

Annex A

From: Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 January 2026 14:01
To: Cabinet Secretary for Transport <CabSecfortransport@gov.scot>
Subject: Lines

The Infrastructure Delivery Pipeline sets out our commitment to dualling the A96.

It lists the Inshes to Smithton section and the Inverness to Nairn Section including the Nairn Bypass.

It should have also listed the **entire** A96 corridor because that is our commitment.

And that was what Ministers' agreed when the draft document was sent to them for formal Ministerial approval.

We are still looking into exactly how this happened but my understanding is it would appear to be a simple production error in the document.

What I can say absolutely definitively is the document has already be corrected online and the full A96 is now included, and Minister's remain absolutely committed to that project, including the Elgin bypass.

Regards

Colin McAllister
Chief of Staff



From: [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>
Sent: 14 January 2026 13:53
To: Cabinet Secretary for Transport <CabSecfortransport@gov.scot>
Cc: Fiona Brown <Fiona.Brown@transport.gov.scot>; Catherine Jess-Gibson <Catherine.Jess-Gibson@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: FW: A96 - corridor; Infrastructure Development Pipeline

FYI

[redacted]

Transport Portfolio Finance

T: Teams

E: [\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)

From: David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>

Sent: 14 January 2026 13:59

To: Daniel Hinze <Daniel.Hinze@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Exchequer Strategy and Performance <DGESP@gov.scot>; Richard McCallum <Richard.McCallum@gov.scot>; Jennie Barugh <Jennie.Barugh@gov.scot>; David Stevenson <David.Stevenson2@gov.scot>; Cathy Sumner <Cathy.Sumner@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Fiona Brown <Fiona.Brown@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>

Subject: RE: A96 - corridor; Infrastructure Development Pipeline

PDF looks like its updated now.

From: Daniel Hinze

Sent: 14 January 2026 13:52

To: Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government ; First Minister ; [redacted] ; Colin McAllister

Cc: David Hutchison ; DG Exchequer Strategy and Performance ; Richard McCallum ; Jennie Barugh ; David Stevenson ; Cathy Sumner ; [redacted] ; [redacted] ; [redacted] ; [redacted] ; [redacted] ; Fiona Brown ; [redacted]

Subject: A96 - corridor; Infrastructure Development Pipeline

A96 corridor is now added to the Html version and the pdf will be updated as well.

Daniel

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government

Sent: 14 January 2026 13:27

To: Daniel Hinze <Daniel.Hinze@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; DG Exchequer Strategy and Performance <DGESP@gov.scot>; Richard McCallum <Richard.McCallum@gov.scot>; Jennie Barugh <Jennie.Barugh@gov.scot>; David

Stevenson <David.Stevenson2@gov.scot>; Cathy Sumner<Cathy.Sumner@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Fiona Brown <Fiona.Brown@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Infrastructure Delivery Pipeline - for clearance

Thanks Daniel – grateful if you could confirm when the corrected version is live online please.

[redacted]

[redacted] | Deputy Private Secretary | Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government – Shona Robison MSP | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | M: [redacted] | E: CabSecFLG@gov.scot

From: Daniel Hinze <Daniel.Hinze@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 January 2026 12:28
To: Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; DG Exchequer Strategy and Performance <DGESP@gov.scot>; Richard McCallum <Richard.McCallum@gov.scot>; Jennie Barugh <Jennie.Barugh@gov.scot>; David Stevenson <David.Stevenson2@gov.scot>; Cathy Sumner<Cathy.Sumner@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Fiona Brown <Fiona.Brown@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Infrastructure Delivery Pipeline - for clearance

Thanks – we are in the process of changing the information.

Daniel

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government
Sent: 14 January 2026 12:23
To: Daniel Hinze <Daniel.Hinze@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; DG Exchequer Strategy and Performance <DGESP@gov.scot>; Richard McCallum <Richard.McCallum@gov.scot>; Jennie Barugh <Jennie.Barugh@gov.scot>; David Stevenson <David.Stevenson2@gov.scot>; Cathy Sumner<Cathy.Sumner@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Fiona Brown <Fiona.Brown@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Infrastructure Delivery Pipeline - for clearance

Hi Daniel,

I understand you may have already spoken with [redacted] this morning on this but Cab Sec has asked that the online IIP is corrected to add the A96 Corridor back in to the document as a matter of urgency please.

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted] | Deputy Private Secretary | Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government – Shona Robison MSP | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | M: [redacted] | E: CabSecFLG@gov.scot

From: Fiona Brown <Fiona.Brown@transport.gov.scot>
Sent: 15 January 2026 09:40
To: Cabinet Secretary for Transport <CabSecfortransport@gov.scot>
Cc: Chief Executive Transport Scotland <ceo@transport.gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Catherine Jess-Gibson <Catherine.Jess-Gibson@transport.gov.scot>; Lawrence Shackman <Lawrence.Shackman@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Sandy Jamieson <Sandy.Jamieson@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>; Daniel Hinze <Daniel.Hinze@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@transport.gov.scot>

Subject: RE: A96 - Presence in IDP

Dear [redacted], as discussed I have attached a briefing note with greater explanation for Ms Hyslop and lines to take. If she would like a discussion please let me know.

Regards,

Fiona Brown | Director of Strategy, Performance and Analysis | Transport Scotland |
[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: 14 January 2026 13:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Transport

Cc: Chief Executive Transport Scotland ; Fiona Brown ; Colin McAllister ; Catherine
Jess-Gibson ; Lawrence Shackman ; [redacted] ; [redacted] ; [redacted]

Subject: A96 - Presence in IDP

PO

Cab Sec has queried the references to the A96 in the IDP which mentions only A96
Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) and A96 / A9 Inshes to
Smithton in the development pipeline.

In the final review process A96 was moved to be a Programme in itself within
Annex B of the IDP, rather than under the other major road projects programme
banner to give it greater prominence and parity with A9 dualling, albeit the A9 is in
Annex A. The A96 corridor was removed in error at that point however is being
added back in presently.

Thanks,
[redacted]

[redacted]

Transport Portfolio Finance

T: Teams

E: [redacted]@gov.scot

A96 - IDP - Correction - Note to CabSec Transport - 15 January 2026

Issue

In the Cab Sec FLG's budget statement on 13th January she said, "We will take
forward the dualling of key sections of the A96...". **[Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank
provision of advice]** lines to take which are, "the Scottish Government's position
has not changed in that we remain in support of the full dualling of the A96 and are
progressing the dualling process from Inverness to Nairn, including the Nairn
bypass."

[Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank provision of advice]. However, it is noted, in the questions following the statement, Ms Robison used the lines to take provided by Transport Scotland in her briefing pack when responding to Mr Ewing, reiterating commitment to full dualling and the progress being made.

On budget day, Annex B of the IDP was published and included the A96 programme within the development pipeline and listed the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) and A96 / A9 Inshes to Smithton elements. This differed from the way you had agreed it to be presented in your letter to Ms Robison on 7th and the final version cleared by Ministers. See the Appendix of this note for detail on the presentation of projects.

This A96 discrepancy occurred on Friday 9th when Transport Scotland officials were asked to do final fact checking of the document before being shared with publishers. During this final review process, the A96 was moved to be a Programme in itself within Annex B of the IDP, rather than be listed under the other major road projects programme banner. **[Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank provision of advice]**. The reference to the A96 corridor was removed in error at that point.

On 14th Jan, Cab Sec FLG approved for the A96 corridor element of the programme to be included back under the A96 programme in Annex B, this was amended by publishers expediently.

[Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank provision of advice] reports in the Press and Journal and the matter was raised by Fergus Ewing and Douglas Ross in the Chamber yesterday, after portfolio questions and before the A9 statement, and by Douglas Ross in the questions following the A9 statement.

Compounding the error of the A96 corridor not being included in published version on 13th, Transport Scotland officials should have sought approval from Ministers to bring the A96 to 'programme' level rather than under the major roads improvement programme, **[Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank provision of advice]**.

TOP LINES

The Scottish Government's current position has not changed – Ministers remain in support of full dualling of the A96 and Transport Scotland is progressing the dualling process from Inverness to Nairn, including Nairn Bypass.

This includes, as set out in our infrastructure pipeline: A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass), A96 / A9 Inshes to Smithton and the A96 Corridor. When the document was originally published on 13th, the A96 corridor was missing from the project list. This was removed in error when the document was being readied for printing, and has now been rectified [as of 14th].

Subject to approval of their business cases and confirmation of funding at a Scottish Budget or Spending Review they will move into the Delivery Pipeline, and details of expected costs and delivery timeframes will be published.

Scottish Ministers remain absolutely committed to dualling the Inverness to Nairn section including the Nairn bypass.

The process of dualling the A96 from Inverness to Nairn has already started. The Government's commitment can be seen not least in the fact that since 2023 funding has been delivered and work is being taken forward. The essential work to complete the statutory authorisation process undertaken (with the Made Orders for the scheme published on 12 March 2024) and land required to construct the scheme has been acquired (with Scottish Ministers taking title to the land on 21 April 2025). Investment in the trunk road network over the next four years will allow Transport Scotland to make further progress on dualling the A96 between Inverness and Nairn, including the Nairn Bypass.

With the statutory authorisation process complete and land acquired for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass), funding is included in the 2026/27 draft Budget to commence the delivery of advanced works for this scheme, with a view to commencing procurement of the main works construction contract for a bypass of Nairn within the four year capital spending review period.

In parallel to the advanced works, Transport Scotland continues to take forward the work to determine the most suitable procurement option for delivering the scheme and thereafter a timetable for delivery can be set in line with available budgets as part of the annual budget setting process.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport has given a commitment to update Parliament, and thereby the people of the north of Scotland, as soon as this work is completed.

Scottish Ministers are committed to improving the wider A96

The commitment to improve key infrastructure for people in the north of Scotland is maintained despite significant ongoing capital pressures this government continues to face.

The Scottish Ministers commitment to improving the wider A96 is maintained despite the current fiscal position and following the Inverness to Nairn scheme, the Scottish Government will continue to progress improvements eastwards, including an Elgin Bypass.

This governments preference would be to fully dual the A96 as soon as possible, but the 14 years of austerity, and continued fiscal challenges, mean that we will have to phase dualling improvements over a longer period of time.

However, in the short term we will continue to invest in targeted improvements to road safety along the route.

With the land acquired, funding is included in the 2026/27 draft Budget to commence the delivery of advanced works for this scheme, with a view to commencing procurement of the main works construction contract for a Nairn Bypass within the four year capital spending review period.

In parallel to the advanced works, Transport Scotland continues to take forward the work to determine the most suitable procurement option for delivering the scheme and thereafter a timetable for delivery can be set in line with available budgets as part of the annual budget setting process.

The Cabinet Secretary has given a commitment to update Parliament, and thereby the people of the north of Scotland, as soon as this work is completed.

The Scottish Government remains committed to taking forward plans for a single carriageway road connecting Inshes and Smithton as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal.

Completion of the statutory process in June 2024 cleared the way for Ministers to complete the procedural steps to acquire the land required to construct the scheme and this has been completed, with Scottish Ministers taking title to the land in April 2025.

With the land acquired, funding is included in the 2026/27 draft Budget to commence the delivery of advanced works for this scheme along with the adjacent A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme, with a view to commencing

procurement of the main works construction contract within this capital spending review period.

In parallel to the advanced works, Transport Scotland continues to take forward the work to determine the most suitable procurement option for delivering the scheme and thereafter a timetable for delivery can be set. The procurement strategy work, along with developing the Outline Business Case for the project, is being taken forward alongside the work being progressed in relation to the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme.

Appendix

Annex B of IDP as issued to CabSec FLG on Wed 7th by CabSec Transport based on Transport Scotland's advice. This also went to CabSec FLG and FM for clearance on Thurs 8th:

Major road investment programme

A96 Dualling programme Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)

A96 / A9 Inshes to Smithton

A96 Corridor

Listed alongside other projects

Through course of document checking on Friday 9th by TS officials including project leads, changes made as follows:

A96 programme

A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)

A96 / A9 Inshes to Smithton

On 14th Jan, IDP published documents amended and now state:

A96 programme

A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)

A96 / A9 Inshes to Smithton

A96 Corridor