

**Annex A – Extracts of briefings and submissions between Fiona Hyslop and her officials over the A96 Corridor Review from the 17 October 2025 to the 12 November 2025**

**Extract from briefing sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport dated 6  
November 2025**

**A96**

**Mr Ruskell's Interest**

Mr Ruskell has recently raised concerns about whether the findings of the A96 climate compatibility assessment will feature in the Climate Change Plan. Cab Sec explained that the Climate Change Plan will not go into detail on this assessment or contain a road-by-road analysis. In response, Mr Ruskell expressed some concerns that the two biggest multibillion pound road-building programmes would not be reflected in some way.

**Key Updates/Speaking Points**

**A96 Corridor Review**

The Scottish Government's position has not changed – we remain in favour of full dualling of the A96 and we are progressing the dualling process from Inverness to Nairn, including Nairn Bypass.

As part of the then Bute House Agreement, the Scottish Government agreed to undertake a review of the corridor, a lengthy and complex process.

The detailed appraisal stage of the A96 Corridor Review has been published and Transport Scotland has consulted on the draft outcomes.

The 12-week consultation, which ended on Friday 21 February with over 1,400 responses received, provided the public and other stakeholders with the opportunity to fully consider and feedback on the findings from the appraisal.

The feedback received has been collated and analysed by Transport Scotland and a report summarising this feedback published on 19 June.

This feedback will help inform the Scottish Government's final decision on how best to take forward improvements to the A96 whilst also balancing the demands of the challenging economic climate and the climate emergency.

Available and planned budgets will have an impact on future decisions about what will happen on the A96 - these will be influenced by the upcoming UK Government Autumn Budget and the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan refresh anticipated for early next year.

**A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass)**

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

Dualling from Inverness to Nairn and bypassing Nairn has already received Ministerial consent following a Public Local Inquiry.

Made Orders for the scheme were published on 12 March 2024 to deliver around 31 km of new dual carriageway between Inverness and Hardmuir.

Completion of the statutory process 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 on 21 April 2025.

Work is also being progressed to determine the most suitable procurement option for delivering the scheme and thereafter a timetable can be set in line with available budgets.

A market consultation was launched on 24 February 2025 to inform further decision-making for completion of A9 Dualling and also seek industry views to inform development of the procurement approach for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) and A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton projects.