



Flooding at Tavelty, the site of the proposed bridge (violet route).

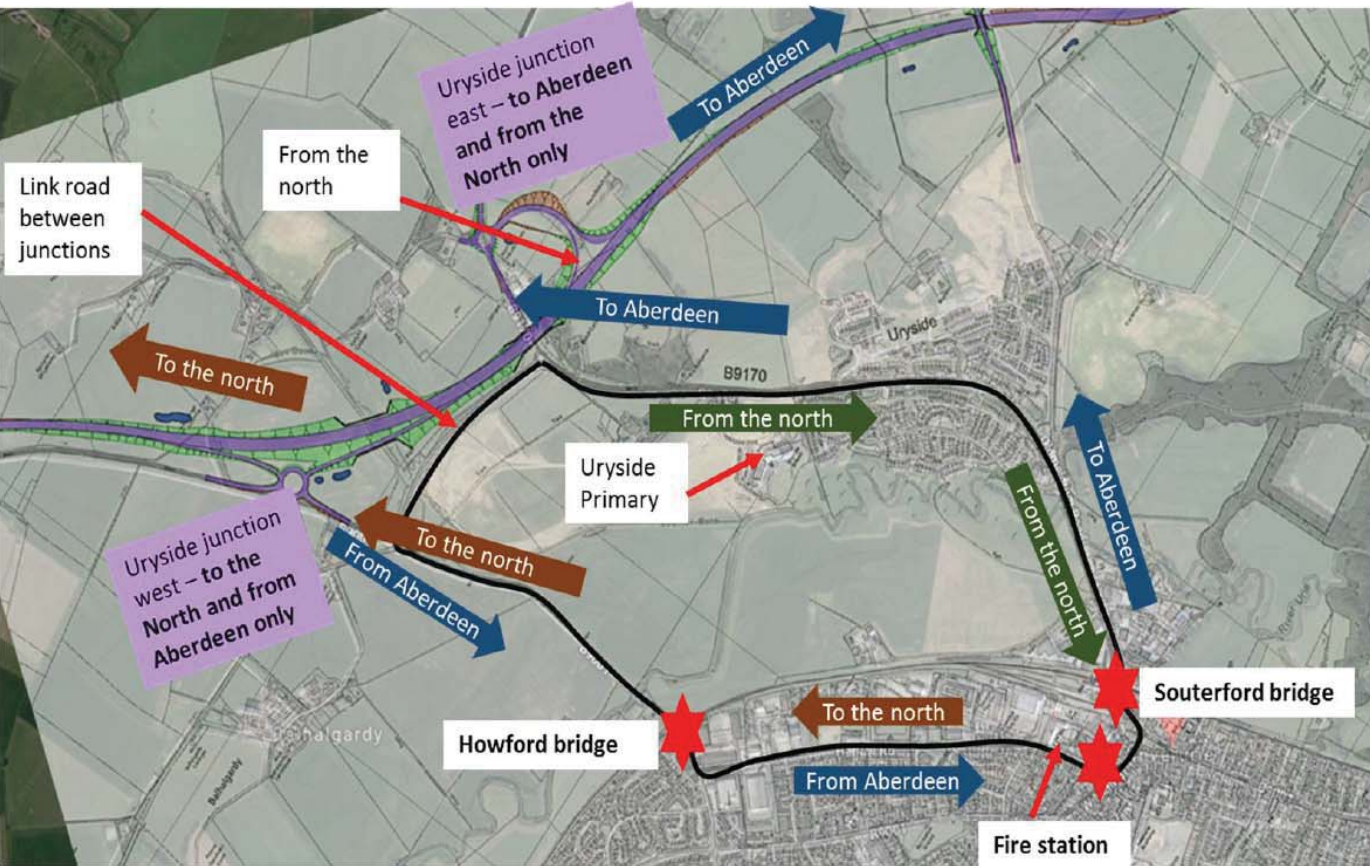


The Violet route is elevated & will be seen & heard by everyone in Inverurie & Port Elphinstone



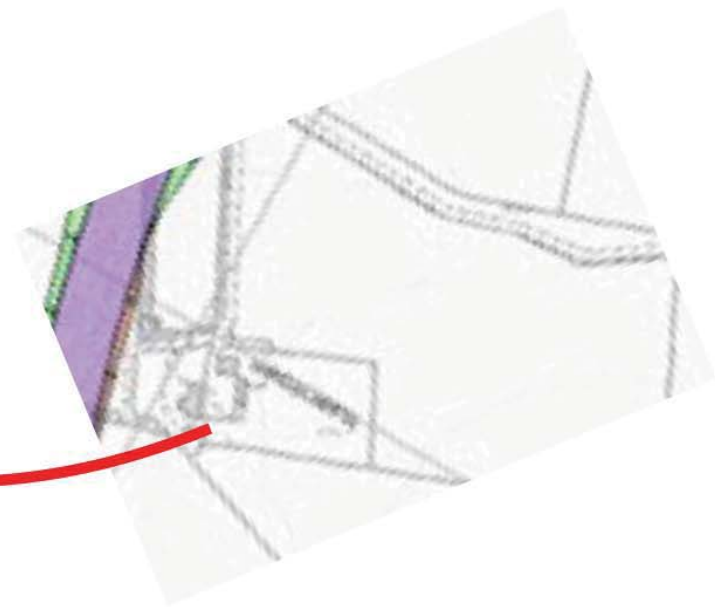
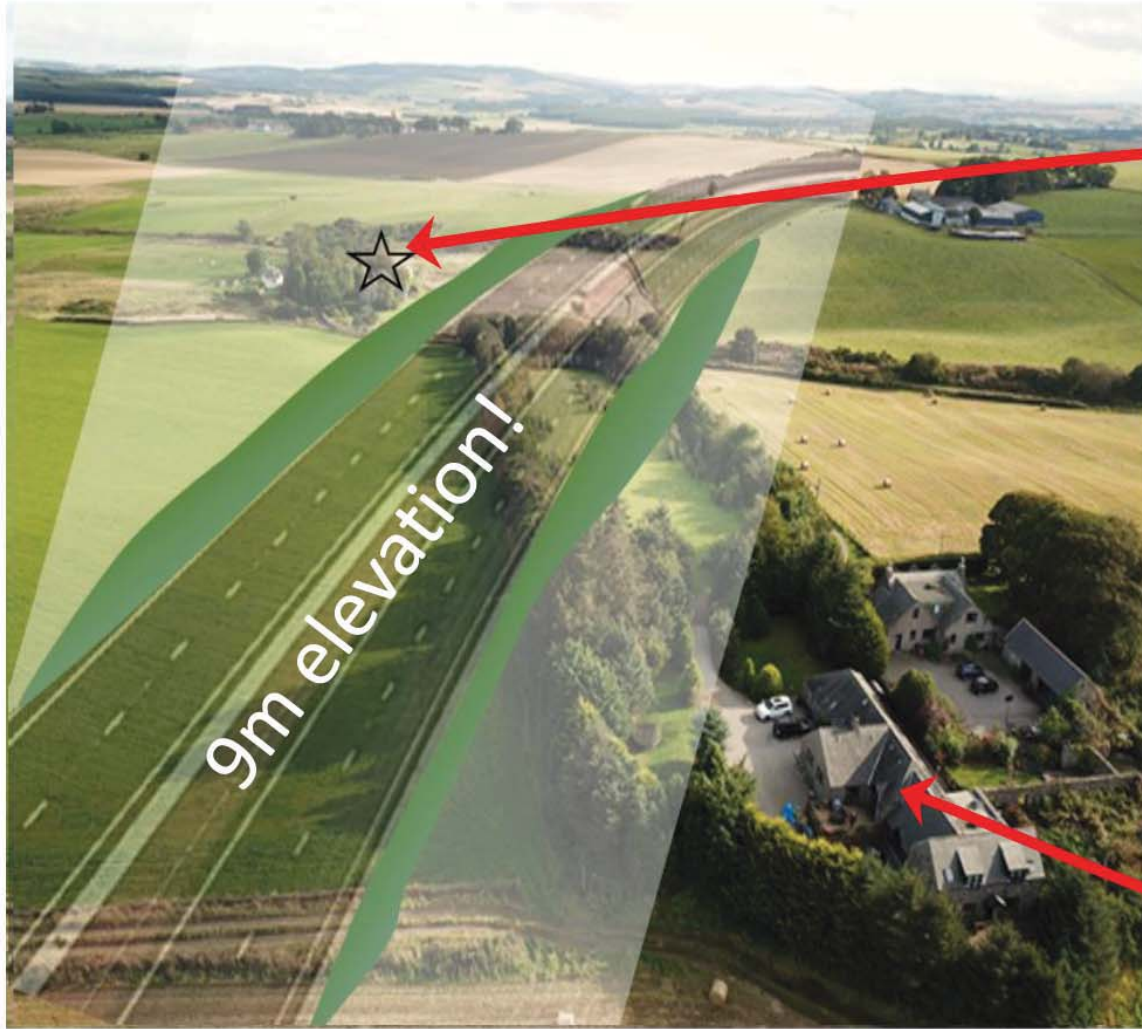
Violet route:

- Is remote from Inverurie, with overly complex layout which will increase congestion and may impair trade.
- Does not support **approved** commercial and residential (737 houses) development to SW of Inverurie at 'Crichie' or Thainstone Mart.
- Does not support **planned** commercial and residential development to SW of Inverurie.
- Does not support an integrated transport system
- May also impede egress of Fire and Rescue Services.



Inverurie town centre becomes a congested roundabout!

# Encroachment on homes – an example (Violet route)



# Current proposed route options do not deliver benefits for Scotland

- Destroy hundreds of hectares of prime food-producing land & fragment farms
- Impact or completely destroy rural businesses
- Do not use any existing infrastructure
- Have high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
**(3-5 times greater than the existing route)**
- Negative impact on health (air quality, noise, light, water supplies)
- Urbanise the rural landscape
- Damage the setting of the historic environment
- Do not support regional growth
- Do not support an integrated transport system
- Hugely damaging to the environment
- Would significantly blight properties and will likely lead to CPO of some



Comments:

This is why we shouldn't add a new A96 - instead of dualing the current road.

People all over the country are complaining about how the NHS has no money to improve their services. You know why? It is roads that the government are choosing to spend their money on. As if <sup>creating</sup> more noise pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> pollution is more important than helping the health of our people.

Also, global warming is becoming a huge issue for our planet. But guess what? Building an ~~unnecessary~~ <sup>unnecessary</sup> massive road doesn't help. Not only will it pollute the surrounding environment, but the amount of money and more importantly ENERGY it will take to build the road is unnecessary and avoidable.

am [redacted] years old and this is my future.

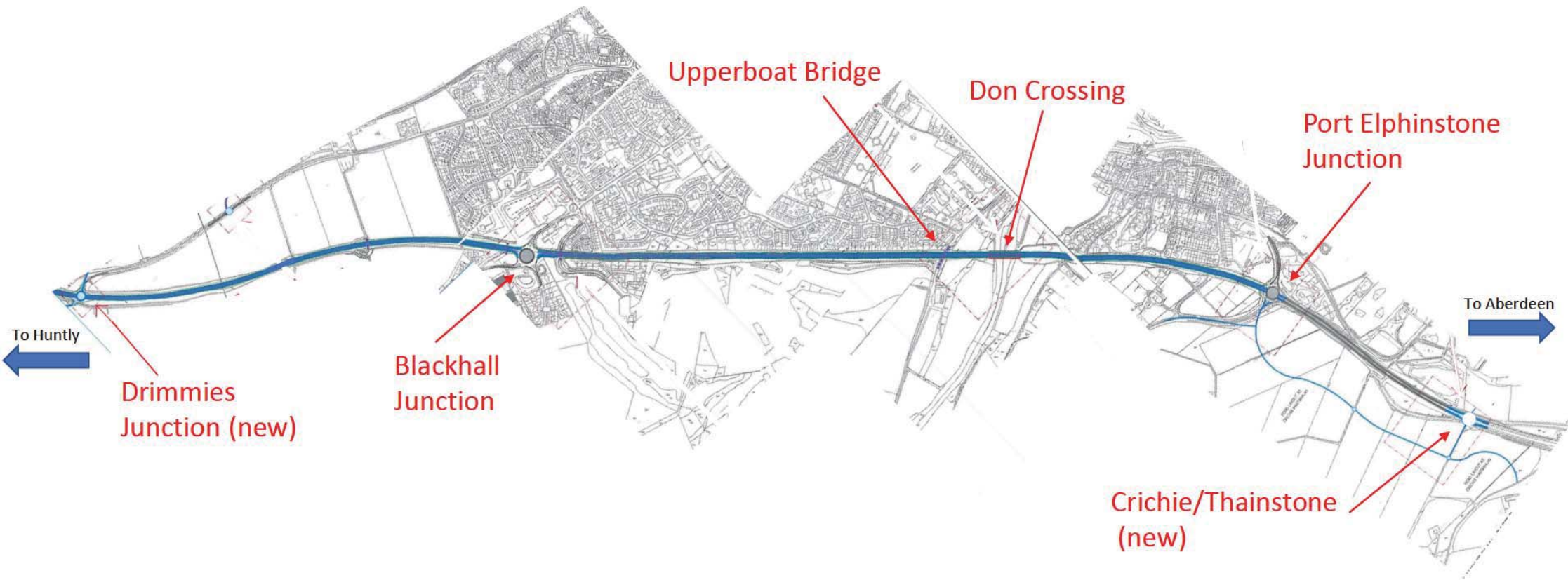
se email or post completed responses by 12 July 2019 to the  
om any queries may be direct

# The solution: Online dualling through Inverurie



- Deliver a Category 7A compliant dual carriageway on A96 existing route through Inverurie
- Minimises climate impact
- Lower cost than any other options – could benefit from approved developments – dualling and GSJ
- Can be achieved in shorter timescale
- Complies with TS tender document
- ***No residential property removal***
- Solves local traffic congestion
- Supports an integrated transport system
- Supports approved plans for business development
- Short term disruption rather than permanent environmental & climate change impact





Upperboat Bridge

Don Crossing

Port Elphinstone Junction

Blackhall Junction

Drimmies Junction (new)

Crichtie/Thainstone (new)

To Huntly

To Aberdeen





# Extracts from Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)

## DMRB Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1 Lane Width Reductions at Pinch Points

'3.14 At points of particular difficulty on new dual carriageways, where full lane widths cannot be achieved, a reduction from 3.65m to 3.50m is permitted provided that the radius of curvature exceeds 1000m.

Points where such a relaxation are likely to be most applicable are around the urban fringe, and at sites with difficult topography or in historic or conservation areas. This relaxation shall not apply on new single carriageway roads.'

### DMRB Volume 6, Section 1, Part 2

#### DMRB All Purpose Dual Carriageway cross-sections

	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	TOTAL
	Verge	Hard Strip	Lane	Lane	Strip	Central Res	
<b>DUAL CARRIAGEWAY</b>							
<b>Transport Scotland (as per F&amp;A report)</b>	2.5	1.0	3.7	3.7	1.0	1.3	<b>26.1</b>
<b>D2AP Rural</b>	2.5	1.0	3.7	3.7	1.0	1.3	<b>26.1</b>
<b>D2AP Urban</b>	2.5	0.0	3.7	3.7	0.0	0.9	<b>21.4</b>
<b>D2AP Urban with pinch point lanes</b>	2.5	0.0	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.9	<b>20.8</b>

## DMRB Volume 6, Section 1, Part 2

### DMRB All Purpose Dual Carriageway with GSJ cross-sections

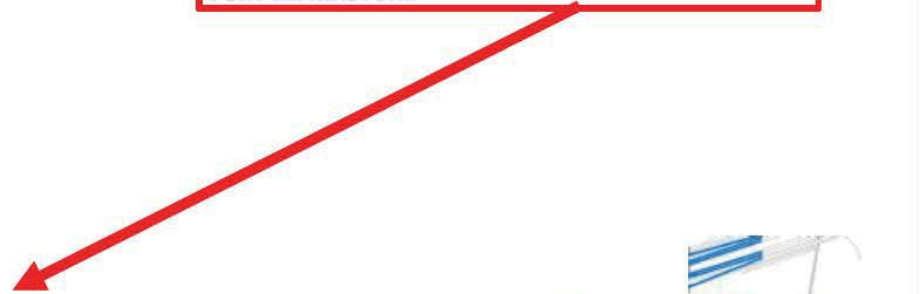
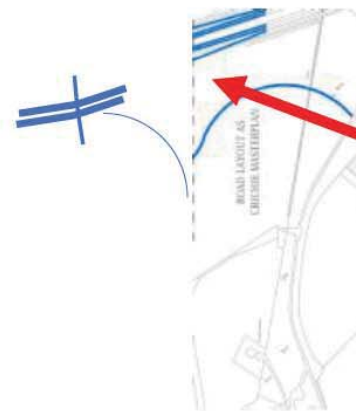
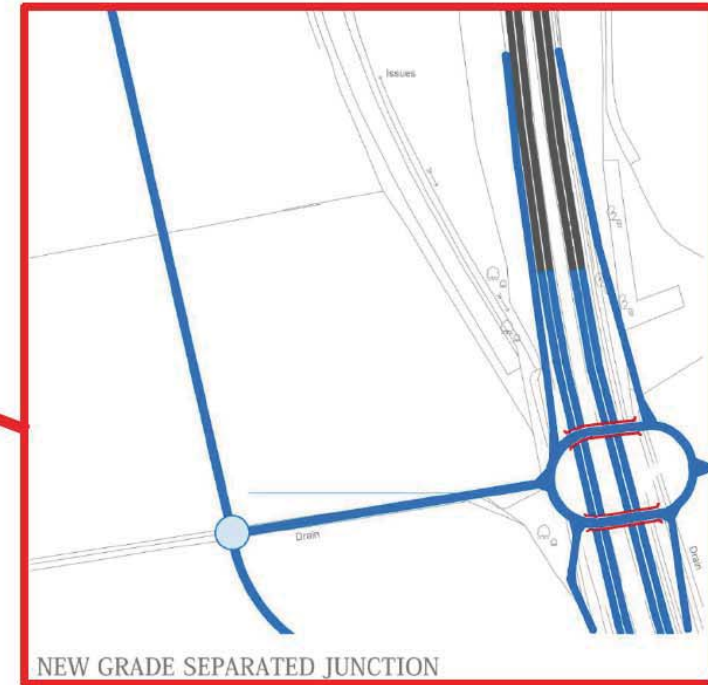
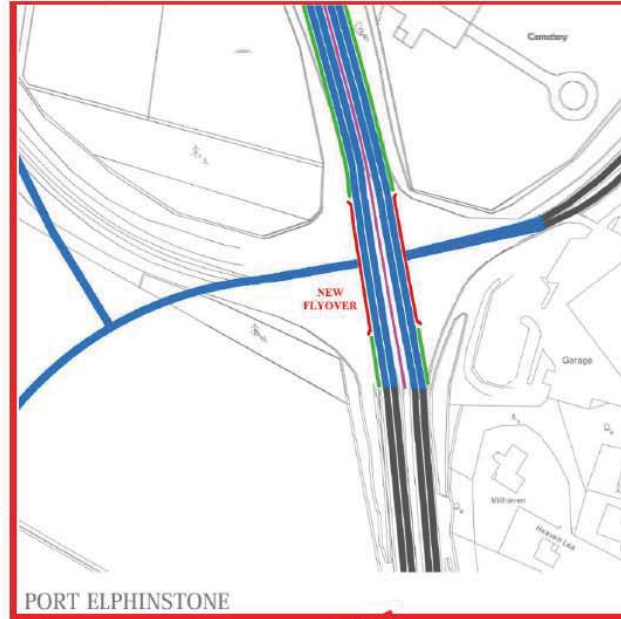


	Slip Road	Slip Road	Slip Road	Slip Road	Slip Road	Slip Road	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Mainline	Sub-Total	TOTAL
	Wall	Verge	Hard Strip	Lane	Hard Strip	Verge	Wall	Verge	Hard Strip	Lane	Lane	Strip	Central Res		
<b>DUAL CARRIAGEWAY WITH GSJ</b>															
Transport Scotland (as per F&A report)	0.7	2.5	2.3	3.7		2.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	3.7	3.7	1.0	1.3	<b>23.5</b>	<b>47.0</b>
D2AP Rural		2.8	0.7	3.7	3.3	2.0			1.0	3.7	3.7	1.0	1.3	<b>23.1</b>	<b>46.1</b>
D2AP Urban			0.3	3.7	3.3				0.0	3.7	3.7	0.0	0.9	<b>15.5</b>	<b>31.0</b>
D2AP Urban with pinch point lanes	0.7		0.3	3.7	3.3		0.7		0.0	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.9	<b>16.6</b>	<b>33.1</b>
D2AP Urban with pinch point lanes and relaxed Slips (6.5m)	0.7		0.3	3.7	2.5		0.7		0.0	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.9	<b>15.8</b>	<b>31.5</b>

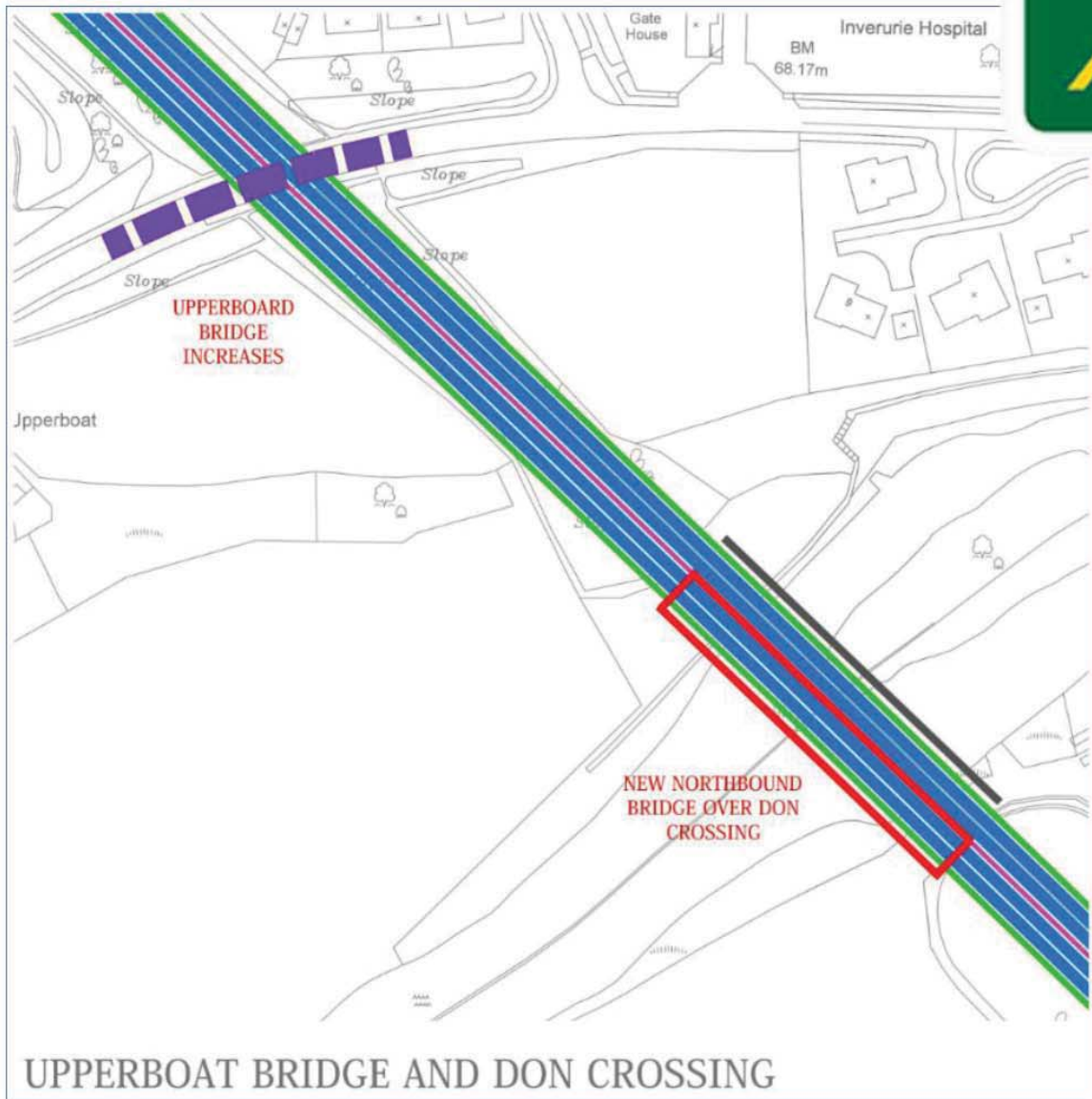
### IN SUMMARY FORM

	TOTAL
<b>DUAL CARRIAGEWAY WITH GSJ</b>	
Transport Scotland (as per F&A report)	<b>47.0</b>
D2AP Rural	<b>46.1</b>
D2AP Urban	<b>31.0</b>
D2AP Urban with pinch point lanes	<b>33.1</b>
D2AP Urban with pinch point lanes and relaxed Slips (6.5m)	<b>31.5</b>

# Junction 1: Port Elphinstone/ Crichie/Thainstone



# Upperboat Bridge and Don Crossing

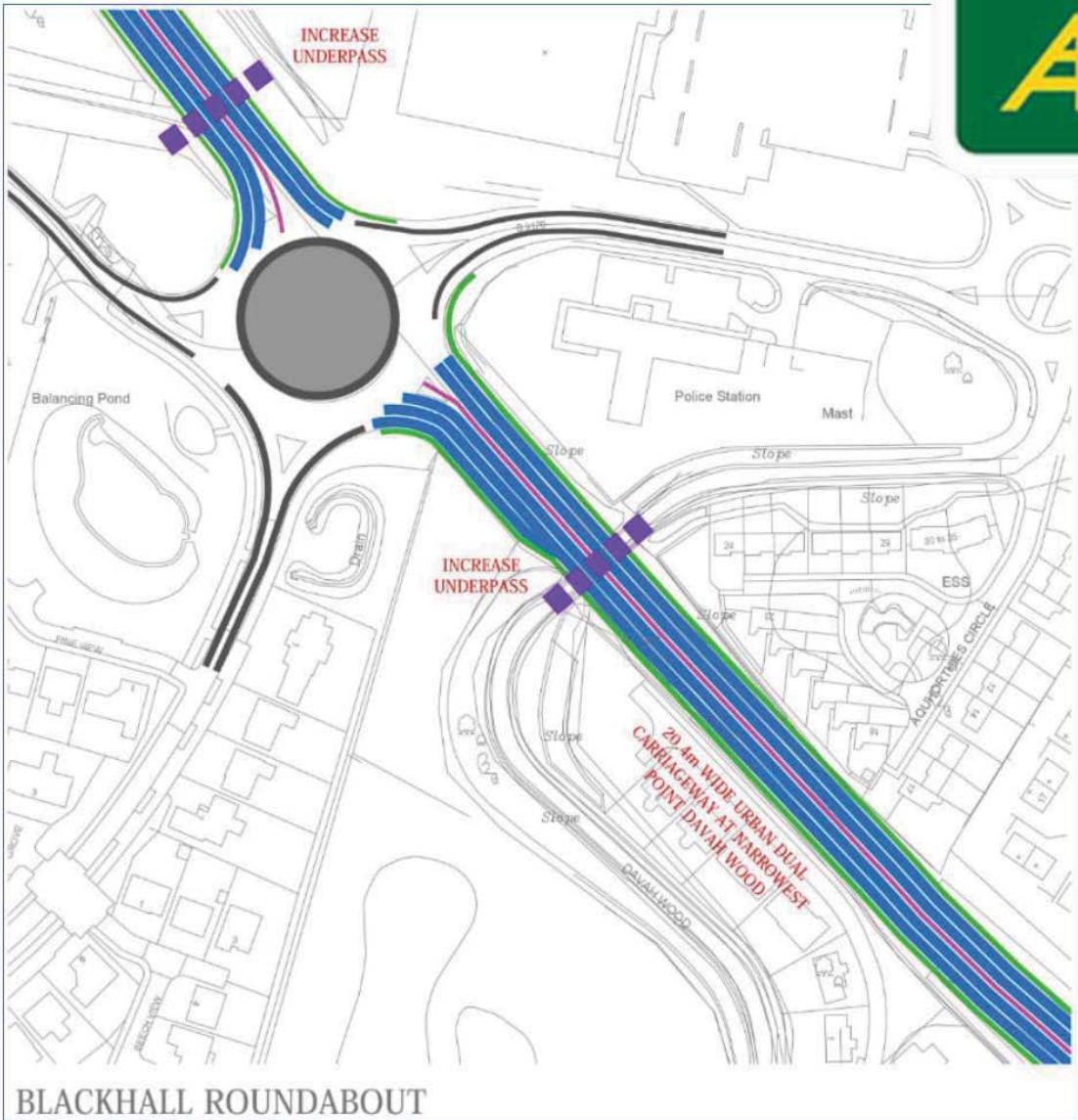




Junction 2

Blackhall  
roundabout –  
Option 2

At-grade  
roundabout

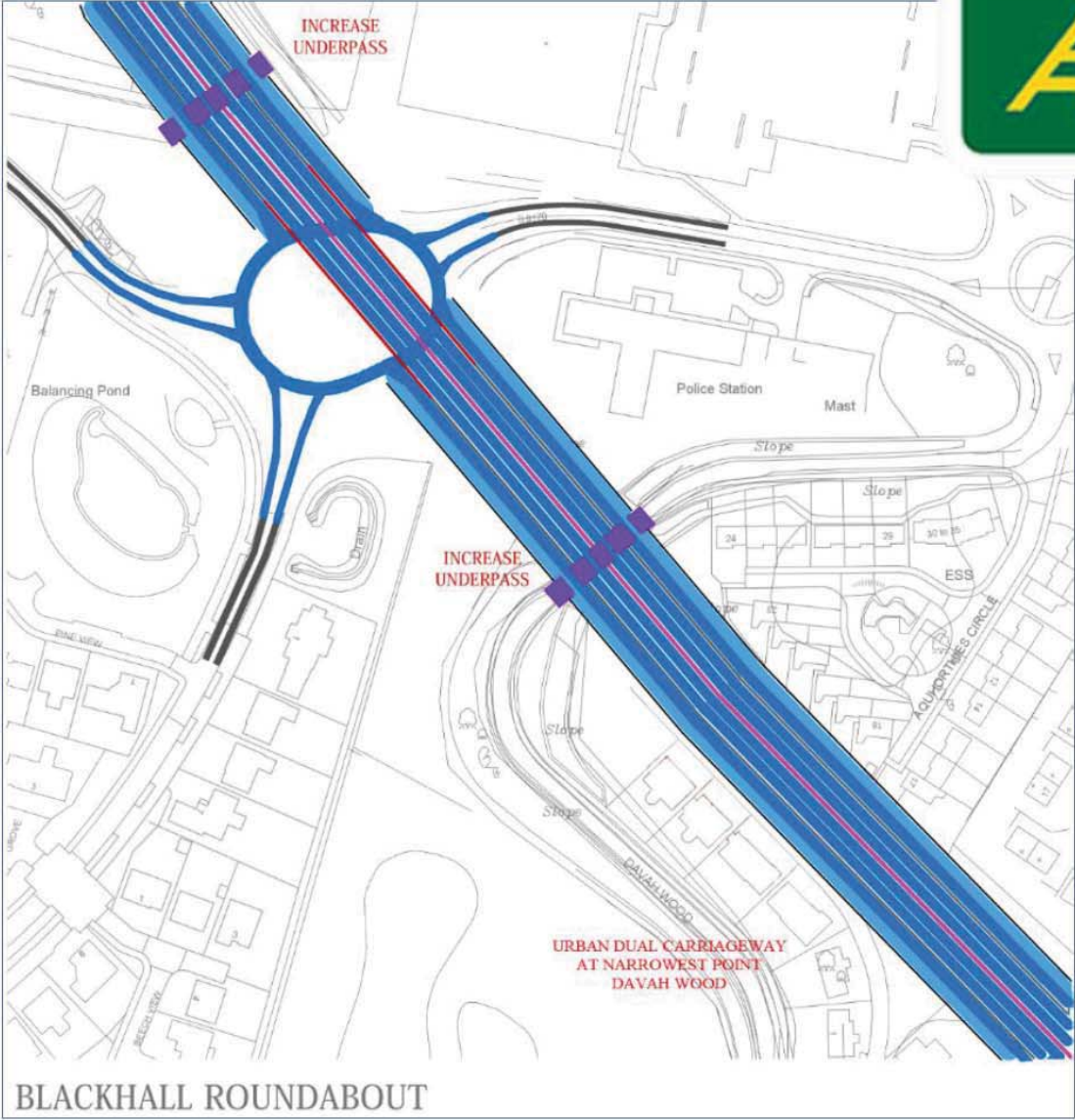




Junction 2

Blackhall  
roundabout –  
Option 2

Grade Separated  
Junction



# Junction 3: Drimmies



# Summary

## A96 Online dualling solution

- Achieves all Scottish Government objectives
- Fully compliant with Scottish Government Policies
- Fully compliant with TS specification
- Supports regional growth
- Supports an integrated transport system
- Shortest and least expensive route
- Lower CO2 emissions than all other route options
- No residential property demolition
- No loss of prime food-producing land
- No impact on the rural landscape
- No impact on the setting of the historic environment
- No increase in flood risk
- Minimal impact on the natural environment
- Maximises use of existing infrastructure







***“Protecting the environment and ensuring a just transition to a net zero future is part of our commitment to put wellbeing at the heart of all we do as a Government.”***

**Nicola Sturgeon: 2019 Protecting Scotland’s Future**

**Thank you for  
listening**

**Questions?**

## Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

Direct Line: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Your ref:

Our ref:  
[REDACTED]

Date:  
30 October 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

### A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen

Thank you for your letter dated 1 October 2019 addressed to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson MSP and your letter dated 15 October 2019 addressed to the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, Mhairi Gougeon MSP, regarding the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen. Mr Matheson and Ms Gougeon have asked me to thank you for your letter and respond as project administrator for the scheme.

The Scottish Government needs to make sure that Scotland has the right infrastructure to meet the needs of all our population. I can advise that as part of its current programme of infrastructure improvements, the Scottish Government is committed to dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen and also the Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvement project, underlining its commitment to connecting Scotland's cities with a high quality transport system that will generate sustainable economic growth.

Dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen will bring many benefits to local communities, businesses, visitors and road users living, travelling and working along the route. These include reduced journey times, improved journey time reliability and, crucially, improve road safety for all users.

All large scale transport projects that the Scottish Government develop carry out detailed assessment work to make sure we deliver the right schemes that minimise the impacts on the environment and local communities, and the A96 Dualling is no exception to that.

To develop the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme, Transport Scotland follows a detailed assessment process which is based on standards set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The DMRB covers environmental, engineering, traffic and economic considerations. During this process, Transport Scotland speaks to local communities, landowners and a large number of stakeholders and interested parties like Scottish Natural

Heritage (SNH), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES), with the information collected being used to help develop our proposals.

In terms of climate change, the Scottish Government aims to reduce emissions from transport in ways that promote sustainable environmental and socio-economic wellbeing. The Scottish Government is phasing out the need to purchase a petrol or diesel powered car or van by 2032, a full eight years ahead of the UK. A sustainable, low carbon transport network brings many additional benefits to communities and businesses. The Scottish Government is committed to maximising these co-benefits which means that individual transport projects should not be assessed in isolation but in combination with other projects and Scottish Government policies. The Scottish Government needs to balance the extensive changes required to meet its climate change targets with its duty to ensure that Scotland has high quality infrastructure to meet the needs of all our residents, businesses and visitors.

Following the public exhibition events held in Inverurie, Blackburn and Huntly between 28 and 31 May 2019, a very large amount of feedback and comment has been received by Transport Scotland from members of the public, stakeholders and interest groups regarding the route options being considered.


I would like to reassure you that all of the feedback and comments received, including that provided within your letters, will be fully considered as we progress the design and assessment process.

Once again thank you so much for taking the time to provide your feedback on this section of the A96 Dualling.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.



1/10/19

Mr Michael Matheson  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity,  
T3.03  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

First, thank you very much for giving up time in your very busy schedule to meet with me and my colleagues on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019. I very much appreciated being given the opportunity to share with you the material and designs that the A96 Action Group have been producing for online dualling of the A96 through Inverurie. I hope that you found the information of interest.

Second, I was so pleased to see that the Climate Change Bill has now been passed. The Government is to be congratulated on this good legislation which makes Scotland amongst the leading countries taking actions to address the Climate Emergency. These actions are critical to protecting our environment and securing a sustainable future.

Many thanks again,

Kind regards



## Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

Direct Line: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Your ref:

Our ref:  
[REDACTED]

Date:

31 October 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

### **A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen**

Thank you for your letter dated 1 October 2019 addressed to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson MSP regarding the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme. Mr Matheson has asked me to thank you for your letter and also for taking the time to meet him in Parliament on 18 September to discuss the concerns of the A96 Action Group.

I can confirm that all of the feedback and comments received, including the material you provided at the meeting with Mr Matheson and Transport Scotland Officials on 18 September 2019, will be fully considered as we progress the design and assessment of the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen Scheme.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 16 December 2019 11:48:55  
To: Public Engagement Unit  
Subject: FW: Equitrac Scan-to-Me

Attachments: u445490\_16-12-2019\_11-46-40.pdf

Hi,

For MACCS as an MR.

[REDACTED]



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Peter Chapman MSP  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for North East Region

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

07/11/2019

Dear Michael,

After recent consultation with the A96 Action Group it has come to my attention that there has been a breach of due process with regards to STAG protocol.

STAGs own guidelines state that “the principle of being objective-led, rather than solution-led allows the appraisal of options against Planning Objectives, STAG Criteria and establish policy directives, and provides a robust evidence base for decision makers.” Following FOI requests from the Action Group it is clear that these guidelines have not been followed, resulting in a clear breach of standards and process. The breach of process is acknowledged in a workshop report from 24th July 2018 (<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45384/route-options-sifting-workshop-report.pdf> p 20 et seq. paras 4.5, 4.6, 4.10) prepared for TS by the contractors AmeyArup Joint Venture (AAJV) and attended by members of TS; concern about not fully following the agreed process is expressed.

Disregard for following the correct procedures has resulted in alignment 22 (image in link <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45292/view-appendix-d-part-1.pdf>) being included as one of the three alignments considered for final selection. Alignment 22 has a very large environmental impact and accordingly has the lowest possible final score of 0.75 on page 125.

(see link <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45291/view-appendix-c.pdf>) These concerns were raised in the Workshop Report as can be seen on page 20 of the following link. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45384/route-options-sifting-workshop-report.pdf>

The scheme objectives clearly indicate a need to minimise and mitigate the effects of the project on the environment. Alignment 22 is clearly not compatible with this objective, so questions have to be asked as to why it has not been de-selected like other poor performing options.

Violation of procedure is not the only concern of the Action Group. There is also considerable concern about the governance and management of the project. This concern is exemplified by an email dated as recently as 8th January 2019 signed by the three government agencies, SEPA, SNH and HES to the Transport Scotland project manager. The email highlights the concerns amongst the three agencies that unlike procedures for the A9 project, the A96 project lacks a formal process for the Environmental Steering Group and requests a proper engagement process between the contractors and agencies. It appears that terms of reference for the Environmental Steering Group were still under consideration in May 2019. (Appendix 1)

This comes on top of a protracted series of emails from agency members to AAJV repeatedly requesting minutes of a meeting on 15th November 2018. Despite many emails, the draft minutes were not made available by AAJV until over 4 months after the meeting. An email on 18th April 2019 from SNH staff highlights concerning the quality of the draft minutes eventually provided, and raises the concern that the minutes do not provide an audit trail of discussions and decisions made. (Appendix 2)

There are also concerns about the lack of information provided to experts, in particular in relation to the assessment of landscape. For example, in emails on 13th May 2019 and 16th May 2019, concerns are raised about the lack of justification or clarity, the lack of clearly specified design and the insufficient clarity on how the pairing procedures relate to the design principles. Importantly there appears to be a lack of rigour in the assessment procedure, both in terms of the designation of 'high sensitivity landscapes' and especially when compared to that applied to other sections of the Inverness to Aberdeen dualling project. (Appendix 3).

There is also a theme throughout the correspondence examined of lack of timely provision of information, insufficient detail, lack of appropriate communication etc. The evidence comes both from SNH and HES as well as from Aberdeenshire council and dates from 2018 to 2019. This gives the impression of an unacceptable haphazardness in the organisation of the project and or the project team. This does not give those affected by the final decision



confidence that the decision has been made in an appropriate manner with suitable levels of information and full consultation. (Appendix 4)

The project was initiated in 2017 and route selection was due in December 2019. While it is acknowledged that the selection may be delayed to 2020, it is of huge concern that so far into the project, basic matters of governance such as terms of reference and timely delivery of correct, professional minutes are still apparently insufficient. It is also wholly unacceptable that the key criteria and assessments for route selection, such as landscape assessment are not satisfactorily clear for all the consultees. It is impossible for the statutory bodies to play their role if the basic underpinning information is unclear, unavailable or not agreed.

As you are aware when you met some of the A96 group in Holyrood, these are people who are professional, talented and driven to ensure the best outcome for dualling past Inverurie.

Through sheer hard work and extensive use of FOI's they have uncovered evidence of a consultation which is seriously flawed and not fit for purpose.

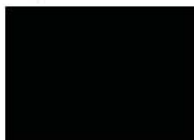
When the commentary on the DMRB stage 2 sifting options workshop report openly admits (paragraph 4.10 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45384/route-options-sifting-workshop-report.pdf>) to a "nervousness of not taking through a large section of alignment within the existing on line corridor" and "concern about not fully following the agreed process i.e taking a poorer alignment through," alarm bells must be ringing.

Unless these serious issues are resolved satisfactorily the whole process of deciding on route options needs to be completely reassessed.

If not, there is a real chance that the findings will be challenged in a judicial review. I have no doubt you would not wish to end up in that situation.

I await your considered response to these concerning matters at your earliest opportunity.

Yours,



Michael, this letter was originally sent on 7/11/19 but your office say that it never arrived. Hope this one finds you and you reply ASAP.



T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Peter Chapman MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2019/0032993  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Dear Peter

Thank you for your letter dated 7 November 2019 in relation to the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen, which I received on 16 December. Unfortunately I do not have record of receiving your original letter.

I would like to reassure you that all major projects within the Scottish Government's transport portfolio are subject to significant assessment work, and the A96 Dualling programme is no exception to that.

To establish a preferred line for a trunk road improvement like the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme, Transport Scotland implements a rigorous assessment process, based on standards set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which covers environmental, engineering, traffic and economic considerations. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults with local communities, landowners and a large number of stakeholders and interested parties, with the information collected being utilised to inform the development of scheme proposals.

Transport Scotland has advised me that the findings of the initial assessment of the route options under consideration, which considered the Scheme Objectives and STAG criteria, was presented at a sifting workshop attended by representatives from Transport Scotland its consultant, AmeyArup. This is consistent with the other A96 Dualling programme schemes and is a well-established Transport Scotland practice. The outcome of the initial assessment work and the sifting workshop is outlined in the DMRB Stage 2 Route Options Sifting Workshop Report, a copy of which is available from the Transport Scotland website at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a96-dualling-inverness-to-aberdeen/a96-east-of-huntly-to-aberdeen/>.

The 52 end to end alignments presented at the sifting workshop were all feasible alignments but did have varying degrees of benefits and impacts. However, the purpose of the workshop was to challenge and agree a reduced number of alignments to take forward for further assessment and to be presented to the public in October 2018 for feedback. I can advise that the sifting workshop attendees recognised that there may be merit in taking forward the option of following the corridor of the existing A96 between Colpy and Oyne.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



Although it was acknowledged that Alignment 22 had a low environmental score, the workshop recognised that it was one of the better performing options in terms of traffic and engineering. The justification of this particular online section is outlined in section 3.4 of the Sifting Workshop Report and the subsequent route option (Brown route) was presented at the public exhibitions in October 2018.

Reviewing the assessment results and challenging outcomes are a key part of the management and governance of the project. The sifting workshop enables all participants to provide constructive comment on the route options development and appraisal process, including its findings, and to identify any areas that may require further consideration. This is in line with process for the design and assessment of trunk road projects.

I would like to reassure you that Transport Scotland also continues to regularly engage with key statutory environmental authorities, including Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) both individually and as part of the A96 Dualling Environmental Steering Group (ESG) regarding the environmental sensitivities and potential environmental impacts of the proposals and to reduce these as far as possible through design and mitigation. The ESG meets on a regular basis with the latest meeting held on 26 September and will meet again on 30 January 2020.

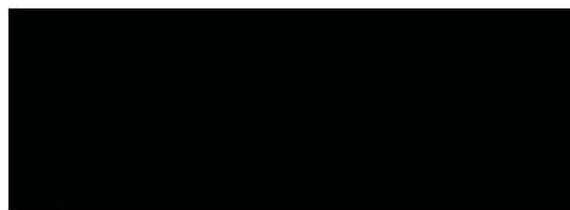
Following meetings with the statutory bodies draft minutes are typically prepared and issued to the relevant participants for approval. Following feedback the draft minutes are updated to address any queries raised and comments are closed out with the agreement of the participants.

I would like to reassure you that we value the environment we are working in and place emphasis on striking a balance between delivering the A96 Dualling and respecting the sensitivities of the corridor. The in-depth planning and design work being taken forward includes an environmental assessment to ensure that we deliver the right scheme and keep impacts on the environment, communities and businesses to the absolute minimum.

The outcome of the environmental, engineering and traffic and economic assessment of the route options under consideration will be reported in a DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report which will be published once the route options assessment process has been concluded.

I can confirm that all of the feedback and comments received, including that provided by the A96 Action Group, will be fully considered as Transport Scotland progress the design and assessment process.

I hope this is of assistance.



**MICHAEL MATHESON**

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Accredited  
Until 2020



From:  
Sent: 24 November 2019 09:09:46  
To: scottish.ministers@gov.scot, firstminister@gov.scot  
Subject: Online dualling A96 upgrade Inverurie

Dear Minister

You will recall that you very kindly met with representatives from the A96 Action group on 18th September, 2019. At that meeting, A96 Action presented viable, achievable, comprehensively researched and economically deliverable plans for online dualling of the A96 past Inverurie (East of Aberdeen to Huntly section of the A96 dualling upgrade project). The plans presented to you protect the countryside, the now widely acknowledged first line defence and gate keeper against climate change, whilst also delivering on your criteria for no property demolitions.

I attended a meeting yesterday, at the invitation of the Girl Guides Association, at Fyfe House, a treasured and invaluable rural retreat for Guides and Brownies across the North East of Scotland that lies worryingly close to the violet route. Also in attendance, at the suggestion of the First Minister, was Amey Arup's Landowner and Communities Manager. At that meeting I was extremely disappointed to hear him repeat that online dualling had been deselected, without mentioning to those present that the option of online dualling being reinstated had recently been raised directly, and in person with you.

I am not aware that the A96 Action Group have been informed of any decision following your meeting with them over 2 months ago and would feel extremely aggrieved if their efforts on behalf of the communities to the north and east of Inverurie have been dismissed out of hand, without any further dialogue or communication.

Minister, you will be aware that the proposed violet and orange routes for the A96 dualling project fall within the Gordon Constituency, a key target for the SNP in the forthcoming General Election. I fear however that you and the First Minister are totally unaware of the depth of feeling about, and opposition to the violet and orange routes in the communities voting in that Election. Indeed, a petition of 598 signatures, calling for a rethink of their position on the A96 dualling plans, has been submitted to Aberdeenshire Council and the petitioner has been invited to address their Infrastructure Committee next Wednesday. Again, proof of the depth of local feeling against these damaging plans.

I therefore respectfully urge you to make a public announcement clarifying your position following the information presented to you by A96 Action and if, as I hope, in the interest of climate change mitigation and economic prudence, you are now of a mind to thoroughly explore online dualling through and beyond Inverurie, you instruct Transport Scotland to start DMRB Stage 2 assessments and advise the local communities of this via a further public consultation.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience and preferably before I cast my vote on 12th December.

Regards

Sent from my iPad



## Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF  
Direct Line: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent via email [REDACTED]

Your ref:

Our ref:  
[REDACTED]

Date:  
20 December 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

### A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen

Thank you for your email dated 24 November 2019 addressed to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson MSP, regarding the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme. Mr Matheson has asked me to thank you for your email and respond as project administrator for the scheme. I am also responding to your email addressed to myself dated 22 November 2019.

Following the public engagement events held in Inverurie, Blackburn and Huntly between 28 and 31 May 2019, approximately 800 consultation feedback responses and comments have been received by Transport Scotland from members of the public, stakeholders and interest groups with respect to the route options being considered. It is critical that we take time to consider all the feedback received as we take forward the options assessment process.

I confirm that all of the feedback and comments received, including that provided within your Keith Hall and Bourtie Local Action Group correspondence, the material presented by the A96 Action Group at the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity on the 18<sup>th</sup> September and feedback received from the Girl Guides Association will be fully considered as we progress the design and assessment process. I would like to reassure you that a formal response will be provided to you once we have had the opportunity to consider all comments received.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From:  
Sent: 28 November 2019 09:09:11  
To: Public Engagement Unit  
Subject: FW: Today's news - Climate Emergency

MACCS case please for OR

Office of the First Minister  
Scottish Government  
5TH floor/St Andrews House/Regent Road  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
Tel

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From: Nicola Sturgeon <[Nicola.Sturgeon@snp.org](mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon@snp.org)>  
Sent: 27 November 2019 20:38  
To: First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
Subject: Fwd: Today's news - Climate Emergency

Nicola Sturgeon MSP  
Glasgow Southside  
Constituency Office (constituent enquiries only)  
Unit 3  
Govanhill Workspace  
69 Dixon Road  
G42 8AT  
Tel: 0141 424 1174  
[nicola.sturgeon.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:nicola.sturgeon.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)<<mailto:nicola.sturgeon.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>>

All other enquiries to [nicola.sturgeon@snp.org](mailto:nicola.sturgeon@snp.org)<<mailto:nicola.sturgeon@snp.org>>

Begin forwarded message:

From:  
Date: 27 November 2019 at 19:42:22 GMT  
To: Nicola Sturgeon <[Nicola.Sturgeon@snp.org](mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon@snp.org)<<mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon@snp.org>>>  
Subject: Today's news - Climate Emergency  
?

Dear Ms Sturgeon,

I want to very briefly bring to your attention something which greatly concerns me.

My family and I are trying hard to reduce our carbon footprint wherever possible. However, in the face of the Scottish government's plans to build a new dual carriageway between Aberdeen and Huntly, our efforts seem futile.

With the construction of the violet option between Aberdeen and Huntly, around Inverurie, the statistics on carbon emissions, loss of natural environment and loss of fertile, food producing agricultural land are shocking. How can your government proceed with this vain plan and put all our futures in jeopardy? It has been shown that there are other less expensive and much more environmentally kind options which would alleviate traffic problems and make provisions for future generations that are proportional to the population needs. The action group (A96 Action) opposes Transport Scotland's proposal to build the Violet route and has presented their arguments to your Transport Minister, Michael Matheson.

Please could you let me know that you are aware of the proposals and if you will personally take some interest in this issue.

Sincerely,

Mrs

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## Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF  
Direct Line: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Your ref:

Our ref:  
[REDACTED]

Date:  
20 December 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

### A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen

Thank you for your email dated 27 November 2019 addressed to the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, regarding the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme. The First Minister has asked me to thank you for your email and respond as project administrator for the scheme.

The Scottish Government needs to balance the extensive changes required to meet a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions with its duty to ensure that Scotland has a high quality transport system that meets the needs of all our population. As part of its current programme of infrastructure improvements the Scottish Government is committed to dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen along with improvements to the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line. This underlines the Scottish Government's commitment to connecting Scotland's cities with a high quality transport system that will generate sustainable economic growth.

When complete the A96 Dualling programme will bring many benefits to local communities, businesses and visitors living, travelling and working along the route. These include reduced journey times, improved journey time reliability and, crucially, improve road safety for all users along the A96.

All major projects within the Scottish Government's transport portfolio are subject to significant assessment work, review and challenge to ensure we deliver the right schemes and minimise the impacts on the environment and local communities, and the A96 Dualling programme is no exception to that.

To establish a preferred line for a trunk road improvement like the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme, Transport Scotland implements a rigorous assessment process, based on standards set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which covers environmental, engineering, traffic and economic considerations. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults with local communities, landowners and a large number of

stakeholders and interested parties, with the information collected being utilised to inform the development of scheme proposals.

Following the public engagement events held in Inverurie, Blackburn and Huntly between 28 and 31 May 2019, approximately 800 consultation feedback responses and comments have been received by Transport Scotland from members of the public, stakeholders and interest groups with respect to the route options being considered. It is critical that we take time to consider all the feedback received as we take forward the options assessment process.

I confirm that all of the feedback and comments received, including that provided within your correspondence and those provided by the A96 Action Group, will be fully considered as we progress the design and assessment process.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Project Administrator

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 January 2020 08:57  
**To:** 'Keith Hall and Bourtie Local Action Group'  
**Subject:** RE: Reply from the Scottish Government

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email below. Following the public engagement events held in Inverurie, Blackburn and Huntly between 28 and 31 May 2019, approximately 800 consultation feedback responses and comments have been received by Transport Scotland from members of the public, stakeholders and interest groups with respect to the route options being considered. It is critical that we take time to consider all the feedback received as we take forward the options assessment process. As previously confirmed, all feedback and comments received will be fully considered as we progress the design and assessment process. This assurance was given by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson MSP at his meeting with Peter Chapman MSP and the A96 Action Group representatives in the Scottish Parliament on 18 September 2019. I would like to reassure you that formal responses will be provided to everyone that has provided feedback once we have had the opportunity to consider all comments received. All formal responses will be issued in advance of any future public engagement event.

I hope this is of assistance.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

---

[REDACTED]  
Major Projects Design Administrator  
Transport Scotland  
Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF



---

**From:** Keith Hall and Bourtie Local Action Group [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 January 2020 16:03  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Reply from the Scottish Government

Hello [REDACTED] and a very Happy New Year to you. I do hope you had an enjoyable break over the festive season?

[REDACTED] are you able to reply to my email below, sent on 20th December? Is the Transport Minister minded to review the possibility of online dualling through Inverurie, based on his meeting with and the plans submitted by A96 Action?

Kind regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tel: [Redacted]

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Keith Hall and Bourtie Local Action Group [Redacted]  
**Date:** 20 December 2019 at 15:11:41 GMT  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Reply from the Scottish Government

Hi [Redacted]

Thank you for your email below but I have to express profound disappointment at the complete lack of any detail whatsoever contained within it. My question to Mr Matheson was very simple ie whether or not online dualling through Inverurie is going to be considered especially in light of the comprehensive and detailed plans put forward for this by A96 Action. Site visits on the violet route have been carried out by Amey Arup and Transport Scotland just this week so I feel those affected by this project deserve to know if further public consultations to discuss online dualling are going to be held and if not, why not. I'm afraid a 'holding pattern' type of response, such as that given below, just isn't good enough. I therefore ask again (and I don't expect to have to wait for another 20 days for a reply) is online dualling being considered by Mr Matheson - **yes or no?**

Regards

[Redacted]

Sent from my iPad

On 20 Dec 2019, at 14:45, [Redacted] wrote:

Thank you for your correspondence. Please see the attached reply which includes a reference number for future use.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

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<F20190032624.pdf>

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From:  
Sent: 19 February 2020 16:04:24  
To: Public Engagement Unit  
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Finance  
Subject: FW: A96 Action advises against new A96 to the north east of Inverurie

MiCase - Diary

From: On Behalf Of Forbes K  
(Kate), MSP  
Sent: 19 February 2020 15:11  
To: Cabinet Secretary for Finance <CabSecFinance@gov.scot>  
Subject: FW: A96 Action advises against new A96 to the north east of Inverurie

Hi folks,

Email below from A96 Action Group to Kate in her role as Cab Sec for Finance.

Thanks

Caseworker - Kate Forbes MSP

From:  
Sent: 18 February 2020 16:17  
To: Forbes K (Kate), MSP  
<Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot>>  
Subject: A96 Action advises against new A96 to the north east of Inverurie

Dear Ms Forbes

A96 Action would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Finance Secretary and commend you on your actions to date. We would also like to introduce our action group; we feel that A96 Action would be of interest to you, as our campaign directly relates to a potential government spend of well in excess of £3bn.

You will be familiar with Transport Scotland's plans to create a "new A96" to the north east of Inverurie as part of the Aberdeen to Inverness dualling project. A96 Action is campaigning against this proposed route and advocating instead dualling of the existing A96 - online - through Inverurie on the grounds of:

\* Current proposals are at odds with the recently published "A Blueprint for Scotland" paper produced by the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland which states : By the end of 2020, the Scottish Government should require all public sector infrastructure asset owners to develop asset management strategies containing a presumption in favour of enhancing, re-purposing, or maintaining existing infrastructure over developing options for new infrastructure. New infrastructure should only be considered where the relevant authority has demonstrated this is the

most appropriate response.

- \* Unacceptable financial costs which are likely to reach £8-10bn by the time the road is constructed
- \* Unacceptable environmental cost, particularly in an era of government-declared Climate Emergency
- \* The total greenhouse gas cost for the entire project is about 6 million tons of carbon dioxide; to put this perspective, Scotland's current total annual transport emissions are 10 million tons
- \* Built in redundancy, given that by 2030 there should be higher use of public transport and lower use of private cars
- \* Insufficient traffic figures to justify an end-to-end dual carriageway
- \* Catastrophic economic effects on agricultural and related businesses
- \* This route would necessitate the construction of a 600m bridge over the flood plains at Kintore, exactly where SEPA has advised against such an event

In essence, the Scottish tax payer simply cannot afford to build an unnecessarily and expensive NEW road, where it is perfectly possible to upgrade the existing infrastructure through Inverurie. This meets the SNP manifesto commitment in full, as well as potentially making funds available for the many other far more worthy causes. As you said yourself, there is nothing left stuffed down the back of the sofa!

Current proposals to dual the A96 through pristine unspoiled countryside would permanently damage peoples' lives and their environment and is at complete odds with new climate change legislation. In addition, the proposed solutions would not solve the local traffic problems and ignores the fact that there is a cheaper, simpler and scheme compliant option available. Our research reports to justify our claims are attached and we hope you will find them interesting. We would hope that you could free an hour in your diary to meet with us, on a date and at a venue to suit you.

Kind regards,

Chair, A96 Action

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[www.a96action.com](http://www.a96action.com)<<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.a96action.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7CKate.Forbes.msp%40parliament.scot%7Cd0e6425ed69b4a895ea208d7b48e0a16%7Cd603c99ccfdd4292926800db0d0cf081%7C1%7C1%7C637176394459737517&sdata=uPeVMznyAIBME4g4YEU B42xb6gkootjpsvP%2FMTel1xU%3D&reserved=0>>

The A96 Action Group is a broad group of concerned Garioch residents opposed to plans being assessed by Transport Scotland to build, at huge environmental and financial cost, a new A96 dual carriageway through open countryside and farmland as part of the A96 dualling project. The Group's aim is to achieve the reinstatement of the existing A96 corridor as the optimum route for dualling, or otherwise upgrading, the A96 between Inverurie and Huntly.

Over 400 members are represented by a committee including business owners, company directors, managers, academics and professionals with in-depth experience in the fields of scientific research, analysis, engineering, cost accountancy, £XXXM project management, agriculture, medicine, telecommunications, geology, hydrology, oilfield and heavy engineering PR and marketing. Our policy advisors are specialists in environmental issues, climate change, traffic analysis and agriculture.

Our aim is to achieve the reinstatement of the existing A96 corridor as the optimum route for dualling, or otherwise upgrading, the A96 between Inverurie and Huntly on the grounds of:

- \* Environmental impact, climate change and protection of wildlife
- \* Unproven economic case, overstated economic benefits
- \* Waste of public money that should be spent on local services for local people
- \* Government policy requires the use of existing infrastructure where feasible

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\*

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T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[REDACTED]  
Chair  
A96 Action Group

Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Our ref: [REDACTED]  
March 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email dated 18 February 2020, inviting the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes MSP, to meet with the A96 Action Group in relation to the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme. I am responding as this falls under my portfolio.

I recall we met on Wednesday 18 September 2019 to discuss the scheme and I am glad to hear you found it beneficial. Unfortunately, due to a fully committed diary, I am unable to meet with the action group on this occasion.

Following the public engagement events held in relation to the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme between 28 and 31 May 2019, approximately 800 consultation feedback responses and comments have been received by Transport Scotland from members of the public, stakeholders and interest groups with respect to the route options being considered. It is critical that Transport Scotland takes time to consider all the feedback received, including that from the A96 Action Group, as it takes forward the options assessment process.

Please be assured that all feedback, including that provided by the A96 Action Group, will be fully considered as Transport Scotland progresses the design and assessment process.

Although I am unable to meet on this occasion, Transport Scotland officials would be pleased to meet the group and discuss the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen Scheme with you in further detail. Should this be of interest to you please contact the A96 Dualling [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED], at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED] to discuss the arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

**MICHAEL MATHESON**

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From:  
Sent: 11 March 2020 16:19:51  
To: Public Engagement Unit  
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Finance  
Subject: FW: Letter from Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity

MiCase - Diary

From:  
Sent: 11 March 2020 15:43  
To: Cabinet Secretary for Finance <CabSecFinance@gov.scot>  
Subject: FW: Letter from Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity

For you

for Kate Forbes MSP

[SP\_twitter\_image]<[@KateForbesMSP](http://www.twitter.com/@KateForbesMSP)>@KateForbesMSP ?  
[Facebook\_icon\_image] <<http://www.facebook.com/kate4slb>> Kate Forbes MSP

Stay informed - sign up for Kate's weekly newsletter  
here<<http://eepurl.com/cwuB49>>

From:  
Sent: 11 March 2020 15:42  
To: Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity  
<CabSecTIC@gov.scot<mailto:CabSecTIC@gov.scot>>  
Cc: Forbes K (Kate), MSP  
<Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot>>  
Subject: RE: Letter from Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity

Dear Mr Matheson,

Thank you for your reply. In the interests of clarity, you did in fact meet with my colleagues, \_\_\_\_\_ and Prof \_\_\_\_\_ who did indeed find the meeting very beneficial.

My meeting request was to Kate Forbes MSP, rather than yourself, as the meeting was of a financial nature. She asked in Parliament where the money should come from for local government, and our intention was to lay out the costs of the proposed Violet route for the new A96. We believe that this is a waste of government funds which could be better spent elsewhere ? for example, being allocated to local Councils to deliver essential services.

We would still appreciate a meeting with Ms Forbes.

Kind regards,

Chair, A96 Action

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[www.a96action.com<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.a96action.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7CKate.Forbes.msp%40parliament.scot%7C16c4e1b13c0447d93e8d08d7c5d2bb72%7Cd603c99ccfdd4292926800db0d0cf081%7C1%7C0%7C637195381195089197&sdata=Q%2FwhrsQ%2FCBYouOp11d3%2BtzMSEN%2BHjmxtGuMJ6wDSGhk%3D&reserved=0>](http://www.a96action.com<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.a96action.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7CKate.Forbes.msp%40parliament.scot%7C16c4e1b13c0447d93e8d08d7c5d2bb72%7Cd603c99ccfdd4292926800db0d0cf081%7C1%7C0%7C637195381195089197&sdata=Q%2FwhrsQ%2FCBYouOp11d3%2BtzMSEN%2BHjmxtGuMJ6wDSGhk%3D&reserved=0>)

From:

[mailto: On Behalf Of  
CabSecTIC@gov.scot<mailto:CabSecTIC@gov.scot>

Sent: 11 March 2020 09:54

To

Cc: CabSecTIC@gov.scot<mailto:CabSecTIC@gov.scot>

Subject: Letter from Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity

REFERENCE:

Good morning,

Please find attached a letter from Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity.

Best Wishes

to Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for  
Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity

The Scottish Government | Web:

[www.gov.scot<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.scot%2F&data=02%7C01%7CKate.Forbes.msp%40parliament.scot%7C16c4e1b13c0447d93e8d08d7c5d2bb72%7Cd603c99ccfdd4292926800db0d0cf081%7C1%7C0%7C637195381195089197&sdata=n5uczOJBmnqpyjQHnpKwVx1nnDS83XDY%2Fctf0R68JtU%3D&reserved=0>](http://www.gov.scot<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.scot%2F&data=02%7C01%7CKate.Forbes.msp%40parliament.scot%7C16c4e1b13c0447d93e8d08d7c5d2bb72%7Cd603c99ccfdd4292926800db0d0cf081%7C1%7C0%7C637195381195089197&sdata=n5uczOJBmnqpyjQHnpKwVx1nnDS83XDY%2Fctf0R68JtU%3D&reserved=0>)

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## Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

Direct Line: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Our ref: [REDACTED]

Date:  
30 March 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

### A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen

Thank you for your email dated 11 March 2020, in relation to the meeting invitation to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes MSP from members of the A96 Action Group regarding the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme.

Mr Matheson responded to your previous correspondence dated 18 February 2020 as the A96 Dualling Programme as he stated falls under his portfolio.

I would like to confirm again that Transport Scotland officials would be pleased to meet the group and discuss the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen Scheme with you in further detail. Should this be of interest to you please contact the A96 Dualling [REDACTED] [REDACTED], at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED] to discuss the arrangements.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Project Administrator

**Subject:** FW: Meeting the U.K. Climate Change Commitments  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.jpg](#)  
[image001.png](#)

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**From:** [REDACTED] On Behalf Of  
firstminister@gov.scot  
**Sent:** 28 February 2020 11:05  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Meeting the U.K. Climate Change Commitments

PEU

Please add this onto the Ministerial Correspondence System for an OR.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]



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| First Minister's Ministerial Private Office | 5<sup>th</sup> Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road |  
Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [REDACTED] |

[REDACTED]

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**From:**  
**Sent:** 28 February 2020 08:52  
**To:** Scottish Ministers <[Scottish\\_Ministers@gov.scot](mailto:Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot)>; First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** [richard.thomson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:richard.thomson.mp@parliament.uk); MSP Martin G <[gillian.martin.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:gillian.martin.msp@parliament.scot)>  
**Subject:** Meeting the U.K. Climate Change Commitments

FAO First Minister, Cabinet Secretary for Transport , Cabinet Secretary for Finance,  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Dear First Minister and Ministers

Scotland will be front and centre on the world stage in November when we host the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26). The Scottish Government has shown that you take this issue seriously by declaring a climate change emergency and you will no doubt seek every opportunity at COP26 to promote Scotland's actions with regard to this. Now, with

the landmark judgement yesterday against the expansion of Heathrow, it is clear that the British judiciary are also taking a strong line in ensuring the U.K. acts within the legal framework of the Climate Change Act.

We as a nation will, quite rightly, be judged not only on our fine words however, but also our deeds, when it comes to protecting against climate change, but I fear we could be found wanting.

As we are all aware, Mr Matheson, along with Transport Scotland and Amey Arup, are currently reviewing proposed routes for the 'upgrade' of the A96 dual carriageway, East of Huntly to Aberdeen section. The use of quotation marks around 'upgrade' is deliberate because what is proposed is in fact not an upgrade, but brand new roads cutting through great swathes of prime agricultural and woodland. It has been widely reported in the press that local action group A96 Action have submitted a report to you outlining comprehensively and in great detail, not only a viable option for online dualling of the A96 at Inverurie, but also the significant environmental damage the proposed new routes currently under consideration will cause and that by failing to use existing roads infrastructure\* (\*as recommended by the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland), Scotland will risk failing to meet its own stringent net zero carbon emission commitments by the set target date. The new Cabinet Minister for Finance will, I have no doubt, be keen to protect the Scottish taxpayer and your Government from the unacceptably high cost of building new roads when a viable and much more cost efficient option is available and I would therefore urge her to raise this with Mr Matheson as a matter of urgency.

First Minister and Ministers, as the host nation for COP26, Scotland should be seen to lead by example and to prove to the world that we really are serious in our commitment to mitigate against climate change by announcing the shelving of plans to build brand new, damaging routes across our countryside and that instead, the Scottish Government will be working in sympathy with this vital resource, so essential for carbon capture and much, much more.

I look forward to receiving such an assurance at the earliest opportunity.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]

Sent from my iPad







Our Reference:

08 April 2020

Dear ,

Thank you for your email of 28 February to Scottish Ministers regarding UK climate change commitments. As a member of the Scottish Government's COP 26 Unit, I have been asked to respond.

COP26 will be an important milestone in global efforts to take action on climate change and the Scottish Government remains committed to supporting Glasgow as host of COP26. When the time is right, we look forward to welcoming delegates to a successful COP26 in Glasgow, that sets the world on course to net-zero in a way that is fair and just.

While the Scottish Government's immediate actions need to focus on supporting Scotland's people and businesses in dealing with COVID-19, I would like to reassure you of our continued commitment to tackling climate change. Once we are able to move beyond the current crisis, the Scottish Government will continue to lead global climate action through the delivery of a sustainable and resilient recovery towards a net-zero emissions economy and society. Our world-leading statutory climate change commitments will help to guide this process. In response to the international Paris Agreement, our landmark 2019 Act sets legally binding emissions reduction targets for every year from now until net-zero emissions in 2045 at the latest, five years ahead of the UK.

It is fully acknowledged that the transport sector is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases and that reducing emissions from all parts of the transport system is essential for meeting the Scottish Government's climate change ambitions. However, we need to balance the extensive changes required to meet a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions with our duty to ensure that Scotland has a high quality transport system that meets the needs of all our population. As part of its current

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programme of infrastructure improvements the Scottish Government is committed to dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen along with improvements to the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line. This underlines the Scottish Government's commitment to connecting Scotland's cities with a high quality transport system that will generate sustainable economic growth.

When complete the dualling programme will bring many benefits to local communities, businesses and visitors living, travelling and working along the route. These include reduced journey times, improved journey time reliability and, crucially, improve road safety for all users along the A96.

All major projects within the Scottish Government's transport portfolio are subject to significant assessment work, review and challenge to ensure we deliver the right schemes and minimise the impacts on the environment and local communities, and the A96 Dualling programme is no exception to that.

To establish a preferred line for a trunk road improvement like the A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen scheme, Transport Scotland implements a rigorous assessment process, based on standards set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which covers environmental, engineering, traffic and economic considerations. Throughout this process, Transport Scotland consults with local communities, landowners and a large number of stakeholders and interested parties with the information collected being utilised to inform the development of scheme proposals.

Following the public engagement events held in Inverurie, Blackburn and Huntly between 28 and 31 May 2019, over 800 consultation feedback responses and comments have been received by Transport Scotland from members of the public, stakeholders and interest groups with respect to the route options being considered. It is critical that Transport Scotland takes time to consider all the feedback received, including that provided by the A96 Action Group, as it takes forward the design and assessment process.

I would like to reassure you that all of the feedback and comments received, including that provided within your correspondence will be fully considered as we progress the design and assessment process.

Yours sincerely

## **ICCD : International Climate Change and COP26 Unit**

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