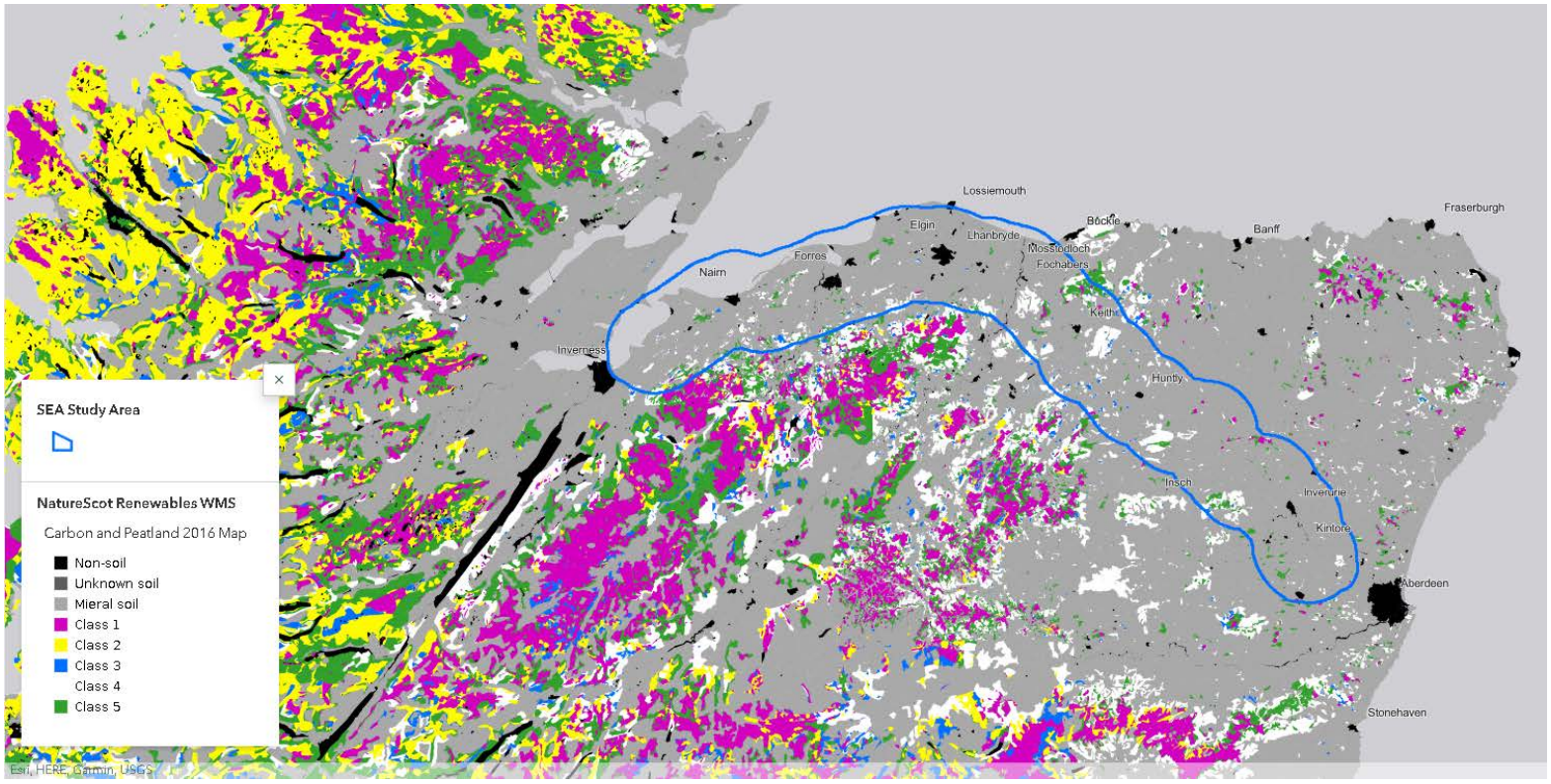
International designations in the study area include four Ramsar wetland sites, eight SPAs and seven SACs. Potential likely significant effects on these internationally designated sites are being considered in a separate Habitats Regulations Appraisal.

National designations include 43 biological SSSIs.

Thirty one Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs), four Moray Wildlife Sites and one Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve have been identified in the study area.

One Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Findhorn Bay, and two Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Reserves are also located within the study area.

Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory and Native Woodland Survey of Scotland sites are found throughout the study area, with significant concentrations (primarily of plantation woodland) around Forres and the River Spey. In the southern part of the study area near Inverurie, there is less forestation than in the north. Approximately 26% of the study area is covered by woodland recorded on the National Forest Inventory. According to the Ancient Woodland Inventory, 14% of the study area comprises ancient woodland cover.

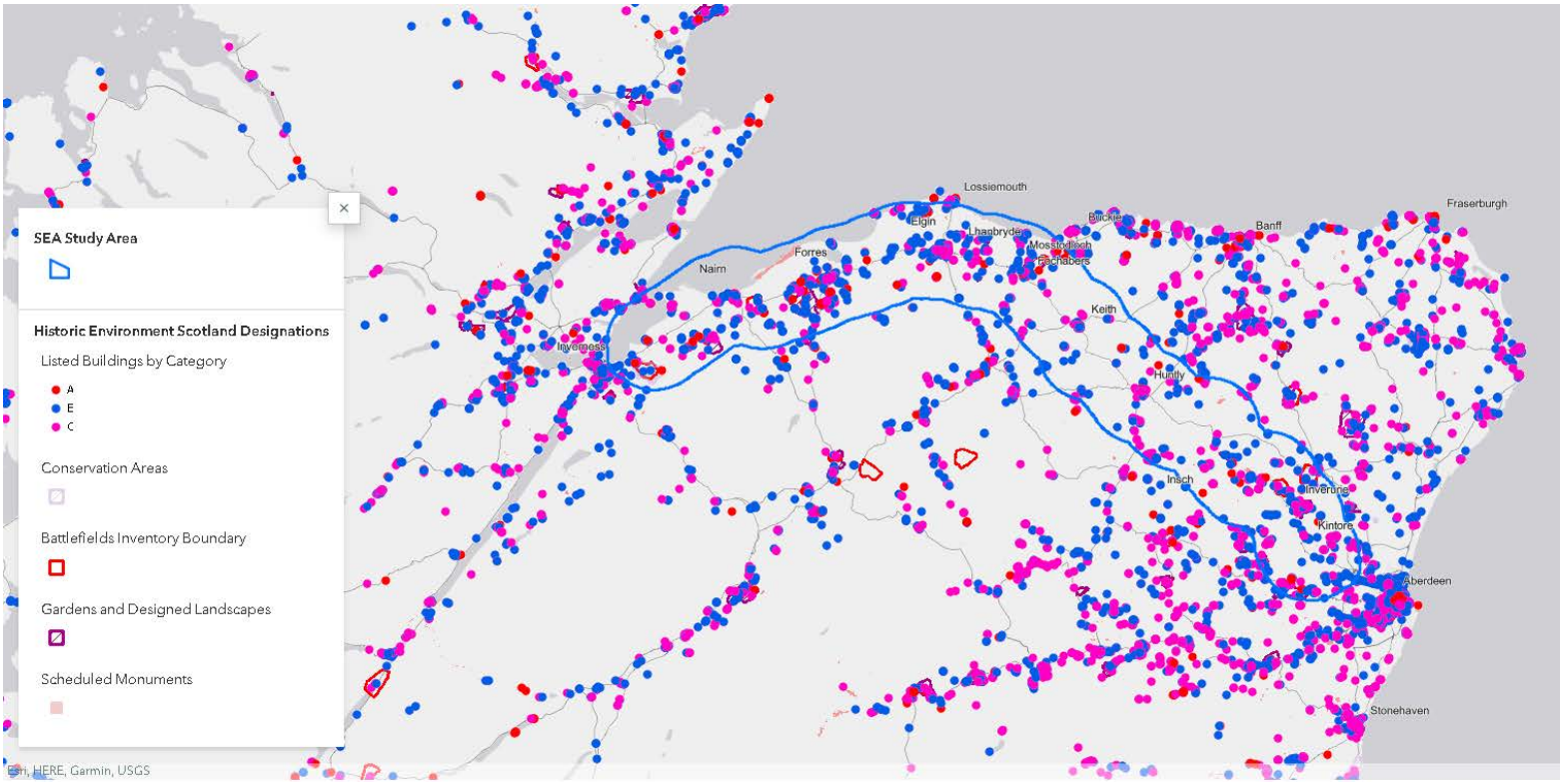


Geology and Soils

There are 17 geological and five mixed (biological and geological) SSSIs scattered throughout the area.

Scotland's Soils (2019) mapping (Carbon and Peatland Map) is divided into five classes of carbon and peatland, and also illustrates areas of non-soil, unknown soil, and mineral soil. The classes are listed in Appendix C (Environmental Baseline). There are many soil types in the study area, ranging from Class 2 and 3 lands capable of producing a wide or moderate range of crops, to poorer quality Class 6 and 7 land of little use for cultivation.

Some peat deposits are found within the study area, with higher concentrations south-east of the River Spey, from Moray Council area to Aberdeen City. Peat is an important carbon sink. More than 20% of Scotland is covered by peat soil, with peatlands holding over half of Scotland's terrestrial store of carbon. However, within the SEA study area, there are no significant areas of buried peat (including carbon-rich soil, deep peat and priority peatland habitat).

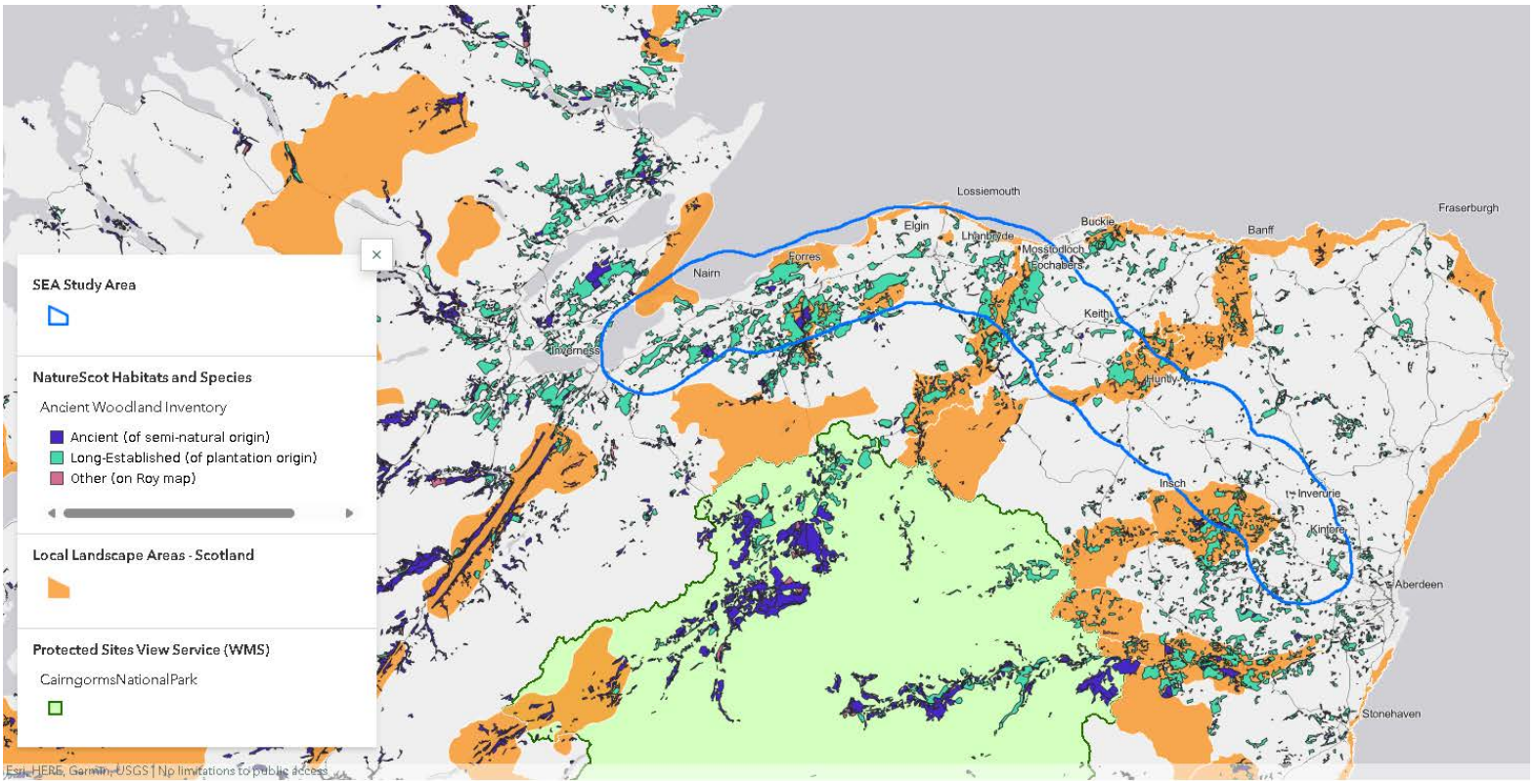


Cultural Heritage

The corridor contains four historic battlefield sites; including Culloden to the east of Inverness, the Battle of Auldearn to the east of Nairn, and the Battle of Barra and the Battle of Harlaw close to Oldmeldrum and Inverurie respectively. The Battle of Harlaw site near Inverurie borders the A96 itself. There are a large number of heritage designations throughout the A96 Study Corridor with the A96 itself passing close to a number of Scheduled Monuments, Gardens and Designed Landscapes and passing through Conservation Areas in Elgin, Fochabers and Keith.

Non-designated sites also provide crucial contextual information to help better understand the history and development of the landscape within the study area, as well as the archaeological potential of the area. Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland and Moray Council areas have approximately 412; 3,092; 2,212 and 5,479 non-designated cultural heritage assets respectively. There is also potential for previously unrecorded cultural heritage assets to be located within the study area, given the area contains known heritage sites and artefacts. Information gathered on both designated and non-designated assets is important for assessing the archaeological potential of the study area.

The designated and non-designated historic landscape and seascape in the study area is also important. The historic landscape has developed as a result of land management, agriculture and settlement patterns.



Landscape and Visual Amenity

There are no areas of national landscape protection, such as National Scenic Areas or National Parks, within the A96 Study Corridor although the northern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park is approximately 10km to the south. Within the study area, there are 13 Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) which are regionally valuable landscapes intended to protect and enhance unique and important landscape qualities and encourage the enjoyment of these areas. In Aberdeenshire, important landscapes are designated as Special Landscape Areas.

There are 30 distinct Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the SEA study area.

Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory and Native Woodland Survey of Scotland sites are found throughout the study area, with significant concentrations (primarily of plantation woodland) around Forres and the River Spey. There are also several areas of woodland located throughout the study area recorded as core native woodland.

There are various Tree Preservation Orders scattered through the study area, including several close to the existing A96 for example at Nairn, Keith and Thainstone.

The eastern end of the study area is within the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Greenbelt, the purpose of which is to help avoid coalescence of settlements and sprawling development on the edge of the city, maintain Aberdeen's landscape setting, and provide access to open space.

Whilst the study area does not contain any nationally recognised scenic viewpoints, or nationally designated landscapes, there are visual sensitivities to some types of development within or visible from the locally designated landscapes. There are also numerous towns, villages and rural properties, along with numerous paths, recreational trails and areas used for outdoor recreation where there is the potential for visual effects to occur.

SEA Appraisal Outcomes

This section summarises the appraisal of the Refined Package and Full Dualling against the SEA objectives.

The Refined Package is likely to have a cumulative minor negative effect. Moderate negative effects are predicted for natural resources and biodiversity, whereas minor negative effects are predicted for air quality, water quality, cultural heritage, and landscape and visual amenity. Due to the predicted greenhouse gas increases associated with constructing and operating transport infrastructure, a minor negative cumulative effect is predicted for the greenhouse gases SEA objective. As there is considerable uncertainty associated with the future impacts of climate change and any construction design is yet to be developed, an uncertain score was assigned for the climate adaptation SEA objective.

Full Dualling of the A96 would be considered to have a cumulative major negative effect. There will be opportunities to improve safety, placemaking, and accessibility, hence some minor positive effects are predicted for these SEA objectives.

However, there are still likely to be major negative effects on many environmental receptors. This is mainly due to the construction footprint but also adverse effects of greenhouse gas emissions and local air quality from traffic emissions during the operational phase. As there is considerable uncertainty associated with the future impacts of climate change and any construction design is yet to be developed, an uncertain score was assigned for the climate adaptation SEA objective.

For the Refined Package, the likely minor and moderate negative effects are expected to arise from some of the physical works, mainly due to the construction of two bypasses, public transport, freight capacity and road safety improvements and their potential impact on the natural environment.

In general, the Refined Package has fewer negative effects and lower magnitude negative effects than Full Dualling in terms of potentially significant cumulative effects. Both the Refined Package and Full Dualling have positive effects predicted for the Population and Human Health topics, for example due to targeted road safety improvements.

For Full Dualling, the considerable amount of land-take, raw materials requirements and greenhouse gas emissions associated with constructing a fully dualled road has led to this being assessed as having major or moderate negative effects for most of the SEA Objectives.

In contrast, the Refined Package was assessed to be likely to lead to minor negative effects for most SEA Objectives, albeit with moderate negative effects predicted for natural resources and biodiversity due to the raw material demand and land-take associated with constructing the Refined Package bypasses.

There are also several minor positive environmental effects predicted for the Refined Package, including for the Population and Human Health SEA objectives focused on quality of life and sustainable access, high quality places and the Material Assets SEA objective relating to sustainable transport networks. Moderate

positive effects were also predicted for the SEA objective relating to safety due to the proposed road safety improvements.

Jacobs

AECOM

Reports and Assessments

Reports and Assessments

The following reports referenced in these Project Pages can be read in full on the Transport Scotland website.

Summary Report

- A96 Corridor Review Draft Summary Report

2024 Consultation Publications

- A96 Corridor Review, Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report (Draft)

- A96 Corridor Review, Strategic Business Case - Summary of Main Report (Draft)
- A96 Corridor Review, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Draft Environmental Report
- A96 Corridor Review, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Draft Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary
- A96 Corridor Review, Climate Compatibility Assessment Report (Draft)
- A96 Corridor Review, Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA) Report (Draft)
- A96 Corridor Review, Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) Report (Draft)
- A96 Corridor Review, Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Report (Draft)
- A96 Corridor Review, Partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) Report (Draft)

Existing Publications

- A96 Corridor Review Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report
- A96 Corridor Review Strategic Environmental Assessment - Scoping Report
- A96 Corridor Review Initial Appraisal: Case for Change
- A96 Corridor Review Stakeholder & Public Engagement Consultation Report

Jacobs AECOM

Consulation

Consultation

Our consultation, which launched on 28 November 2024 has now closed. Thank you to everyone who visited this website, took the time to read the reports and provided feedback.

Contact us

All enquiries from the media will be dealt with by the Transport Scotland Press Team.

Other stakeholders, including the public can email the project team at: A96CorridorReview@jacobs.com

Alternatively, you can call the Jacobs AECOM stakeholder team on 07432 112790

If you want to write to us instead, the address is:
Transport Scotland
George House
2nd Floor
36 North Hanover Street
Glasgow
G1 2AD

FAQ

Why has the review taken place?

The Scottish Government is committed to improving the A96. The current plan is to fully dual the route and as part of this process Transport Scotland has been undertaking a transparent, evidence-based review of the programme, which includes a climate compatibility assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on climate and the environment. This is sensible good governance for major investment of this kind.

The outcomes from the A96 Corridor Review have been published in draft for public consultation. The feedback received from

members of the public and key stakeholders will be key in helping inform the Scottish Government's final decision on how best to take forward improvements to the A96 transport corridor whilst also balancing the demands of the challenging economic climate, current policy and the climate emergency, and will inform timescales going forward.

What has the Review covered?

The Review has been undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). STAG is the best practice, objective-led approach to transport appraisal and provides a consistent framework to identify and appraise transport interventions.

The Review has covered the transport corridor from Raigmore Interchange at Inverness to Craibstone Junction at Aberdeen, and has considered all relevant transport modes within the A96 corridor, including roads-based transport, rail, public transport and active travel modes. It has also looked at the changing policy context and other key considerations, such as development and growth aims for the corridor and surrounding area. In addition, it has considered the impact of the global climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic on how people work and travel within the corridor.

Dualling the A96 from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is separate from the wider A96 Corridor Review process, as it has already received Ministerial consent following a Public Local Inquiry.

Why did we need to follow the STAG process?

Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) represents best practice guidance for transport appraisals and the requirement to undertake a clear, transparent evidence-based review. The objective-led process is designed to provide investment decision makers with the information they need in a clear, structured format.

An appraisal using STAG provides a consistent framework to identify and appraise transport interventions and is required whenever Scottish Government funding, support or approval is needed to change the transport system.

STAG is applicable to all transport interventions, regardless of the transport modes affected.

STAG is a comprehensive and proven process. By not following STAG there would be a risk of challenge to any proposals taken forward through the subsequent various stages of scheme development.

Has the Review concluded?

Transport Scotland has now concluded the Detailed Appraisal stage of the Review process, with the draft outcomes published for public consultation before a final decision can be reached by the Scottish Government. A range of assessments have been undertaken, including the STAG based transport assessment, a Strategic Environmental Assessment, a Climate Compatibility Assessment and Statutory Impacts Assessments. Those assessments have been documented into full reports, which can be found in the **Reports and Assessments** section.

The feedback received from members of the public and key stakeholders will be key in helping inform the Scottish Government's final decision on how best to take forward improvements to the A96 Corridor.

More information about the methodology used for these assessments is in the **How we did the review** section.

What is a Climate Compatibility Assessment and what did it assess?

The Climate Compatibility Assessment is a report that forms part of the A96 Corridor Review. It provides a narrative assessment of the direct and indirect impacts of the A96 corridor in relation to climate

change, both in its current form and with the interventions as assessed as part of the Review, including full dualling.

The Climate Compatibility Assessment was developed using relevant literature, best practice, and professional judgement to align the assessment criteria with relevant national and local policies, plans and strategies. Additionally, the Climate Compatibility Assessment is well aligned to the climate aspects of existing statutory processes including aspects of STAG, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). In this way, the Climate Compatibility Assessment draws from relevant appraisal and assessment information providing a robust and comprehensive review.

What is the outcome of the review?

The evidence-based process has considered the relative performance of seven “packages” of improvements for the corridor, including full dualling of the A96. Of these packages considered, the evidence from the appraisal work identifies that there is an optimal “Refined Package”.

This Refined Package includes a spread of interventions across all modes of transport, supporting a multi-modal approach to transport investment within the corridor.

It includes bypasses of Elgin and Keith and targeted road safety improvements; an A96 electric corridor to improve alternative refuelling facilities; rail improvements to reduce passenger journey times and enhance freight facilities; active travel improvements within settlements along the corridor; investment in flexible transport opportunities to improve connectivity in areas with limited access to existing public transport; and improvements to public transport interchange facilities.

Overall, the evidence from the appraisal work identifies that Refined Package performs better than Full Dualling in terms of current appraisal criteria, particularly with respect to the impact on

the environment, sustainability, equality and inclusivity. Full Dualling only performs better in relation to road safety.

The outcomes from the Review have been published in draft for public consultation. Several reports detailing the assessments from the Review, including a draft Strategic Business Case - Transport Appraisal Report, draft Strategic Environmental Assessment, and draft Statutory Impact Assessments have been published on Transport Scotland's website. These can also be accessed via the **Reports and Assessments** section.

The feedback received from members of the public and stakeholders will be key in helping inform the Scottish Government's final decision on how best to take forward improvements to the A96 Corridor.

How has feedback from the initial consultation been taken into account?

The Review process has followed the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and has been objective-led throughout. The generation and development of options has had a focus on the ability to address one or more of the identified problems and opportunities and hence meet the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs). The options developed through the generation/sifting process have taken consideration of the feedback that has been received through the engagement process including the initial public consultation undertaken and workshops undertaken with key stakeholders.

Full Dualling has remained a considered option throughout all stages of the Transport Appraisal process and has been subject the same criteria used to appraise all alternative options.

No final decision has been made by the Scottish Government as to how transport improvements along the corridor are prioritised. At this stage the draft outcomes of the Review have been published by the Scottish Government for consultation before a final decision can be reached by the Scottish Ministers.

How did you consult with the public as part of the A96 Corridor Review?

We have engaged with a broad range of stakeholders including community representatives, businesses and those living and working within the corridor.

A full public consultation was held in summer 2022 covering a range of topics and the feedback received has informed the development of problems and opportunities, as well as a range of options across different forms of transport.

The feedback received was vital to the Review as it gave the project team a greater understanding of the problems affecting the A96 corridor, and to identify opportunities. These problems and opportunities were used to inform the Transport Planning Objectives and the generation of a long list of potential options at Case for Change stage.

For more information read the Stakeholder & Public Engagement Consultation Report – December 2022.

Full details of who was consulted, and how, are included in the public consultation report.

The Scottish Government says the current plan is to fully dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen – does this mean that it is still going ahead?

The Scottish Government has not changed its position since the A96 Corridor Review began, the current favoured position is to fully dual the A96. Transport Scotland has now concluded the detailed appraisal stage of the Review process, with the draft outcomes published for public consultation before a final decision can be reached by the Scottish Government. The feedback received from members of the public and key stakeholders will be key in helping inform the Scottish Government's final decision on how best to take forward improvements to the A96 Corridor.

What are the next steps for the A96 Corridor Review?

The draft outcomes of the Review have been published by the Scottish Government for consultation before a final decision can be reached by the Scottish Ministers. The consultation period runs for a period of 12 weeks from Thursday 28 November 2024 until Friday 21 February 2025.

The evidence-led transport appraisal that supports the Review, along with the feedback from the public consultation, will assist in planning how transport improvements along the corridor are prioritised and the review's results will inform the Scottish Government's timescales going forward.

Was the A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) Scheme included in the A96 Corridor Review?

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is separate from the wider A96 Corridor Review process. The Review has tested current plans for dualling outwith the A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, which runs from Inverness to Hardmuir, as it already has Ministerial consent following a Public Local Inquiry.

The publication of Made Orders for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme on 12 March 2024 was a major step forward in delivering around 31 km of new dual carriageway between Inverness and Hardmuir.

Completion of the statutory process clears the way for the Scottish Ministers to take forward the final stage of the process to acquire the land required to construct the scheme and Transport Scotland is pressing ahead with the procedural steps to make this happen.

Work has also commenced to determine the most suitable procurement option for delivering the scheme and thereafter a timetable for progress can then be set in line with available budgets.

Accessibility Statement

Accessibility

Transport Scotland is committed to making its websites accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

This accessibility statement applies to the A96 Corridor Review project pages and associated survey.

This application is run by Jacobs AECOM on behalf of Transport Scotland. We want as many people as possible to be able to use this application. For example, that means you should be able to:

- change colours, contrast levels and fonts
- zoom in up to 400% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate most of the application using just a keyboard
- navigate most of the application using speech recognition software
- listen to most of the application using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)

We've also made the application text as clear as possible to understand.

AbilityNet has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

To provide the best possible experience a mobile phone some elements are removed when you view the site on a phone to improve the usability and user experience.

Compliance status

This application is fully compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 AA.

ESRI Software

This application is developed by ESRI. ESRI provide information on accessibility conformance.

Preparation of this accessibility statement

This statement was prepared on 28/11/2024.

The statement was last reviewed on 28/11/2024.

Feedback and contact information

If you need information on this application in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille you should email A96CorridorReview@jacobs.com or phone 07432 112790.

We'll consider your request and get back to you in 14 days.

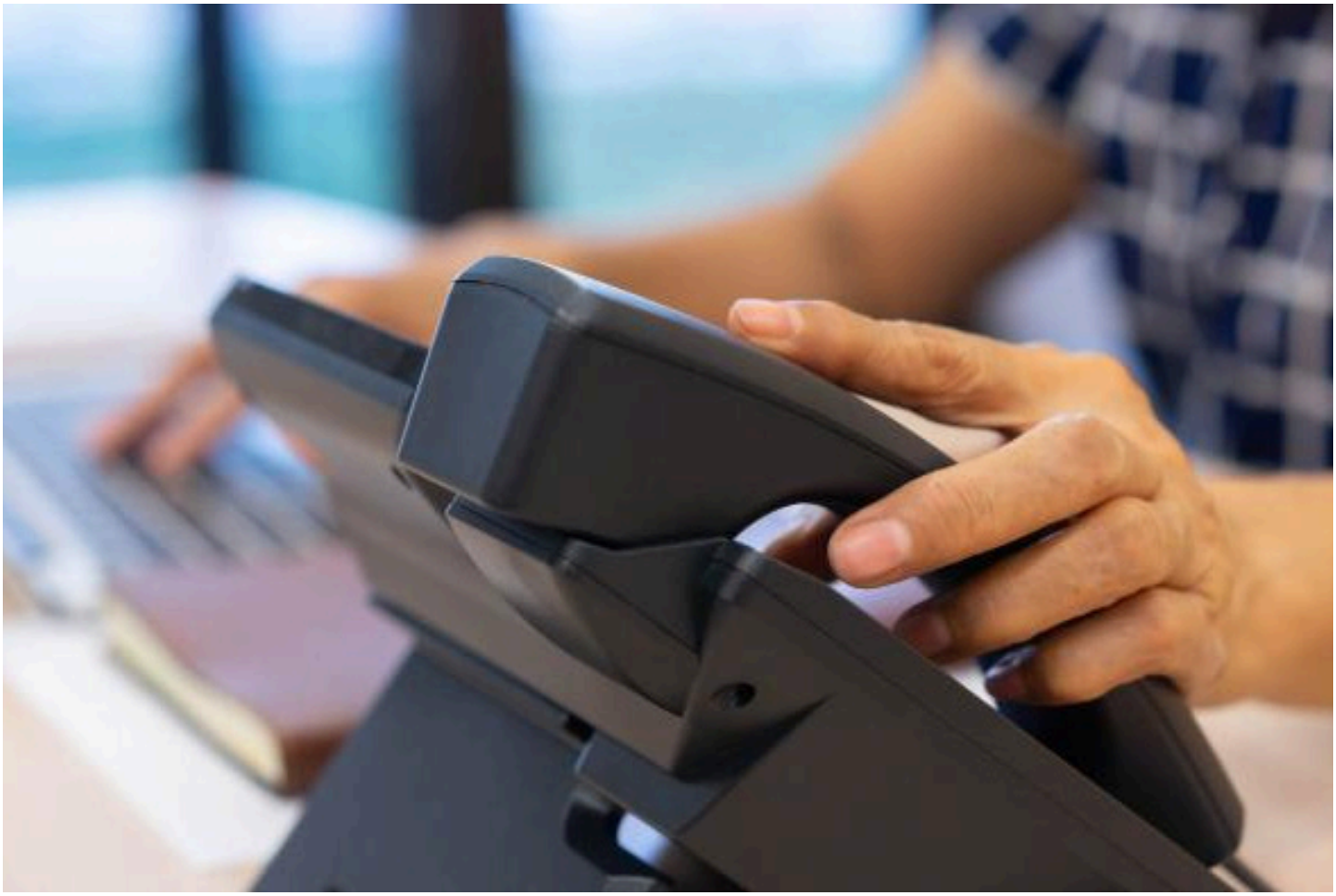
We're always looking to improve the accessibility of this application. If you find any problems that aren't listed on this page or think we're not meeting the requirements of the accessibility regulations, email A96CorridorReview@jacobs.com.

Enforcement procedure

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations'). If you're not happy with how we respond to your complaint, contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).

Published 28/11/2024.

Contact Us



Contact us

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Glasgow
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Appendix B1. News Release

PUBLISHED
28 Nov 2024

A96 Corridor Review published

The Scottish Government has today published the outcomes from the detailed appraisal carried out as part of the A96 Corridor Review. The public now have the opportunity to read what the Review has found in its draft reports and to provide their views in a 12 week consultation.

The corridor review was undertaken by Transport Scotland as part of the Bute House Agreement with the Scottish Greens – this part of the review involved a detailed appraisal of several 'packages' of improvements for the corridor.

The Scottish Government's current position is still to fully dual the A96 and with the statutory procedures completed, Transport Scotland is pressing ahead with the final stages to acquire the land required to construct the dualling of the A96 between Inverness to Nairn and the Nairn Bypass, along with the adjacent A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton project.

The detailed appraisal of all the evidence undertaken by Transport Scotland includes full dualling and a list of other options including a multi-modal 'Refined Package' of options.

The cost of full dualling east of Nairn to Aberdeen is estimated in the range of £2.5 billion to £5 billion (at 2022 prices) which compares with a range of £501 million to £1 billion for the Refined Package. That is why, along with its performance in relation to the assessment criteria, the appraisal has identified that the Refined Package of options is the optimal one.

The Refined Package aims to address the problems and opportunities within the corridor through a multi-modal approach to transport investment, delivering multi-modal benefits across the corridor.

Speaking after making a statement to Parliament, Cabinet Secretary for Transport Fiona Hyslop said:

"The Scottish Government's position has not changed – we remain in favour of full dualling of the A96. However, it is important local people, businesses and communities are given the opportunity to help inform the government's final decision on how to take forward improvements to the A96 Corridor.

"That decision will also have to balance the demands of the challenging economic climate and the climate emergency.

"Since we announced our intention to fully dual the A96 in 2011, a lot has changed, including 14 years of austerity, and ongoing cost pressures that have impacted the Scottish budget.

"We also agreed to undertake a corridor review, a lengthy and complex process, which has taken longer than initially anticipated because of the huge interest and engagement from the public.

"These delays now mean that we will not complete dualling of the A96 by the original anticipated timeline of 2030.

“However, we will continue to make progress with the statutory procedures already completed and work underway to determine the most suitable procurement option for delivering dualling of the key section of road between Inverness and Nairn.

“No decisions on the final outcome from this Review will be determined until we hear from the public and consider their views from this 12 week consultation. People have until 21 February 2025 to get involved.”

Before any final decision is taken on the way ahead, the Scottish Government wants to hear the views of people and communities, businesses, wider road users and others on the findings of the Corridor Review.

- Watch the Transport Secretary's statement to Parliament in full

Background

The ‘Refined Package’ includes bypasses of Elgin and Keith and targeted road safety improvements; improvements in towns and villages to encourage more people to walk and cycle locally; an A96 electric corridor to improve alternative refuelling facilities; rail improvements to reduce passenger journey times and enhance freight facilities; investment in flexible transport opportunities to improve connectivity in areas with limited access to existing public transport; and improvements to public transport interchange facilities. The detailed appraisal undertaken by Transport Scotland identifies that the Refined Package performs best against the objectives of the Review and provides better value for money.

Full Dualling has remained the Government’s commitment to the A96 throughout all stages of the appraisal process and has been subject to the same criteria used to appraise all alternative options. No final decision has been made by the Scottish Government as to how transport improvements along the corridor are prioritised. At this stage, the draft outcomes of the review have been published by Transport Scotland for consultation before a final decision can be reached by the Scottish Ministers.

- View the material from the A96 Corridor Review
- Read a Summary Report, providing a synopsis of the wider A96 Corridor Review

The A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme is separate from the wider A96 Corridor Review process as it has already received Ministerial consent following a Public Local Inquiry. The publication of Made Orders for the scheme on 12 March 2024 was a strong sign of the Scottish Government’s commitment to build this key project.

Appendix B2. Social media

Social media post by Transport Scotland dated 28 November 2024 on X (formerly known as Twitter)

Social media post by Transport Scotland dated 28 November 2024 on Facebook

Social media post by Transport Scotland dated 28 November 2024 on Instagram

Appendix B3. Poster

A96 Corridor Review

Your views are essential in helping us shape the future of the A96 corridor.

We have listened to your feedback which has informed the Review and the draft outcomes are now available for you to see.

We now want to hear from the public and would urge anyone with an interest in the A96 Corridor to view the material and give us your views. The Scottish Government will then consider all the feedback received before deciding on the way ahead for the A96 Corridor.

The consultation starts on **28 November 2024** and closes at midnight on **21 February 2025**

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

More details on the A96 Corridor Review, including the consultation feedback form can be found at:

bit.ly/A96Review

or scan the QR code to the right here.

For a paper copy of the feedback form phone 07432 112790.

Appendix C. Poster Distribution List

Sent by post

Merkinch Post Office IV3 8HU
Inverness Post Office IV1 1AX
Crown Post Office IV2 3JT
Inshes Post Office IV2 3TW
The Post Office IV2 4RP
Morrisons IV2 3PX
Tesco Superstore IV3 5DD
Aldi IV3 5JP
Tesco Superstore IV2 4XT
Asda Superstore IV2 6BZ
Lidl IV3 5LU
Tesco Extra IV2 3TW
Tesco Extra IV2 7GD
Aldi IV2 3TW
The Highland Council Inverness Service Point IV1 1JJ
The Highland Council HQ IV3 5NX
Raigmore Community Centre IV2 3UY
Hilton Community Centre IV2 4HT
Charleston Academy Community Complex IV3 8ET
James Cameron Community Centre IV3 5RH
Merkinch Community Centre IV3 8AD
Inverness Train Station IV2 3PY
Inverness Leisure Centre IV3 5SS
Inverness Library IV1 1NH
Culloden Post Office IV2 7LL
Croy Village Hall IV2 5PG
Balloch Village Hall IV2 7HQ
Inverness Airport Train Station IV2 7JJ
Culloden Leisure Centre IV2 7JZ
Culloden Academy IV2 7JZ
Inverness Royal Academy IV2 6RE
Culloden Library IV2 7LL
Co-op Food IV2 7LL
Spar IV2 7WB
Inverness Airport Train Station IV2 7JB
Nairn Town and County Hospital IV12 5EE
Nairn Leisure Centre IV12 4EA
Nairn Train Station IV12 4QS
Nairn Academy IV12 4RD
Sainsbury's IV12 5QF

Co op IV12 5AA
Nairn Library IV12 4AU
Nairn Community & Arts Centre IV12 4BQ
Sainsbury's IV12 5QF
Tesco Extra IV2 7GD
Culloden Academy IV2 7JZ
Lochdhu Post Office IV12 5NQ
Nairn Post Office IV12 4QD
The Highland Council Nairn Service Point IV12 4AU
Fortnighty Hall IV12 5JB
Cawdor Community Centre IV12 5XZ
Forres House IV36 1BU
Forres swimming pool and fitness centre IV36 1FG
Tesco IV36 2EY
Lidl IV36 2GW
Forres Town Hall IV36 1PB
Forres Post Office IV36 1QQ
Phoenix Findhorn CIC IV36 3TD
Edinkillie Community Hall IV36 2QW
Forres Midwives IV36 1QF
Forres Train Station IV36 1GZ
Forres Academy IV36 1FG
Rafford Village Hall IV36 2RU
Forres Library IV36 1BU
Kinloss Post Office IV36 3TL
Findhorn Post Office IV36 3YJ
Findhorn Foundation IV36 3TZ
Elgin Train Station IV30 1QP
Lidl IV30 1QW
Dr Grays Hospital IV30 1SN
Moray Leisure Centre IV30 1AP
Tesco Extra IV30 1TY
B&Q IV30 6YQ
Elgin Golf Club IV30 8SX
Elgin Cathedral IV30 1HU
Scotmid Bishopmills IV30 4EF
Moray Sports Centre IV30 8AR
New Elgin Post Office IV30 6BQ
ASDA IV30 6YQ
Elgin Library IV30 1HS
Elgin Town Hall IV30 1UL
Alves Parish Church IV36 2RA
Bishopmill Post Office IV30 4EB
Elgin Post Office IV30 1BH
New Elgin Post Office IV30 6BQ
Moray Council Reception IV30 1BX

New Elgin Hall IV30 6BL
Williamson Hall IV30 1QS
Bishopmill Hall IV30 4DH
Pluscarden Village Hall IV30 8TZ S
Elgin Academy IV30 4ND
Keystore Hopeman and Post Office IV30 5RU
Duffus Village Shop and Post Office IV30 5RR
Buckley's and Post Office IV31 6PR
Costcutter IV30 5SJ
Duffus Village Hall IV30 5QD
Roseisle Hall IV30 5YF
Lossiemouth Sports & Community Centre IV31 6JU
Lossiemouth Swimming Pool IV31 6NA
Lossiemouth High School IV31 6JU
Lossiemouth Library IV31 6JU
Co-op IV31 6ED
Co-op IV31 6PN
Mosstodloch Post Office and Filling Station IV32 7LH
Milnes High School IV32 7DJ
St Mary's Church IV32 7ED
Fochabers Public Institute IV32 7EP
Scotmid Co op IV32 7DH
Fochabers Veterinary Centre IV32 7LL
Fochabers Library IV32 7DU
Baxters Food Group Fochabers IV32 7LD
Fochabers Post Office IV32 7DX
Inchberry Hall IV32 7QB
Speymouth Hall IV32 7JX
Spey Bay Community Hall IV32 7PJ
Garmouth & Kingston Community Hub IV32 7NQ
Lhanbryde Community Centre IV30 8QQ
Lhanbryde Primary school IV30 8PD
Co-op IV30 8NZ
St Andrew's Lhanbryde & Urquhart Parish Church IV30 8LA
Llanbryde Post Office IV30 8RZ
Keith Sports and Community Centre AB55 5GT
Keith Railway station AB55 3DR
Keith Grammar School AB55 5GS
Tesco AB55 5HB
Keith Library AB55 5DP
Longmore Community Hall AB55 5HA
Newmill Post Office/Rosemount Stores AB55 6UR
The Keith Local & Keith Post Office AB55 5BL
Premier AB55 5AB
Londis AB55 5ED
Moray Council Keith Access Point AB55 5AH

King Memorial Hall AB55 6SL
Huntly Swimming Pool and Fitness Suite AB54 4SH
Huntly Train Station AB54 6HY
Linden Community Centre AB54 4SE
Jubilee Hospital AB54 8EX
The Gordon Schools AB54 4SE
Aberdeenshire Council Customer Service Point AB54 8AL
Tesco AB54 8TS
ASDA AB54 8SX
Huntly Library AB54 8BR
Stewarts Hall AB54 8AJ
Huntly Post Office AB54 8AE
Gartly Community Hall AB54 4PX
Kennethmont Post Office AB54 4NP
Insch Post Office AB52 6JE
Co-op AB52 6JB
Oyne Hall AB52 6QT
Premnay Hall AB52 6QE
Insch Train Station AB52 6PU
Bennachie Leisure Centre AB52 6LT
Insch Library AB52 6JJ
Inverurie Community Campus AB51 3QZ
Inverurie Town Hall AB51 3SN
Co op Burghmuir Drive AB51 4GY
Inverurie Academy AB51 3QS
St Andrews School AB51 3AD
M&S AB51 4UZ
Tesco AB51 4SR
Home Bargains AB51 0GZ
Lidl AB51 0GZ
Inverurie Library AN51 3SN
Post Office/JG Ross Bakers AB51 5QW
Inverurie Post Office AB51 3PY
Aberdeenshire Council Customer Service Point AB51 3WA
Garioch Community Education Centre AB51 3QZ
Logie Durno Village Hall AB51 5EJ
Inverurie Maternity Unit AB51 3UL
Inverurie Train Station AB51 4TN
Garioch Sports Centre AB51 4GY
Meikle Wartle Post Office AB51 5AA
Oldmeldrum Post Office AB51 0AA
Daviot Village Hall AB51 0HZ
Meldrum Academy AB51 0NT
Oldmeldrum Library AB51 0GN
Kemnay Post Office AB51 5SS
Monymusk Post Office AB51 7HJ

Kemnay Village Hall AB51 5SS
Monymusk Village Hall AB51 7HJ
Kemnay Academy AB51 5FW
Kemnay Library AB51 5RN
Co op Ab51 5RB
Kintore Post Office AB51 0YL
Sustainable Roots AB51 0UA
Sainsbury's Local AB51 0UY
Kintore Train Station AB51 0YF
Kintore Library AB51 0RU
Kintore Public Hall AB51 0UX
Dyce Post Office AB21 7AX
Newmachar Post Office AB21 0PJ
Sclattie Park Post Office AB21 9DH
Bucksburn Post Office AB21 9HB
St Nicholas Post Office AB10 1HW
Asda Dyce Superstore AB21 7NG
Lidl AB21 9LZ
Tesco Extra AB22 8HB
Asda Middleton Park Superstore AB22 8WQ
Aldi AB16 5UT
Sainsbury's AB25 3SA
Tesco Superstore AB15 6LT
Aldi AB15 8RF
Asda Bridge of Dee Superstore AB10 7QA
Sainsbury's AB10 7AY
Tesco Superstore AB12 3DN
Aberdeen City Council Customer Service Centre AB10 1AB
Northfield Community Centre AB16 7LL
Danestone Community Centre AB22 8ZP
Dyce Community Centre AB21 7BD
Milne Hall AB32 6XE
Kinellar Community Hall AB21 0JQ
Dyce Train Station AB21 7AB
Aberdeen Train Station AB11 5RA
Westdyke Leisure Centre AB32 6QX
Aberdeen Sports Village AB 24 5RU
Bucksburn Academy AB21 9DG
Dyce Academy AB21 7NF
Bucksburn Library AB21 9DG
Aberdeen Central Library AB25 1GW
Dyce Library AB21 7BD

Sent by email

Raigmore Community Council
Smithton Community
Culloden Community Council
Ardersier & Petty Community Council
Balloch Community Council
Croy & Culloden Moor Community Council
Cawdor & West Nairnshire Community Council
Nairn West & Suburban Community Council
Auldearn Community Council
East Nairnshire Community Council
Dyke Landward Community Council
Forres Community Council
Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council
Heldon Community Council
Elgin Community Council
Innes Community Council
Lennox Community Council
Strathisla Community Council
Keith Community Council
Strathbogie Community Council
Huntly Community Council
Bennachie Community Council
Inverurie Community Council
Kintore & District Community Council
Fintray & Kinellar Community Council
Dyce & Stoneywood Community Council
Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council
Newmachar Community Council
Fintray Community Council
Kinellar Community Council
Echt and Skene Community Council
Kemnay Community Council
Meldrum, Bourtie and Daviot Community Council
Fyvie, Rothienorman, Monquhitter Community Council
Auchterless, Inverkeithny and Fisherford Community Council
Donside Community Council
Tap o Noth Community Council
Dufftown and District Community Council
Aberchirder and Marnoch Community Council
Fordyce, Sandend and District Community Council
Cullen and Deskford Community Council
Buckie and District Community Council
Speyside Community Council
Lossiemouth Community Council

Hopeman and Covesea Community Council
Burghhead and Cummingston Community Council
Finderne Community Council
Cradlehall and Westhill Community Council
Inshes and Milton of Leys Community Council

Appendix D. Stakeholder Letter

Dear all,

Following the email you received on 28 November from Transport Scotland, we are writing to provide you with further details regarding the consultation for the A96 Corridor Review.

As part of the consultation period, we would welcome the opportunity to understand the views of your organisation about the draft outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review, and **we will be in touch shortly inviting you to a briefing session which is anticipated to be held in the week commencing 27 January 2025.** If you are unable to attend we would appreciate if you could please pass the invitation on to a colleague who can attend on your behalf.

The format of the briefing session will be a short presentation, followed by an open discussion about the outcomes of the review. During the session, we will also be using a Mural board so you can share your views and feedback. The Microsoft Teams invitation, and the link to the Mural board, will be circulated in advance of the session.

We will be undertaking this consultation exercise to gather key information about how the draft outcomes of the review could impact living, working and travelling experience along the A96 corridor. We appreciate a wide range of engagement and consultation has been carried out on the A96 in recent years. This consultation exercise will build on the previous engagement undertaken and seek to identify how satisfied stakeholders are with the outcomes of the review.

As mentioned previously, we are also gathering feedback from the public and other stakeholders. This feedback is being collected via a digital consultation survey. We would appreciate if you could share this survey to anyone who may be interested in taking part during the consultation period.

A96 Corridor Review feedback survey - https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=mHckNyz0_UKKN9SccSjTa2STfdKfp_5NuSl4aDL-0N5UN0g4T0tIOVk5VEtYWlU4N0dTVExWTVdYQy4u&route=shorturl

Accompanying our survey is an online interactive StoryMap which provides further information. The Transport Scotland project webpage and the StoryMap provide further details on the A96 Corridor Review.

Transport Scotland A96 Corridor Review website – https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/strategy/a96-corridor-review/

A96 Corridor Review StoryMap - https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/46a76788ae2141ce8f52f7949baf0f19/page/Home/

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the A96 Corridor Review or would like to discuss this further, please contact a96corridorreview@jacobs.com.

Yours sincerely,

The Jacobs AECOM Stakeholder Engagement Team

Appendix E. Stakeholder List (list of all stakeholders contacted for latest A96 Corridor Review consultation)

Council Leaders and Executives

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Moray Council
The Highland Council

Transport Working Groups

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
HITRANS
Moray Council
Nestrans
The Highland Council

Statutory Environmental Bodies

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Historic Environment Scotland
Moray Council
NatureScot
Scottish Forestry
SEPA
The Highland Council

Environmental Bodies

Bat Conservation Trust
British Deer Society
Buglife Scotland
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Environmental Standards Scotland
Highland Environment Forum
John Muir Trust
Marine Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
North East Scotland Bat Group
North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership
Reforesting Scotland
Royal Society for Protection of Birds
Saving Wildcats
Scotland Badgers
Scottish Amphibian & Reptile Group
Scottish Squirrels
Scottish Wild Land Group
Scottish Wildlife Trust

The Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust & River Diveron District Salmon Fishery Board
Woodland Trust Scotland
WWF Scotland

Active Travel and Accessibility

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeen Cycle Forum
Aberdeenshire Council
Access Panel (Aberdeenshire North)
Access Panel (Central Aberdeenshire)
Access Panel (Inverness)
Access Panel (Nairn)
Access Panel (West Aberdeenshire)
Accessible Moray
British Horse Society
CTC/Cycling UK
Cycling Scotland
Cyclists' Touring Club Grampian
Disability Agenda Scotland
Disability Equality Scotland
Disability Information Scotland
Highland Cycle Campaign
Inverness City Cycle Club
Mobility & Access Committee for Scotland
Moray Council
National Access Forum (NAF)
Paths for All
Ramblers (Inverurie)
Ramblers (Moray)
Ramblers Scotland
Revolution Cycling Team
Scottish Orienteering Association
Scottish Outdoor Access Network
Scotways
SUSTRANS
The Highland Council

Community Planning Partnerships

Community Planning Aberdeen
Community Planning Aberdeen City
Community Planning Moray
The Highland Council

Businesses

AA Motoring Trust
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Aberdeen Business Improvement District
Aberdeen Community Transport
AGS Airport Ltd. (Aberdeen International Airport)
Amazon
BEAR Scotland
BT Opeanreach
Crown Estate Scotland
D&E Coaches Ltd.
Defence Infrastructure Organisation (Land)
DPD
Eddie Stobart
Elgin Business Improvement District
FedEx
Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries Trust
First Bus
Fisheries Management Scotland
Hermes
Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd.
Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE)
Inverness Business Improvement District
Inverness Chamber of Commerce
Inverurie Business Improvement District
Logistics UK
Menzies Distribution
Mobile Broadband Network (EE & 3)
Moray Chamber of Commerce
Moray Community Transport
Nairn Business Improvement District
Nairn Community Transport
Nairn District Salmon Fishery Board
National Air Traffic Services
National Grid
Ness and Beauly Fisheries Trust
Ness District Salmon Fishery Board
Network Rail
NHS (Grampian)

NHS Scotland
ParcelForce
Police Scotland
RAC
Rapson's
Royal Mail
Scotch Whisky Association
Scotland Chamber of Commerce
ScotRail
Scottish Ambulance Services
Scottish City Link
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Fire and Rescue
Scottish Gas Network
Scottish Water
Sky
Spey Fishing Board
SSED
SSET
Stagecoach
Transform Scotland
Verizon
Virgin Media
Vodafone
Yodel

Community Councils

Aberchirder and Marnoch Community Council
Ardersier & Petty Community Council
Auchterless, Inverkeithny and Fisherford Community Council
Auldearn Community Council
Balloch Community Council
Bennachie Community Council
Buckie and District Community Council
Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council
Burghhead and Cummingston Community Council
Cawdor & West Community Council
Cornhill and Ordiquhill Community Council
Cradlehall and Westhill Community Council
Croy & Culloden Moor Community Council
Cullen and Deskford Community Council
Culloden Community Council
Donside Community Council
Dufftown and District Community Council
Dyce & Stoneywood Community Council

Dyke Landward Community Council
East Nairnshire Community Council
Echt and Skene Community Council
Elgin Community Council
Finderne Community Council
Findhorne & Kinloss Community Council
Fintray & Kinellar Community Council
Fintray Community Council
Fordyce, Sandend and District Community Council
Forres Community Council
Fyvie, Rothienorman, Monquhitter Community Council
Heldon Community Council
Hopeman and Covesea Community Council
Huntly Community Council
Innes Community Council
Inshes and Milton of Leys Community Council
Inverurie Community Council
Keith Community Council
Kemnay Community Council
Kinellar Community Council
Kintore & District Community Council
Lennox Community Council
Lossiemouth Community Council
Meldrum, Bourtie and Daviot Community Council
Nairn River Community Council
Nairn West & Suburban Community Council
Nairnshire Community Council
Newmacher Community Council
Raigmore Community Council
Smithton Community Council
Speyside Community Council
Strathbogie Community Council
Strathisla Community Council
Tap o Noth Community Council
Westhill and Elrick Community Council

Appendix F. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Media Notice

A96 Corridor Review

Strategic Environmental Assessment Notice - Draft Environmental Report

As per Section 16(2) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Scottish Government is now consulting on the documents relating to the A96 Corridor Review Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The A96 Corridor Review covers the transport corridor from Raigmore Interchange at Inverness to Craibstone Junction at Aberdeen and is focused on improving connectivity, tackling congestion and addressing safety and environmental concerns. The draft Environmental Report and appendices can be viewed at: https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/strategic-environmental-assessment-sea-draft-environmental-report-a96-corridor-review/ and the Non-Technical Summary can be viewed at: https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/strategic-environmental-assessment-sea-draft-environmental-report-non-technical-summary-a96-corridor-review/

Feedback on these documents can now be submitted by email to A96CorridorReview@jacobs.com, by phone on 07506 879562, or by mail to Transport Scotland, George House, 2nd Floor, 36 North Hanover Street, Glasgow, G1 2AD. We ask that views be submitted by the close of the consultation period on 21 February 2025. If further information is required on the draft Environmental Report, please contact SEA_Gateway@gov.scot

A copy of the text included within the Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment notice as published in the Edinburgh Gazette and Press and Journal on 29 November 2024

Appendix G. Feedback Survey

A96 Corridor Review

We would like to hear your views on the outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review, particularly the Refined Package. This package includes a range of interventions across the corridor, focusing on improvements to active travel, public transport and road infrastructure. Once the consultation has closed, we will gather and review all feedback, which will then be presented to the Scottish Government for consideration in determining the next steps.

Privacy Notice: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/46a76788ae2141ce8f52f7949baf0f19/page/Privacy/?draft=true

* Required

Section 1: A96 Corridor Review

Question 1: How did you hear about this round of consultation on the A96 Corridor Review?

- ◯ Social media post
- ◯ Poster
- ◯ Newspaper/online news site
- ◯ Transport Scotland website
- ◯ I had the project website bookmarked
- ◯ Google search
- ◯ Google alert
- ◯ Word of mouth
- ◯ Other

Question 2: To what extent are you satisfied with the outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review?

- ◯ Very satisfied
- ◯ Satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Dissatisfied
- ◯ Very dissatisfied
- ◯ Don't know/not applicable

Question 3: How satisfied are you with the Refined Package?

- ◯ Very satisfied
- ◯ Satisfied
- ◯ Neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied
- ◯ Dissatisfied
- ◯ Very dissatisfied
- ◯ Don't know/not applicable

Question 4: What interventions are your priority/priorities within the Refined Package? *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Active Communities
- ☐ Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities
- ☐ Investment in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (Maas)
- ☐ Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements on Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Line
- ☐ Targeted Road Safety Improvements
- ☐ Elgin Bypass
- ☐ Keith Bypass
- ☐ A96 Electric Corridor

Question 5: Do you feel that the Refined Package will improve your experience of living, working and travelling along the A96 corridor?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know/not applicable

Question 6: Do you have any further comments?

Section 2: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Statutory Impact Assessments

Question 7: Please note here any comments you wish to make on the overall findings of the Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report for the A96 Corridor Review.

Question 8: Are there any particular environmental issues, problems or opportunities you would like to mention that you feel have not been captured within the Draft Environmental Report? If so, please note them in the comments box below.

Question 9: Do you have any feedback or comments on the draft Equality Impact Assessment, Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment and/or Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment? If so, please note them in the comments box below

Section 3: About You

This section helps us understand who is responding to the consultation survey. We want to hear from a broad range of the people, businesses and organisations who use the A96 corridor so that we can understand how views of the A96 corridor differ.

Question 10: Please provide the first part (3 or 4 characters) of your home or business postcode. This will help us understand your comments in relation to the review. *

Question 11 *(Optional)***:** Please indicate if you are responding as:

- ◯ An individual
- ◯ On behalf of a business or organisation (including landowners, community councils and interest groups)

Question 12 *(Optional)***:** What is the name of your organisation?

Question 13 *(Optional)***:** What is your role in the organisation?

Question 14 *(Optional)***:** How were the views of those you represent gathered for your organisation?

Question 15 *(Optional)***:** Were you aware of the A96 Corridor Review extent prior to this consultation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know

Section 4: Equality monitoring questions

- **Why are we asking for equality information?** We collect equality information to help plan and deliver services as part of our Equality duties (Equality Act 2010). The information you provide helps us to design and develop services which are accessible, inclusive and do not discriminate.
- **What do we do with equality information?** We use equality information for a range of purposes. On this consultation it will help us to identify and address our customers' needs and improve our information and communications.
- **Do you need to answer every question?** No, all questions are voluntary and anonymous.

Question 16: Please tell us your age:

- ◯ Under 16
- ◯ 16-24
- ◯ 25-34
- ◯ 35-44
- ◯ 45-54
- ◯ 55-64
- ◯ 65-74
- ◯ 75-84
- ◯ 85+
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Question 17: Do you consider yourself?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Question 18: Do you consider yourself to have a disability such as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other

Question 19: Do you use British Sign Language (BSL)

- ◯ Yes, it is my first language
- ◯ Yes, but it is not my first language
- ◯ No