

Annex A – Extracts from Minute to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity from Transport Scotland regarding Initial Route Options Sifting and Public Exhibitions – 13 September 2018

A96 DUALLING EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN INITIAL ROUTE OPTIONS SIFTING AND PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Purpose

To seek agreement from the Cabinet Secretary to present the shortlisted options for the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme to the public at a series of public exhibitions from 8 October to 11 October 2018 to obtain vital feedback.

Initial Options Assessment

To facilitate the development of route options, key scheme study area constraints and route corridors generally 2km wide were established. Within these corridors, route options were designed with the better performing options carried forward for further assessment.

A total of 80 routes within corridors have been appraised, and a long list of 52 viable end to end route options identified for the East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme. The route options considered as part of the initial assessment process are shown in **Annex C**.

Route options deselected at this stage of the assessment process include those that pass through the Bennachie Special Landscape Area (Improvement Strategy Option C), and those using the existing A96 single carriageway corridor through Inverurie.

Only the better performing options that have potential to become the preferred option, have been recommended for further more detailed DMRB Stage 2 assessment. These route options are shown in **Annex D**.

Transport Scotland's A96 Dualling Programme Board have reviewed the output from the initial route options assessment in accordance with internal governance procedures and are content with the route options to be taken forward for further assessment, and that they be presented to the public for vital feedback as part of our on-going rolling programme of engagement with local communities.

Communications Handling

A news release will be prepared for issue at the same time as the first press ads on week commencing 24 September 2018 to encourage attendance at the exhibitions. A further news release will be drafted for issue on 8 October to coincide with the route options going on public display. It will highlight the decision to rule out Improvement Strategy Option C and route options within the existing A96 corridor at Inverurie.

Conclusion

The Cabinet Secretary is invited to:

- **Note the outcome of the initial route option sifting process and the route options to be taken forward as part of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment.**
- **Note that we intend to hold public exhibitions from 8 October to 11 October 2018 to present the route options proposed for further assessment.**

- **Note the proposed communications handling and advise if he wishes to hold a media opportunity at Inverurie Town Hall on 8 October between 11am and 12pm, prior to the opening of the exhibition.**

Annex A

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Background Information

In May 2015, Public exhibitions along the A96 corridor presented the outcome of the A96 Dualling Programme preliminary engineering (DMRB Stage 1 assessment) and strategic environmental assessment work, and sought the views of local communities, businesses and road users. The DMRB Stage 1 assessment looked at the general impacts of a bypass to the north or south of towns along the existing A96, and the improvement strategy options presented (e.g. Options B, C and D) were illustrations of what such choices might mean. The improvement strategies did not represent specific corridors or route alignments, this more detailed work forming part of the next stage of design development (DMRB Stage 2 assessment). Improvement Strategies B, C and D as presented to the public in May 2015 are shown in **Annex B**.

Development of Route Options

To facilitate the development of route options for assessment, the AmeyArup multi-disciplinary team firstly set about identifying key constraints within the scheme study area. The resulting constraints mapping was then used to identify feasible route corridors (generally 2km wide). Route options within these corridors were then designed and appraised from an engineering, environmental and transportation perspective with the better performing route options within each corridor being carried forward for further appraisal.

Three internal sifting workshops have been held. The first confirmed the selection of route corridors to be considered as a result of the constraints mapping exercise. This first sifting exercise resulted in only one of the route corridors being removed from further consideration.

First Fix alignment designs were then used to test the complexity and impact of constructing a new road within each of the corridor areas. 80 corridor routes, totalling over 1,000 km were appraised against the Scheme Objectives and additionally a qualitative assessment of performance against STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) criteria. A "First Fix" workshop was held, where appraisal results were reviewed and better performing corridor routes agreed. The result of this workshop was to remove a further two corridors and associated alignments from being further appraised.

Following the First Fix workshop the AmeyArup team collaboratively rationalised and developed combinations of the better performing corridor routes into viable end to end combinations of routes, from East of Huntly to Aberdeen. A long list of 52 realistic and deliverable “Second Fix” end to end route combinations was determined for further appraisal.

Sub-criteria, based on the Scheme Objectives and STAG criteria, were used to assess and score each end to end route option. Traffic and Transportation, Environmental and Engineering criteria were used. The assessment score allocated to each sub-criterion was based on a seven point (STAG) scale ranging from major beneficial to major adverse. This allowed the performance of each of the 52 end to end route options to be measured against each of the sub criteria.

Option Sifting “Second Fix” Workshop

A ‘Second Fix’ sifting workshop was held on 24 July 2018, and was attended by representatives from across Transport Scotland and the AmeyArup project team. The project team presented details on the methodology adopted to develop the scheme proposals and identified a long list of 52 route options as a result of the Initial Option Assessment process.

The AmeyArup project team presented a combined multi-disciplinary comparative appraisal of all 52 end to end route options. Better performing options were those considered by the team to have potential to become the preferred route option. The scoring was used to identify consistently high scoring route options across the disciplines.

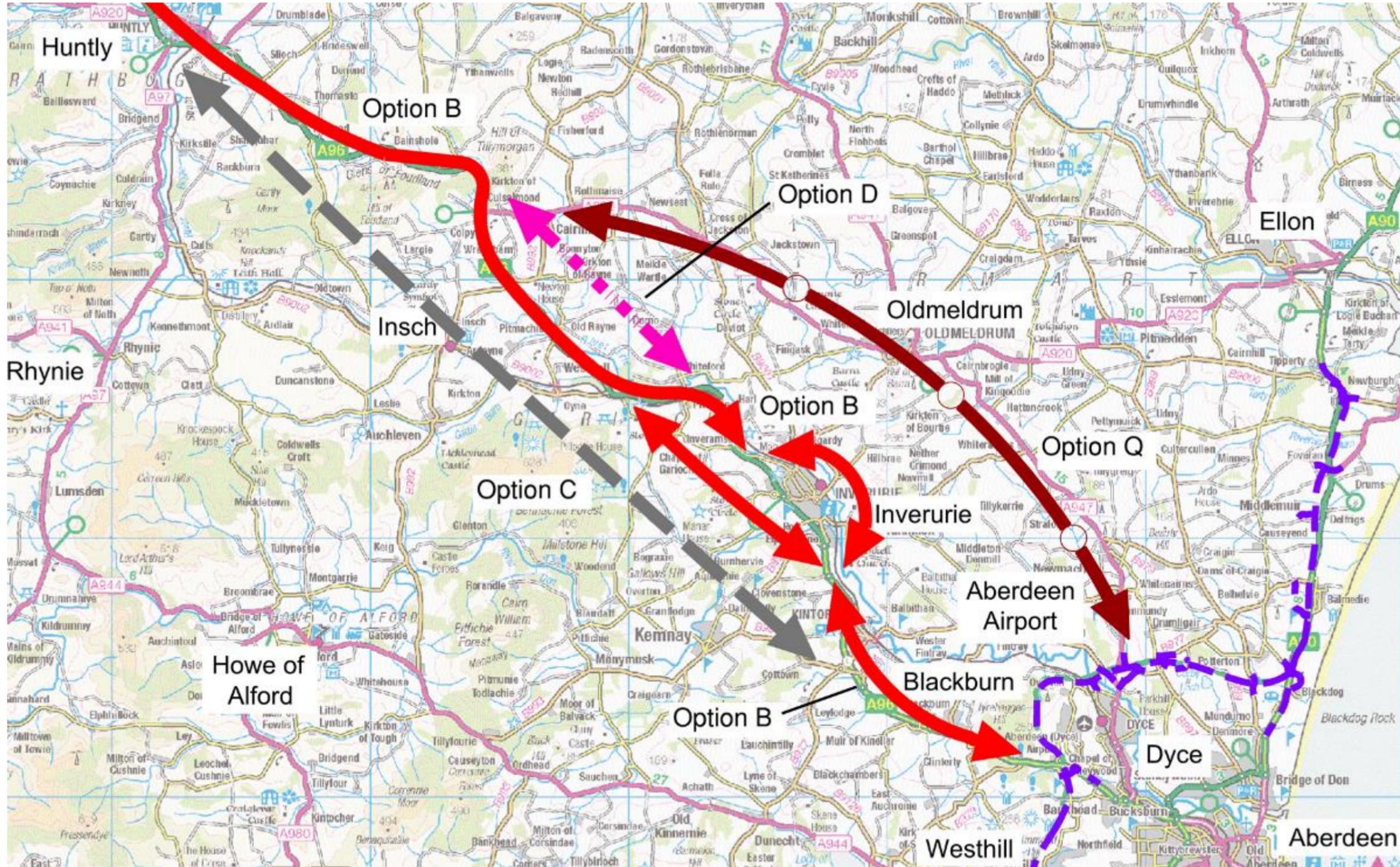
The workshop concluded that the “better performing” route options from the 52 feasible options considered should be used to obtain public feedback. However, a further alignment, which optimises the use of the existing A96 rural corridor was also added following discussion and agreement between workshop attendees.

Annex C shows all route options considered, those sifted out at First Fix, those sifted out at Second Fix, and those deemed to be better performing. The better performing route options are shown in isolation in **Annex D**.

ANNEX B

A96 DUALLING EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN
INITIAL SIFTING OF ROUTE OPTIONS AND PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

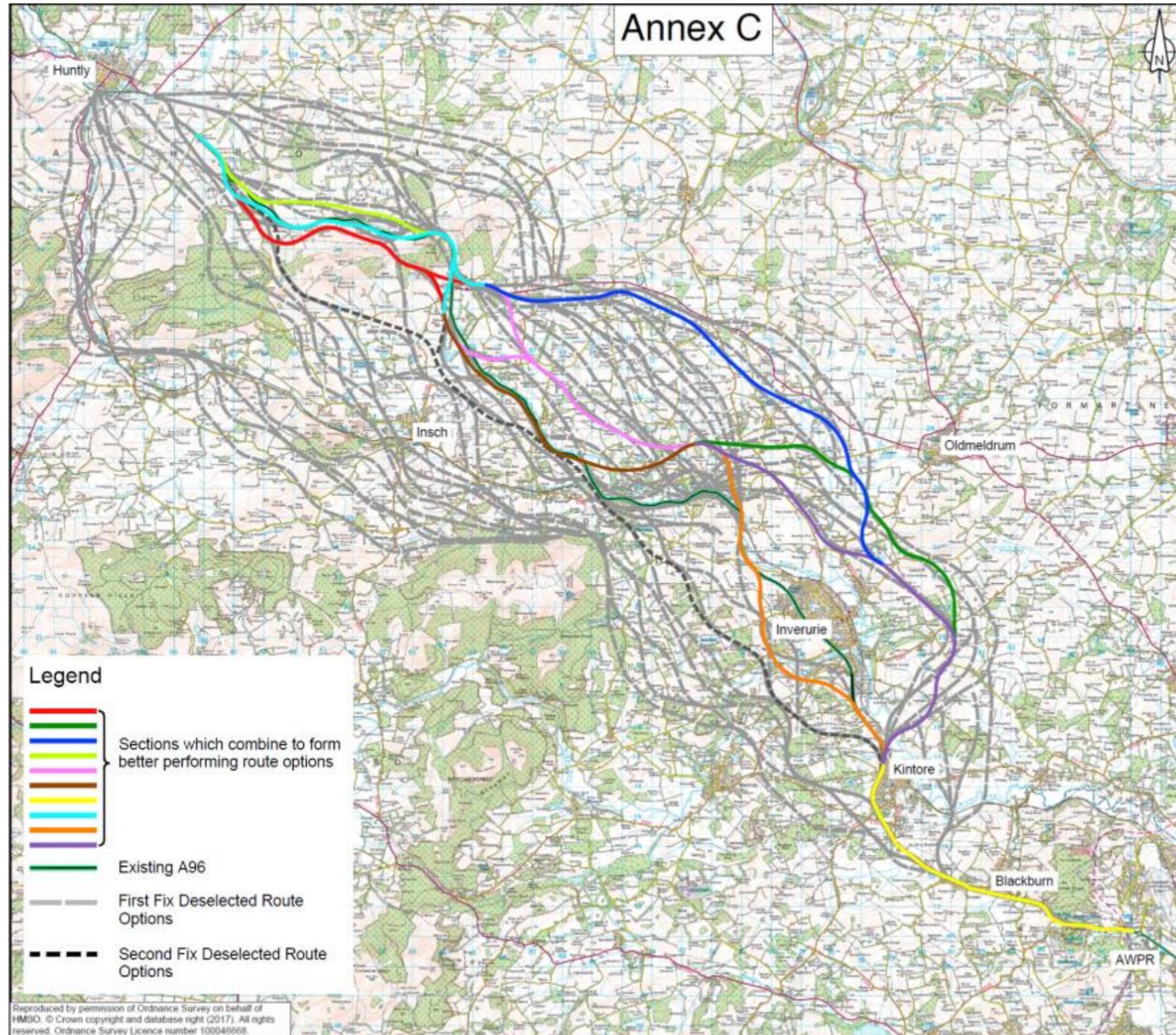
DMRB Stage 1 - Improvement Strategy Options



ANNEX C

A96 DUALLING EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN INITIAL SIFTING OF ROUTE OPTIONS AND PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Initial Route Options Considered



ANNEX D

A96 DUALLING EAST OF HUNTLY TO ABERDEEN INITIAL SIFTING OF ROUTE OPTIONS AND PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

SHORTLIST OF ROUTE OPTIONS TO BE TAKEN FORWARD FOR FURTHER ASSESSMENT

