

Topic and Assessment Indicator	North Option	South Option	Preference	Comment / Summary of Key Differences
Engineering Assessment				
- Cost Estimate Difference (2014 prices)	£17M less than South Option. Route generally follows mainly gentle topography along existing transport corridor (road/rail) between Forres and	£17M more than North Option mainly due to significantly more earthworks. South Option passes through steep topography that would require climbing	N	Slight Preference for North Option due to cost differential driven by significantly less earthworks
Environmental Assessment – Communities and People				
- Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx. 170 receptors predicted to experience minor (non-significant) beneficial effects on local air quality (reduced NO₂ and PM₁₀ concs.) Approx. 70 receptors predicted to experience minor (non-significant) adverse effects on local air quality (increased NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx. 170 receptors predicted to experience minor (non-significant) beneficial effects on local air quality (reduced NO₂ and PM₁₀ concs.) Approx. 50 receptors predicted to experience minor (non-significant) adverse effects on local air quality (increased NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations) 		No preference since differences between effects are negligible in terms of numbers of receptors and all predicted effects are non-significant
- Noise & Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx. 150 dwellings with significant adverse traffic noise impacts (approx. 130 major), approx. 220 dwellings with significant beneficial traffic noise impacts (approx. 90 major) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx. 110 dwellings with significant adverse traffic noise impacts (approx. 100 major), approx. 270 dwellings with significant beneficial traffic noise impacts (approx. 100 major) 	S	Slight Preference for South Option due to slightly fewer adverse traffic noise impacts and more beneficial noise impacts
- People & Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to affect amenity on six NMU routes, of which five would also have increased journey length. Improved amenity on one NMU route A loss of approx. 16ha land used by the community (including from Alves Wood and woodland and coarse fishing ponds at Hardhillock) and impacts on NMU access to these areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to affect amenity on 25 NMU routes, of which 12 would also have increased journey length. Improved amenity on one NMU route A loss of approx. 33ha land used by the community (including from Burgie Wood, Monaghty Wood and the coarse fishing ponds at Hardhillock) and impacts on NMU access to these areas through increased journey length 	N	Clear Preference for North Option due to fewer NMU routes being affected and less impact on woodlands used by the community
- Agriculture, Forestry and Sporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land take from 13 farm / forestry units with a loss of approx. 116ha of agricultural land, approx. 36ha of which is prime land. Major adverse effects on two agricultural holdings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land take from 13 farm / forestry units with a loss of approx. 128ha of agricultural land, approx. 9ha of which is prime land. Major adverse effects on three agricultural land holdings 		No Preference. North Option affects less agricultural land and one fewer farm holding is significantly affected albeit H South affects less prime land
- Policies & Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for conflict with 12 LDP policies No material effects on LDP designated sites Minor land take from planning application site (access route to new house) at Easter Cloves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for conflict with 14 LDP policies Minor land take impact on a designated housing site at Lochyhill and two employment sites at Forres Enterprise Park No material effects on planning applications 	N	Slight Preference for North Option which avoids land take impacts on designated LDP sites in Forres, and avoids encroaching on a settlement boundary
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- Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials required for road pavement (11.6km mainline & 7.3km side roads) and structures (deck area approx. 5,200m²) Bulk earthworks approx. 2.1Mm³, of which net import of approx. 1.0Mm³ Woodland clearance of approx. 20ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials required for road pavement (11.7km mainline & 7.2km side roads) and structures (deck area approx. 4,700m²) Bulk earthworks approx. 2.9Mm³, of which net import of approx. 1.3Mm³ Woodland clearance of approx. 40ha 	N	Slight Preference for North Option since materials requirements are lower for bulk earthworks, material import and woodland clearance. Slightly higher structures deck area and slightly shorter road length
- Visual Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant adverse visual effects predicted on isolated residential receptors, however effects are lessened due to proximity to the existing A96, reasonably consistent route elevation which limits its visibility within surrounding area, and the screening benefit of woodland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option benefits from partial screening by woodland, however its elevated position on reasonably steep, north facing slopes would expose some of its length to extensive visibility to, and significant adverse effects on, visual receptors to the north 	N	Slight Preference for North Option which would have slightly fewer significant visual effects than South Option, in part due to its generally less visually exposed position
Overall – Impacts on Communities and People	<i>North Option is more closely aligned with existing A96 corridor for much of its length and has less impact on visual amenity. South Option affects fewer noise sensitive receptors but North Option has less impact on NMUs, land used by the community, materials and less effect on future development land</i>		N	Clear Preference for North Option due to less effect on NMUs, community land, policy, materials and visual amenity
Environmental Assessment – Natural and Cultural Heritage				
- Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predicted significant effects on the setting of the Category B Listed Buildings at Cathay House Gate Lodge and on setting of Alves Parish Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predicted significant effect on the setting of the Category B Listed Buildings at Cathay House Gate Lodge 	S	Clear Preference for South Option which has less effects on setting of cultural heritage assets
- Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant adverse residual landscape effects predicted due to collective dominance of infrastructure and imposition upon local houses as well as on the strath floor at Lawrenceton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant adverse residual landscape effects predicted from imposition of sub-option at its western junction, across strath floor by Monaghty and Cloves, and cutting through the hillside at Burgie Wood 	N	Clear Preference for North Option due to closer relationship to existing infrastructure and less imposing on rural, open landscapes and hill landforms
- Nature Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of approx. 14.5ha ancient woodland and approx. 2.5ha native woodland Woodland affected includes Alves Wood whose ecological functionality is already affected by the existing A96 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of approx. 21ha ancient woodland and approx. 4.5ha native woodland Woodland affected includes Burgie Wood which is of high quality with considerable protected species interest 	N	Clear Preference for North Option which avoids impact on the high quality habitat of Burgie Wood, requires less loss of ancient woodland and avoids proximity to SSSI at Lethenhill
- Geology, Soils, Contaminated Land & Groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of effect on hydrogeology and water supplies from cuttings and embankments, including on the water supply for Glenburgie Distillery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of effect on hydrogeology and water supplies from cuttings and embankments, including embankment sections crossing upstream watercourses that feed private water supplies to the Burgie Estate and Glenburgie Distillery 		No Preference as similar effects on hydrogeology and watersupplies are predicted for both options
- Road Drainage & Water Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No predicted material changes in flood levels No significant permanent effects on river morphology or water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No predicted material changes in flood levels No significant permanent effects on river morphology or water quality 		No Preference as predicted effects are similar for both options and neither is significant
Overall – Impacts on Natural and Cultural Heritage	<i>Significant effects on landscape character predicted for both options although South Option is more intrusive in the landscape and with greater woodland loss. South Option avoids effects on setting of the listed Alves Church, but is predicted to have greater effects on nature conservation (including potentially on Lethenhill SSSI) and protected species associated with the higher quality woodland at Burgie</i>		N	Clear Preference for North Option which has less ecological and landscape effect
Traffic / Economic Assessment				
- Traffic assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective transfer of traffic from existing network Higher relief to existing A96 at Alves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective transfer of traffic from existing network, but significantly less than North Option 	N	Clear Preference for North Option as it provides best value, results in higher transfer of traffic from local road network compared to South Option
- Additional Cost (PVC)	-	£9M		
- Additional Benefit (PVB)	£17M	-		
- Best Value	£26M	-		