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for



A96 Corridor Review

Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA) Report (Draft)

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Acronyms

AST	Appraisal Summary Table
CT	Community Transport
CRWIA	Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessment
FSDA	Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment
MaaS	Mobility as a Service
NaPTAT	National Public Transport Accessibility Tool
NTS2	Second National Transport Strategy
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
SEqIA	Social and Equality Impact Assessment
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
STAG	Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance
STPR	Strategic Transport Projects Review
STPR2	Second Strategic Transport Projects Review

1. Introduction – A96 Corridor Review

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In August 2021, it was agreed by the Scottish Government to take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues.
- 1.1.2 Whilst the current plan is to fully dual the A96 route, it was agreed as part of this process there would be a transparent, evidence-based review of the programme, to include a climate compatibility assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on the climate and the environment. Other statutory assessments would also be undertaken which include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Statutory Impact Assessments (SIAs).
- 1.1.3 As it has already received Ministerial consent following a Public Local Inquiry, dualling of the A96 from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn is separate from the wider A96 review process.
- 1.1.4 The A96 Corridor Review is being carried out in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG).¹ STAG is the best practice, objective-led approach to transport appraisal. The transport appraisal has considered all relevant transport modes within the A96 corridor, including active travel, public transport, rail and roads-based transport modes. Adopting STAG also brings the review in line with the same methodology as set out in the Second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2).
- 1.1.5 The A96 Corridor Review is being carried out by design consultants Jacobs AECOM acting on behalf of Transport Scotland. Jacobs AECOM supported Transport Scotland undertaking STPR2. The review considers transport problems and opportunities within the A96 corridor. It also looks at the changing policy context and other key considerations, such as development and growth aims for the corridor and surrounding area. Additionally, it considers the impact of the global climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic on how people work and travel within the corridor.

1.2 A96 Corridor Review Impact Assessments

- 1.2.1 Accompanying the A96 Corridor Review, Jacobs AECOM are undertaking a series of social and equality impact assessments on the detailed appraisal options. This includes the following:
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
 - Childs Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)
 - **Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA).**

1.2.2 At the scoping stage, FSDA reporting was combined with the EqIA, CRWIA and Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) as an integrated Social and Equality Impact Assessment (SEqIA). A SEqIA Scoping Report was developed for the A96 Corridor Review which provided a full policy review, baseline evidence, findings from stakeholder engagement activities and set out proposed equality topics and objectives to use as a framework for the assessments. The report was distributed to consultees during February and March 2023 in order to gather views on the evidence collated, scope of the impact assessment and proposed approach. The need to undertake a full ICIA was scoped out in the scoping stage based on the geographical location of Island communities not likely to generate direct impacts of the A96 Corridor Review. At this stage of reporting, individual full impact assessments have been prepared for the EqIA, CRWIA and FSDA. This report sets out the approach and findings of the FSDA.

1.3 Purpose and Structure of FSDA Report

1.3.1 As a public body, Transport Scotland has a legal responsibility when creating new plans and policies to pay due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty, set out in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

1.3.1 This FSDA report has been prepared to determine if Full Dualling and the packages of transport intervention options being considered as part of the A96 Corridor Review might lead to any potential impacts on socio-economically disadvantaged groups and help to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. It demonstrates Transport Scotland's due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty. Full Dualling and the transport packages are outlined in **Chapter 6** of this report.

1.3.2 The chapters within this report include:

- **Chapter 1** summarises the general background to the A96 Corridor Review and FSDA and various impact assessments required for the review.
- **Chapter 2** provides detail on the legislative context for the FSDA.
- **Chapter 3** presents a baseline summary of the key issues and evidence for socio-economically disadvantaged groups pertinent to the A96 Corridor Review.
- **Chapter 4** describes the approach undertaken to stakeholder engagement and consultation.
- **Chapter 5** describes the approach to assessment.
- **Chapter 6** provides the findings of the assessment of impacts by Full Dualling and detailed appraisal transport intervention packages.
- **Chapter 7** summarises high-level conclusions and next steps.

2. Legislation and Policy Context

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 Fairer Scotland Duty

2.1.1.1 Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010ⁱⁱ, the 'Fairer Scotland Duty', places a legal responsibility on the relevant authorities to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. The Scottish Government, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, must have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. The 'Fairer Scotland Duty' differs from the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act which considers only reducing inequalities of opportunity.

2.1.1.2 The Fairer Scotland Duty - Guidance for Public Bodiesⁱⁱⁱ identifies a need to consider both 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest' in terms of people who share an experience and are particularly impacted by socio-economic disadvantage. Key factors through which socio-economic disadvantage can be considered include:

- low/no wealth
- low income
- area deprivation
- socio-economic background
- material deprivation.

2.1.1.3 The inequalities of outcome that people can face because of socio-economic disadvantage include:

- poorer skills and attainment
- lower health life expectancy
- lower quality, less secure and lower paid work
- greater chance of being a victim of crime
- less chance of being treated with dignity and respect.

2.2 National Policy Context

2.2.1 The section below provides an overview of the most relevant national policies to the A96 Corridor Review. A detailed policy context is provided in the **SEqIA Scoping Report**^{iv}.

2.2.2 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

2.2.2.1 NPF4 is a long-term plan providing the vision and spatial strategy for Scotland to 2045 and provides guidance to where development and infrastructure should be planned^v.

2.2.2.2 NPF4 identifies six overarching principles to support the delivery of future places. These are:

- just transition
- conserving and recycling assets
- local living
- compact urban growth
- rebalanced development
- rural revitalisation.

2.2.2.3 Applying these spatial principles will support the delivery of:

- **Sustainable places** where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity
- **Liveable places** where we can all live better, healthier lives
- **Productive places** where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

2.2.3 National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)

2.2.3.1 NTS2^{vi} outlines Scotland's transport vision for the next 20 years through the following four priorities:

- reduce inequalities
- taking climate action
- delivering inclusive economic growth
- improving health and wellbeing

2.2.3.2 The following transport challenges are identified through NTS2:

- Transport can represent significant cost in terms of accessing essential services and plays a crucial part in accessing employment and preventing social isolation.

- **Productivity, labour markets, fair work and skilled workforce, and trade and connectivity:** an efficient transport system, that is affordable, fair and inclusive for employers and the workforce will help address some of these challenges.
- **Health and active travel:** increasing the number of people walking and cycling, especially for short journeys, can have a big impact on individual health and wellbeing.

2.2.4 Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR)

2.2.4.1 STPR^{vii} outlines the Scottish Government's 29 transport investment priorities over the period to 2032 (Transport Scotland, 2008).

2.2.4.2 The review recognises the central role of transport; "An efficient transport system is one of the key enablers for enhancing productivity and delivering faster, more sustainable economic growth".

2.2.4.3 The following objectives were identified for the corridor between Inverness and Aberdeen specifically:

- "To improve connectivity, particularly by public transport between Inverness city centre and the growth area to the east including Inverness Airport
- To improve journey time and increase opportunities to travel, particularly by public transport, between Aberdeen and Inverness
- To reduce the accident rate and severity rate to current national average".

2.2.5 Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2)

2.2.5.1 The Second Strategic Transport Projects Review^{viii} informs transport investment in Scotland and helps to deliver the visions, priorities and outcomes set out in the NTS2 (Transport Scotland, 2022).

2.2.5.2 STPR2 has five key objectives that it aims to address:

- taking climate action
- addressing inequalities and accessibility
- improving health and wellbeing
- supporting sustainable economic growth
- increasing safety and resilience.

2.2.5.3 Over a 20-year period (2022-2042), the STPR2 aims to:

- enhance accessibility across Scotland for residents, visitors and businesses
- create better connectivity with sustainable, smart and cleaner transport options
- highlight the vital contribution that transport investment can play in enabling and sustaining Scotland's economic growth.

3. Baseline Summary

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The key information which supports the assessment presented in this report has been developed throughout the corridor review process with a full evidence base prepared as part of the **SEqIA Scoping Report**.
- 3.1.2 The baseline includes evidence on those living, working, visiting and travelling through the area, drawing on a range of relevant data from the National Records for Scotland, 2021 Scottish Census (as the most recent available Census dataset at the time of writing), the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020^{ix} and additional sources including the Scottish Household Survey and other transport statistics from Transport Scotland research. Where available, local area datasets have also been interrogated. It also draws on research relating to groups covered by the FSDA (for example, socio-economically disadvantaged groups) to identify the key issues within a transport context.

3.2 The FSDA Study Area

- 3.2.1 For analysis purposes, a FSDA 'study area' has been created as shown in Appendix A, comprising wards that intersect with the A96 corridor^x. Four council areas were identified within the FSDA study area:
- Aberdeenshire Council
 - Aberdeen City Council
 - The Highland Council
 - Moray Council.
- 3.2.2 The A96 Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme does not form part of the A96 Corridor Review as it has been through the statutory process and has received ministerial consent, with Made Orders published on 22 February 2024. Interventions within Nairn itself, however, have been included in the transport intervention packages in the appraisal.

3.3 Existing Transport Network and Travel Patterns

- 3.3.1 The entire length of the A96 Trunk Road is serviced by a bus route between Inverness and Aberdeen, with local services available in some of the larger towns along the route. Community transport and demand-responsive transport services are operated within each of the local authorities, although coverage is limited, with membership often required.
- 3.3.2 The rail line between Inverness and Aberdeen generally follows the alignment of the A96 Trunk Road and includes 12 stations, including both Aberdeen and Inverness.
- 3.3.3 There are several on and off-road active travel corridors in the study area, many being local networks, alongside the NCN 1 long-distance cycle route. This also connects to NCN 195 in Aberdeen and NCN 7 south of Inverness and forms part of the National Cycle Network. Traffic-free parts of the routes exist in small sections but for longer travel between settlements and towns, it is necessary to travel on-road.

3.4 Socio-Economic Disadvantage

3.4.1 Context

- 3.4.1.1 Socio-economic disadvantage is a multi-faceted issue, and in the context of transport, can affect communities that are deprived, low-income, belong to certain social classes and/or experience existing structural and institutional disadvantages. A critical aspect of socio-economic inequality is minimising child and adult poverty, which is key for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

3.4.2 Deprivation

- 3.4.2.1 On the whole, the A96 Corridor Review area does not experience relatively high levels of deprivation. However, pockets of deprivation can be found along the corridor, particularly in more urban areas and parts of Aberdeen and Inverness. Not every person in a highly deprived area will consider themselves to be deprived and likewise, there will be some deprived people living in the least deprived areas. 48% of the most deprived households (SIMD quintile 1) do not have access to a car and are twice as likely to use the bus to travel to work as households in the least deprived three quintiles^{xi}.

3.4.3 Skills, Employment and Income

- 3.4.3.1 The latest local level household income estimates show that in 2018, the average household income in Aberdeenshire was over £835 per week, whereas the other three local authority areas in the study area were between £704-715^{xii}. The Scotland average is just under £705 per week so the average for each LA within the A96 Corridor Review study area outperforms the national average. The major towns and cities generally contain a higher proportion of lower income datazones than the rural areas along the A96.

- 3.4.3.2 At a regional level, The Highland Council reported one of the highest employment rate estimates of all Scottish local authorities between 2020-21 (77.6%), sitting above the national average of 72.8%. The Highland Council also had the highest national employment rate for young people (69.9%) while Aberdeen City had the lowest youth employment rate (39.6%) nationally^{xiii}.
- 3.4.3.3 Evidence shows that access to public transport is critical for low-income families to access essential services, such as education, employment and childcare services. Access to transport is shaped by three key factors: affordability, accessibility, and individual household circumstances^{xiv}. Transport often represents a significant cost to those that carry out low-paid, low-skilled or 'atypical' work that involves irregular shifts or hours and has been cited as unmanageable for families and frequently causing anxiety^{xv}. Being able to access education, employment and training are critical for low income households as a means of escaping poverty, as well as for their general wellbeing and improved access to transport is a key enabler to this^{xvi}.
- 3.4.3.4 For low-income individuals specifically, cost is the most significant transportation-related obstacle. Evidence shows that access to bikes also increases with household income and household size with bicycle access being higher in rural areas than urban areas^{xvii}.
- 3.4.3.5 Rural households are more likely to have access to a personal vehicle (96%) than households of urban areas (72%). Rural households may be 'forced' into car ownership despite financial constraints due to the connection between transport and social exclusion, especially where alternatives are sparse and cars are the only viable means of accessing services and opportunities^{xviii}.

3.5 Security and Safety

- 3.5.1 People living in deprived areas tend to live closer to high volumes of fast-moving traffic and high levels of on-street parking and, as such, they have higher levels of exposure to road traffic risk. There is therefore a strong relationship between deprivation and pedestrian casualties. In particular, children and young people from deprived areas are more likely to be involved in traffic injuries, for whom the risk was highest on main roads and on residential roads near shops and leisure services^{xix}.
- 3.5.2 In addition, there is a significant causal relationship between increased motorised transport and increased road casualties and deaths, with people from deprived neighbourhoods more likely to be injured or killed as road users^{xx}.

3.6 Health and Wellbeing

- 3.6.1 People living in deprived areas in Scotland are more likely to die early from disease and have more years of ill health^{xxi}. Those living in deprived areas are also more vulnerable to the effects of environmental change due to the prevalence of pre-existing health problems and inequities amongst these communities.

- 3.6.2 Transport is a significant contributor to nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) emissions, and the transport sector is the most significant source of air pollution in the UK^{xxii}. Poor air quality can have detrimental impacts on human health and quality of life, resulting in health conditions such as asthma, respiratory problems and cardiovascular disease^{xxiii}.
- 3.6.3 Deprived areas are more likely to suffer from poor air quality^{xxiv}. There is also potential for health inequalities widening in these areas due to emissions being concentrated in the most heavily-trafficked roads, which are used more by disadvantaged people as places where they live, work and shop^{xxv}.
- 3.6.4 Climate change can compound poverty and deprivation and in addition, poverty increases vulnerability to climate impacts. There is also evidence that some adaptation and mitigation policy can deepen inequity. Lower-income groups living in poorer-quality housing in coastal locations are disproportionately affected by coastal flooding, while disadvantaged groups living in deprived urban areas with the least green space are more vulnerable to pluvial flooding (flooding caused by rainfall) and heatwaves^{xxvi}.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The STAG process is firmly founded on participation and consultation. Accordingly, public engagement has been pivotal to inform the A96 Corridor Review at all key stages. A comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan was developed at an early stage in the review process and has been carefully devised to ensure general inclusivity and representation of key equality groups.
- 4.1.2 Although there are no legal consultation requirements for FSDA, there has been engagement with the public throughout the Corridor Review in order to provide early opportunities within appropriate timeframes for opinions to be expressed on the transport intervention options for the A96 corridor as they have developed.

4.2 Public Consultation Activities

- 4.2.1 During the course of the A96 Corridor Review, there has been extensive public engagement. An initial four-week public consultation was held from 12 May 2022 to 10 June 2022. During this period, the public and stakeholders were invited to share insights into travel habits, general thoughts on travel and transport along the corridor and identify problems and potential opportunities along the route. In total, 4,687 responses were received via the online consultation survey and email responses. **Figure 4-1** shows the level of responses according to their SIMD ranking.
- 4.2.2 Detailed overview of the findings are available in the A96 Corridor Review Stakeholder and Public Engagement Consultation Report^{xxvii}. A summary of the main findings are as follows:
- 96% of respondents stated that car is their primary mode of travel on the A96 corridor.
 - Public transport is a less prevalent mode of transport with 46% of respondents indicating they do not use public transport along the route.
 - 88% of respondents were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of safe overtaking opportunities, 79% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with levels of traffic congestion and 76% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the length of journey times.
 - 37% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the frequency of bus services, 43% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of safe walking infrastructure, 63% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the cost of rail travel and 58% of respondents felt very unsafe or somewhat unsafe when using the road network.

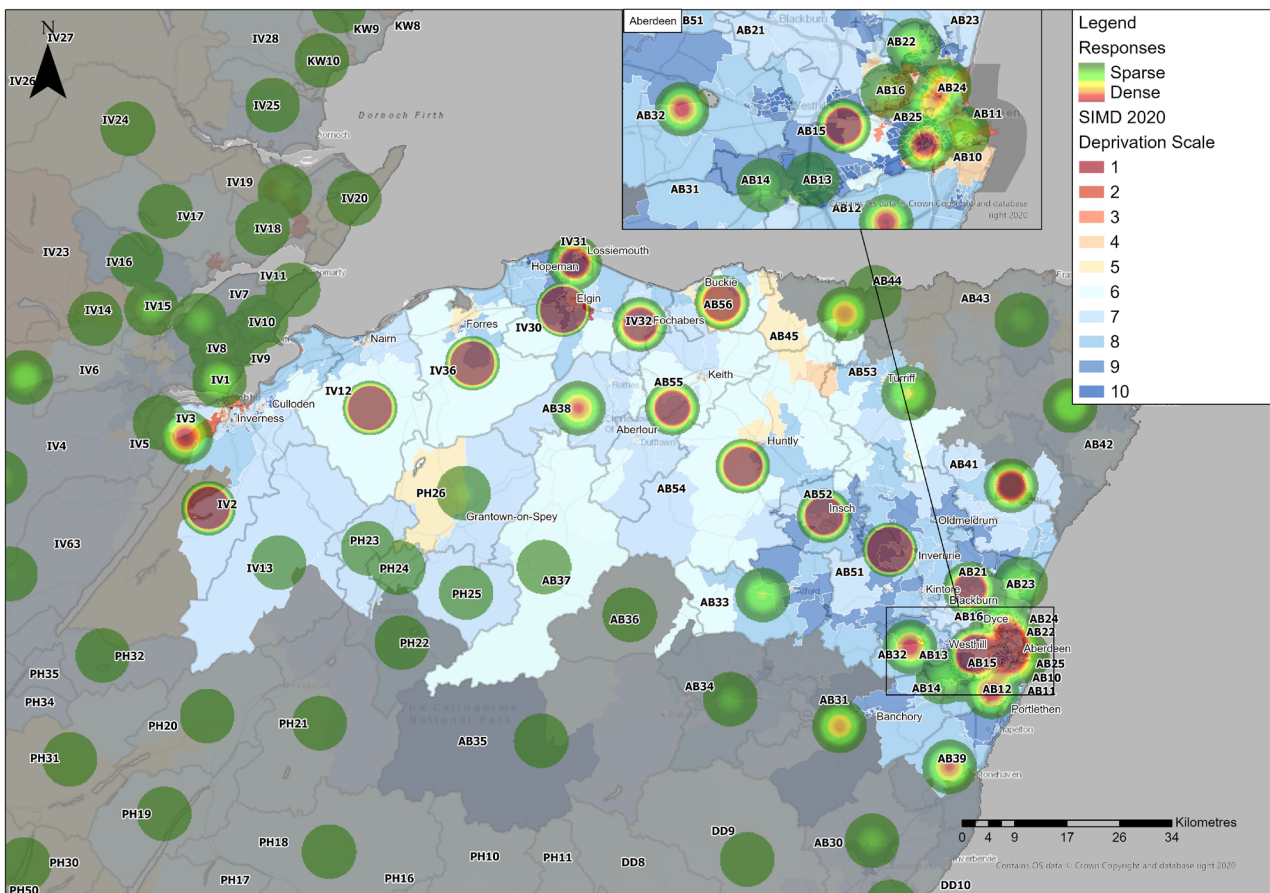


Figure 4-1: Heatmap Showing Location of Feedback Surveys Overlaid onto Areas of Deprivation Scale

- 4.2.3 The most frequently raised priority for the A96 Corridor Review, by 55% of respondents, was dualling the route, while only 12% of respondents opposed full or partial dualling. Similarly, improving road safety was raised by 50% of respondents, which included general safety concerns as well as safety of driving, cycling and walking.
- 4.2.4 The need to improve rail services, including train connections, cost, and comfort of travel, was raised by 30% of respondents, and another 30% of respondents raised bypassing town centres. Other priorities listed by respondents include improvements to bus services (raised by 24% of respondents), general public transport improvements including public transport connectivity and integration (24% of respondents), and better road maintenance including infrastructure, surface, signage etc. (22% of respondents).

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement Activities

4.3.1 As part of the ongoing engagement with stakeholders, a series of stakeholder engagement sessions were held via an online collaboration platform to understand the views of different stakeholder groupings throughout the corridor. All sessions were attended by Jacobs AECOM representatives and split by the below stakeholder groupings:

- representatives from the four local authorities and Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)
- environmental stakeholders, including local authority Environmental Planners
- North East Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) and Aberdeenshire Council
- representatives from statutory environmental groups
- representatives from active travel and accessibility stakeholders
- representatives from business and business organisation stakeholders
- representatives from Stagecoach
- representatives from Police Scotland.

4.3.2 Across these sessions, consistent problems, opportunities and suggestions were provided on the topics outlined in **Table 4-1**:

Table 4-1: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Responses

Topic	Problems	Opportunities	Suggestions/ interventions
Active travel	Lack of appropriate active travel infrastructure, especially concerning safety while cycling and walking	Inclusivity and connectivity of active travel throughout the A96 corridor	Sustainable and safe active travel provision
Public transport	Low public transport uptake due to slow journey times, high travel costs and frequency of services	Reliable and sustainable public transport infrastructure improvements, including Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Community Transport (CT) links	Improvement to public transport services, including Park and Ride facilities, multi-modal transport hubs and interchanges between active travel and public transport
Road network	Lack of road safety and slow journey times	Sustainable travel and green infrastructure improvements to enhance connectivity	Sustainable road safety travel improvements with connectivity to public transport
Environment	Lack of green infrastructure and traffic emissions within towns along the route	Decarbonisation strategies, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure and sustainable travel infrastructure	Increase in green infrastructure

4.4 SEqIA Stakeholder Workshop

4.4.1 An online consultation workshop was held to present the SEqIA Scoping Report on 14 March 2023. Prior to this, the SEqIA Scoping Report was issued to 31 organisations (see Appendix B) representing equalities groups, socio-economically disadvantaged groups and islands communities, along with an invitation to attend the workshop.

4.4.2 Representatives from Jacobs AECOM were present and provided stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of the A96 Corridor Review process to date and the initial requirements of Transport Scotland in its duties to prepare an EqIA, CRWIA and FSDA. The key feedback from these sessions included:

- the need to consider the significant overlaps across the various social and equality impact topic areas and to consider intersectionality as part of the assessment

- that where possible, the assessments should refer to evidence provided by those with lived experience
- the need to incorporate impacts on health into the assessments.

4.4.3 In addition, all attendees agreed they were content with scoping-out an Islands and Communities Impact Assessment for the review.

5. Approach to the FSDA

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The FSDA and other impact assessments have aligned with each STAG stage, in order to maximise influence of impact assessment work in the overall assessment process. **Table 5-1** sets out how the FSDA process aligns with STAG’s four-stage assessment process throughout the A96 Corridor Review.

Table 5-1: FSDA Stages of Assessment

Initial Appraisal: Case for Change
Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs)
<p>The impact assessment team set out the evidence base for problems and opportunities linked to the transport network for all modes within the study area to influence the development of TPOs that align closely with STPR2. TPOs represent the positive outcomes sought for the corridor and provide the basis for the appraisal of alternative options. The FSDA aligns in particular with:</p> <p>TPO2 - An inclusive strategic transport corridor that improves the accessibility of public transport in rural areas for access to healthcare, employment and education.</p> <p>TPO4 - An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth throughout the corridor and beyond.</p>
Preliminary Appraisal
<p>A multi-criterion sifting approach of shortlisted transport intervention options was undertaken, considering a matrix-based assessment in the context of likely disproportionate or differential effects on socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Commentary has been provided to justify the rating and consider relevant likely significant effects, mitigation, risk and uncertainty.</p>
Detailed Appraisal
<p>A more detailed assessment of Full Dualling and sifted transport packages against aligned STAG topics and socio-economic related considerations. The assessment utilises a matrix approach for Full Dualling and each of the transport packages as shown in Table 5-2 which aligns with a seven-point rating system, as shown in Table 5-3. The commentary justifies the rating and considers relevant likely significant effects, mitigation, assumptions and uncertainties where relevant.</p>

5.2 Assessment of Impacts

5.2.1 This FSDA presents an assessment of the potential socio-economic impacts for Full Dualling and six transport intervention packages that were developed in the detailed appraisal stage from the sifted options identified through the initial appraisal. The current Scottish Government commitment, the A96 Full Dualling (from Hardmuir to Craibstone), has also been appraised as part of the Detailed Appraisal in order to assess its performance against current appraisal criteria, and this also forms part of the FSDA.

5.3 Assessment Framework: Matrix Approach

5.3.1 The FSDA process assesses the contribution of Full Dualling and each package option in helping reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

5.3.2 The assessment of impacts used a matrix-based approach, with a qualitative rating system to identify likely impacts on socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Impacts for each of the assessments have been determined against two assessment criteria: magnitude and sensitivity. These consist of:

Magnitude of impact: the extent to which socio-economically disadvantaged groups would be impacted (positively or negatively) by Full Dualling or the package option, considering the numbers or proportion that would experience the impact.

Sensitivity of impact: this considers how those impacted might respond; whether they are able to adapt to Full Dualling or the package option (where negatively impacted). If the impacted group has no alternatives and, as such, will be greatly impacted, then it is considered to be highly sensitive to the change. Where they are able to continue to function as normal, sensitivity would be low.

5.3.3 The identification of likely significant impacts has involved combining the sensitivity of those affected with the predicted magnitude of impact (change) using the assessment matrix provided in **Table 5-2**.

Table 5-2: Impact Rating Matrix

Sensitivity of impact	Magnitude of impact	Magnitude of impact	Magnitude of impact	Magnitude of impact
	No change	Low	Medium	High
High	Neutral	Minor or Moderate	Moderate or Major	Major
Medium	Neutral	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or Major
Low	Neutral	Neutral or minor	Minor or Moderate	Minor or Moderate

- 5.3.4 Where two significance categories are shown in the matrix, professional judgement has been used to select the appropriate category of significance. Evidence and rationale is provided for the selection of category.
- 5.3.5 The seven-point rating system describing the assessment of equality effects is outlined in **Table 5-3**.

Table 5-3: FSDA Rating System

Major positive impact
The proposed option provides a major contribution to reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.
Moderate positive impact
The proposed option contributes significantly to reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.
Minor positive impact
The proposed option contributes to reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage, but not significantly.
Neutral impact
The proposed option is related to, but does not have any impact on, reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.
Minor negative impact
The proposed option detracts from reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage, but not significantly.
Moderate negative impact
The proposed option detracts significantly from reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. Mitigation is therefore required.
Major negative impact
The proposed option results in a major detraction from reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. An alternative option or significant mitigation is therefore required.

- 5.3.6 Following each stage of assessment, any potentially negative impacts identified have been discussed with the project team to consider reasonable alternatives, effective mitigation and enhancement recommendations.
- 5.3.7 The key relevant findings and recommendations of the detailed appraisal options are recorded in Chapter 6 of this report, with overall assessment scores for the FSDA.

6. Assessment of Impacts

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This chapter provides a high-level assessment of the potential impacts of Full Dualling and the packages of transport intervention options that are being considered as part of the A96 Corridor Review on socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.1.2 The assessment is based on the rating criteria set out in Section 5.3 and takes into account wider appraisal work and baseline evidence for socio-economic disadvantage.
- 6.1.3 For the purposes of the A96 Corridor Review, the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios developed as part of the scenario planning undertaken for STPR2, are used in the Detailed Appraisal of Full Dualling and each package. These demand scenarios were developed to consider the risk associated with future uncertainties. The following two scenarios with their inherent variants of transport behaviour were considered:
- 'With Policy Scenario' - captures policy ambitions including 20% reduction (from 2019 levels) in car kilometres travelled by 2030, and assumptions to significantly reduce levels of commuting/business journeys to reflect post COVID-19 working behaviours, leading to low levels of motorised traffic demand and emissions.
 - 'Without Policy Scenario' - no policy ambitions are captured, and less significant reductions to levels of commuting/business journeys, leading to higher levels of motorised traffic demand and emissions.

6.2 Transport Intervention Packages

- 6.2.1 Full package descriptions and detailed appraisal summaries are included within the 'Strategic Business Case – Transport Appraisal Report' published alongside this FSDA. However, **Table 6-1** provides a summary of the transport interventions included within each package. It should be noted that the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme does not form part of the A96 Corridor Review as it has successfully progressed through a Public Local Inquiry and has Ministerial consent. Interventions within Nairn itself, similar to those proposed within the other bypassed towns, however, have been included within the packages for appraisal purposes.

Table 6-1: Interventions Within Each Detailed Appraisal Package

Option	Package 1	Package 2	Package 3	Package 4	Package 5	Refined Package
Active Communities	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Active Connections			✓	✓	✓	
Bus Priority Measures and Park and Ride	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Investment in DRT and MaaS	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Introduction of Rail Freight Terminals				✓	✓	
Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements on the Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Targeted Road Safety Improvements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elgin Bypass	✓				✓	✓
Keith Bypass	✓				✓	✓
Inverurie Bypass	✓				✓	
Forres Bypass	✓				✓	
A96 Electric Corridor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

6.3 A96 Full Dualling – Potential Impacts

6.3.1 The A96 Full Dualling from Hardmuir (approximately five miles east of Nairn) to Craibstone (approximately six miles west of Aberdeen city centre), hereafter referred to as the A96 Full Dualling option, is the current Scottish Government commitment and focuses on improving the trunk road network in the North East of Scotland to address road safety concerns and provide resilience and reliability improvements for a key connection between Inverness and Aberdeen. The location of the option is illustrated in Figure 6-1.

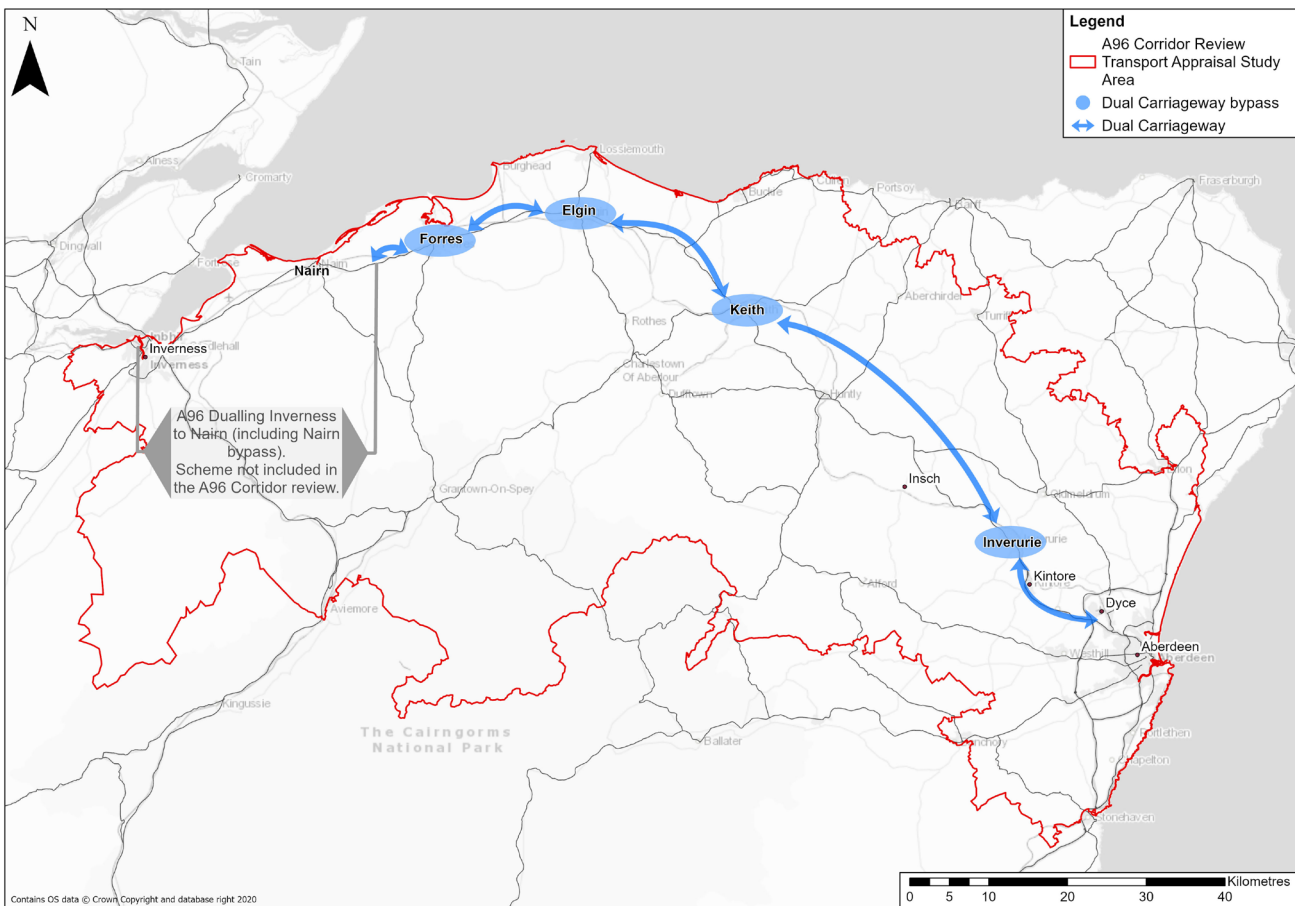


Figure 6-1: A96 Full Dualling Hardmuir to Craibstone Extent

6.3.2 The provision of full dualling between Hardmuir and Craibstone could improve access to places of employment and education increasing opportunities for those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

- 6.3.3 There is generally a heavier reliance on the use of the private car along the A96 corridor compared with the rest of the country. This is primarily due to the rural nature of the region, where there is greater dependency on the private car to access employment, education, healthcare and for social purposes. In the absence of viable alternatives to travel, some low-income households may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. However, there could be benefits through an improvement in journey times and reliability of journey times for these drivers, providing more economical and efficient journeys.
- 6.3.4 There are also opportunities for safety improvements to benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups as evidence shows that people from deprived areas are more likely to be injured or killed as road users. Therefore, improved safety of the trunk road network through overtaking opportunities and reduced traffic flows in bypassed towns could benefit those living in deprived areas. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.3.5 The construction works associated with full dualling could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.3.6 Overall, full dualling is expected to have a **minor positive** impact under both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios for socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

6.4 Package 1 – Potential Impacts

- 6.4.1 This package is focused on primarily delivering transport network improvements to key towns along the A96 corridor, namely Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Keith and Inverurie, by providing enhancements which would aim to encourage a shift to sustainable modes, increasing opportunities for residents and businesses and improving road safety.
- 6.4.2 The location of the settlements concerned in relation to the wider A96 Corridor Review transport appraisal study area is illustrated in **Figure 6.2**. Whilst this package is primarily targeted at the aforementioned settlements, it also includes corridor-wide interventions which are anticipated to result in benefits to other areas within the corridor.

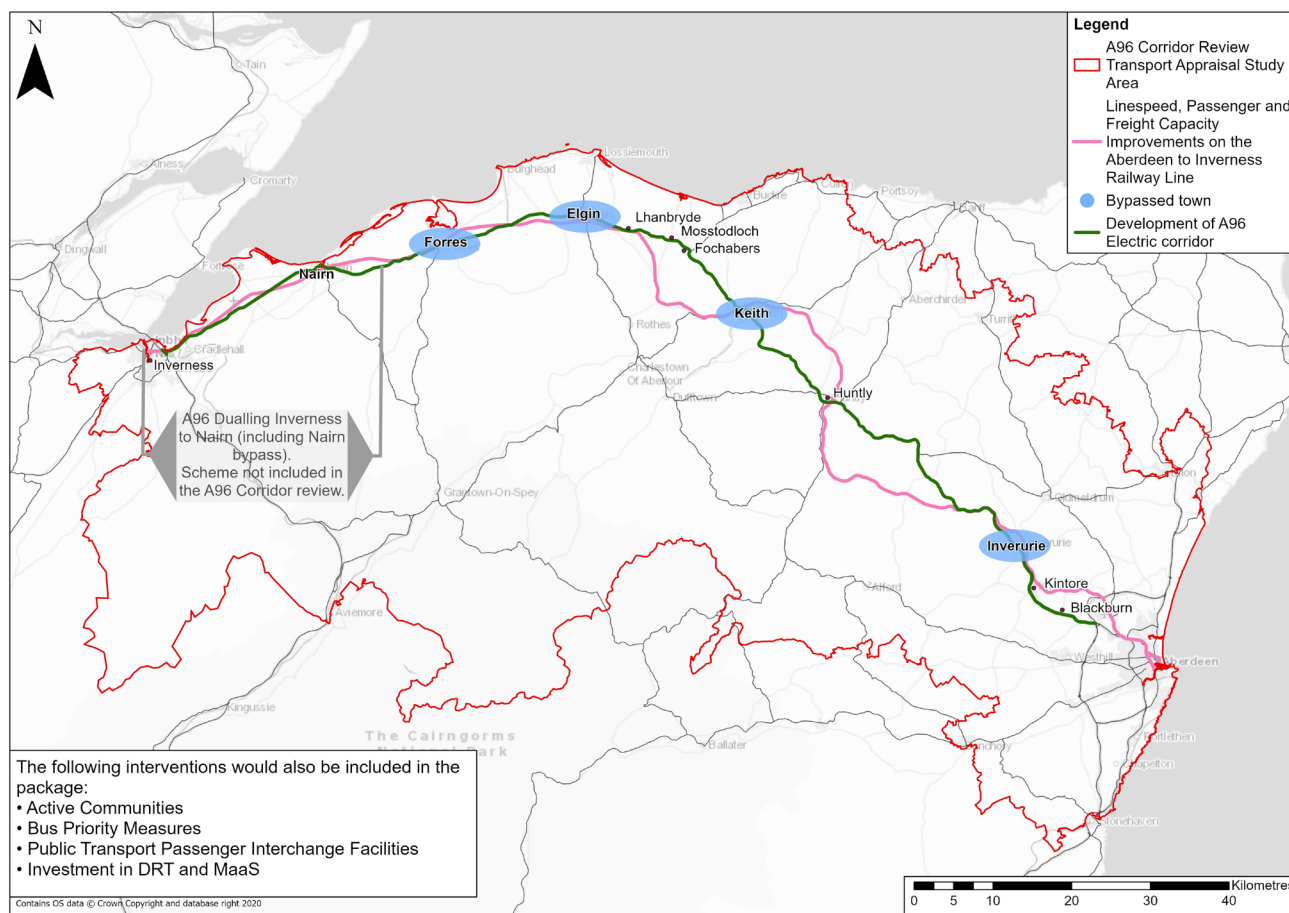


Figure 6-2: Package 1 Extent

- 6.4.3 Modelling undertaken using Jacob’s National Public Transport Accessibility Tool (NaPTAT) anticipates that this package would improve access to essential services for socio-economically disadvantaged groups across the region, including employment and education sites located in major cities.
- 6.4.4 NaPTAT modelling observed the largest journey time accessibility benefits to key destinations and essential services in Aberdeenshire. These benefits would be linked to the rail interventions within the package and result in reduced public transport journey times between settlements along the rail line, particularly to Inverness and Aberdeen. The package would reduce the journey time to the nearest higher education site for 300 young people aged 16–24 who reside in areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area. Of these, 150 young people would be able to access their nearest higher education site within approximately 60 minutes and the remaining 150 young people able to access their nearest higher education site within approximately within 100 minutes. The increased accessibility of higher education along the A96 would largely be found in rural settlements including Kemnay and Alford (located to the south-west of Inverurie).

- 6.4.5 Further journey time accessibility benefits in Aberdeenshire would be observed in access to employment opportunities found in Aberdeen City for residents in geographically deprived areas (20% most deprived in the country). The package would enable, on average, an additional 3,100 existing jobs located in Aberdeen City to be reached within 60 minutes using public transport from geographically deprived areas in Aberdeenshire.
- 6.4.6 Traffic modelling forecasts predict that traffic would divert away from Forres, Elgin, Keith and Inverurie following the introduction of Package 1 in both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios. This is expected to create benefits for socio-economically disadvantaged groups by improving the active travel environment for those who are unable to afford a car. Including active travel interventions in conjunction with bypasses could aid the removal of barriers in communities through an improved sense of road safety and security for those walking, wheeling and cycling, and the public transport interventions included within this package could encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes. There is also the potential for a reduction in inequalities of health in disadvantaged and deprived communities through improved air quality at a local level.
- 6.4.7 There is generally a heavier reliance on the use of the private car along the A96 corridor compared with the rest of the country. This is primarily due to the rural nature of the region, where there is greater dependency on the private car to access employment, education, healthcare and for social purposes. In the absence of viable alternatives to travel, those on low incomes may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. Reductions in journey times and improvement in journey time reliability for drivers, could provide more economical and efficient journeys for these groups.
- 6.4.8 The provision of bypasses could reduce the number and severity of road traffic accidents on the sections of the existing A96 Trunk Road which route through towns. This could benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups, as evidence shows that people from deprived areas are more likely to be killed or injured as road users. The construction works associated with bypasses could also result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.4.9 The extent to which positive effects would be realised depends on the alignment of bypasses and the level to which all other listed interventions are adopted, as it is noted that this would depend on local circumstances within each key community. This in turn would have an impact on the level of reduction of through traffic within disadvantaged and deprived communities.

- 6.4.10 The construction works associated with the interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.4.11 Overall, this package is expected to have a **minor positive** impact under both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios on addressing this criterion.

6.5 Package 2 – Potential Impacts

- 6.5.1 This package of interventions is targeted at providing network improvements to some of the less populated settlements along the A96 corridor, that are not intended to be bypassed within Package 1. The package would provide enhancements which would aim to encourage a shift to sustainable modes, increase opportunities for residents and businesses and improve road safety.
- 6.5.2 The specific settlements considered in this package are Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch, Fochabers, Huntly, Kintore and Blackburn and are shown within the context of the wider A96 Corridor Review transport appraisal study area in **Figure 6-3**. This package focuses on delivering transport network improvements within the vicinity of these towns, aiming to encourage a transfer to sustainable modes and improve road safety. Whilst this package is primarily targeted at the aforementioned settlements, the package also includes corridor-wide interventions which are anticipated to result in benefits to other areas within the corridor.

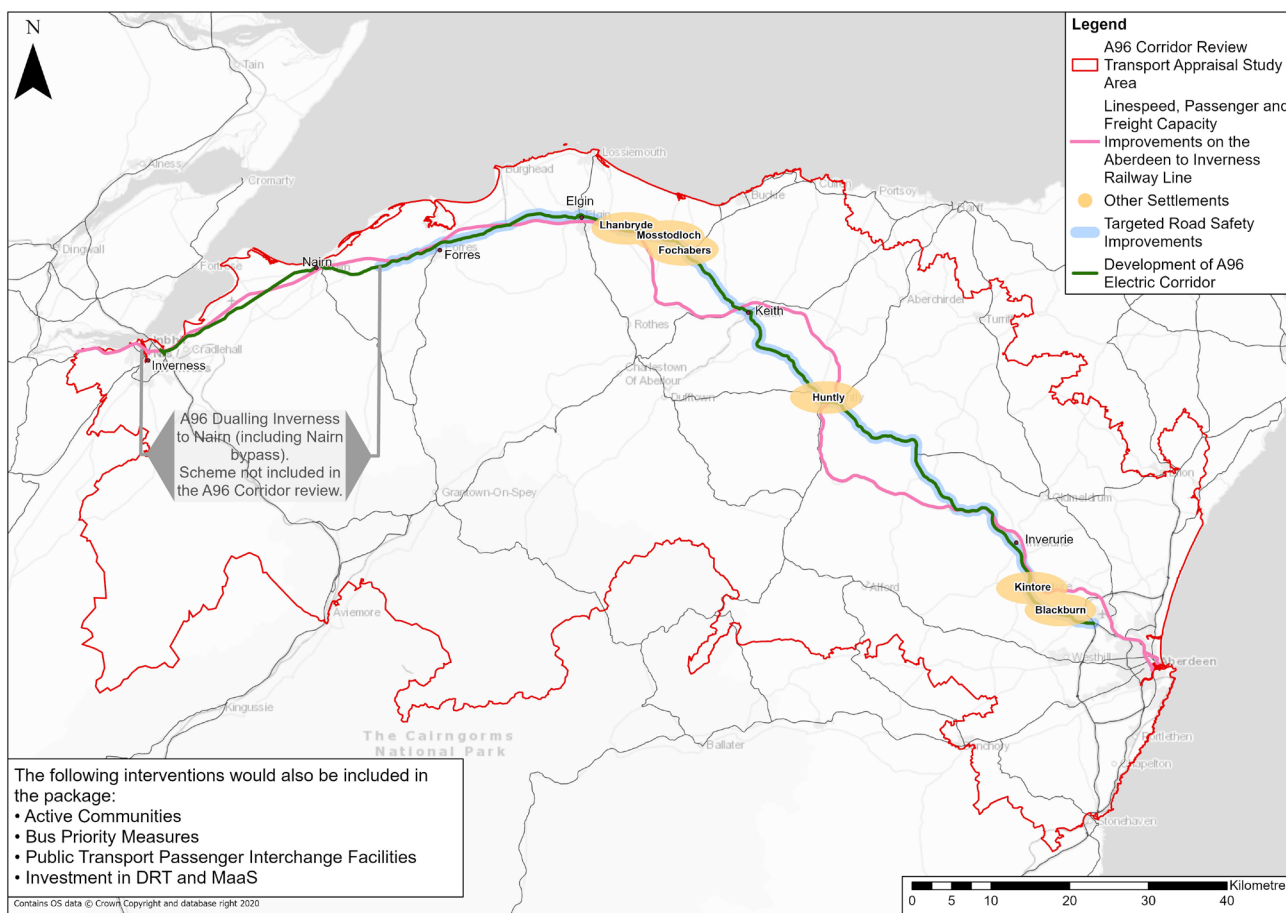


Figure 6-3: Package 2 Extents

- 6.5.3 Modelling undertaken using NaPTAT anticipates that this package would improve the journey time access to essential services, including employment and education sites, for socio-economically disadvantaged groups across the region. There could be a large beneficial impact in tackling inequality, with improved public transport connectivity supporting reduced social isolation and improved health and wellbeing.
- 6.5.4 NaPTAT modelling observed the largest journey time accessibility benefits to key destinations and essential services in Aberdeenshire. These benefits would be linked to the rail interventions within the package and result in reduced public transport journey times between settlements along the rail line, particularly to Inverness and Aberdeen. In particular, Inverurie residents could expect a journey time reduction of between seven and twelve minutes to the nearest higher education site, benefiting 1,400 people who reside in the town and within areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area. Further journey time accessibility benefits in Aberdeenshire would be observed in access to employment opportunities found in Aberdeen City for residents in geographically deprived areas (20% most deprived in the country). The package would enable, on average, an additional 2,700 existing jobs located in Aberdeen City to be reached within 60 minutes using public transport from geographically deprived areas in Aberdeenshire.

- 6.5.5 Given that 48% of the most deprived households (SIMD quintile 1) do not have access to a car and are twice as likely to use the bus to travel to work as households in the least deprived three quintiles, the beneficial impacts would be highest for those from the most deprived households. However, only 6.9% of SIMD datazones within the transport appraisal study area fall into the most deprived quintile. Nevertheless, the barriers created through not having access to a car are likely to be exacerbated in communities where public transport service levels are lower. As such, the positive impact of improved public transport for socially excluded groups in these areas is likely to be greater.
- 6.5.6 Furthermore, in the absence of viable alternatives to travel, some low-income households living along the A96 corridor may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. Therefore, there could be benefits for those groups with regards to the provision of alternative options to private vehicle use and ownership. However, this would depend on public transport fares being affordable. Moreover, if schemes delivered through the package are dependent on MaaS, it is likely to exclude certain groups without access to this technology or bank accounts, and as such this would need to be considered in the design of the schemes to ensure that they are able to benefit.
- 6.5.7 One of the alternative options expected to create benefits for socio-economically disadvantaged groups is an improved active travel environment. Including active travel interventions in conjunction with targeted road safety improvements, such as junction improvements, could aid the removal of barriers in communities through an improved sense of road safety and security for those walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 6.5.8 There is also the potential for a reduction in inequalities of health in disadvantaged and deprived communities through improved air quality at a local level. This is a result of an uptake in active travel being accompanied by reduced congestion and as a result of modal shift, which should contribute towards a reduction in traffic volumes, as shown in traffic modelling outputs.
- 6.5.9 Evidence shows that people from deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to be injured or killed as road users. Therefore, improved safety of the trunk road network could benefit those from deprived areas. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.5.10 However, the extent to which this package would reduce inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups would depend on the interventions listed being adopted, the location of the interventions, proximity to local services and the ability for those from deprived and disadvantaged communities to access the active and sustainable travel network.

6.5.11 The construction works associated with the interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

6.5.12 Overall, this package is expected to have a **minor positive** impact on addressing this criterion in both 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios.

6.6 Package 3 – Potential Impacts

6.6.1 This package is focused on primarily delivering transport network improvements to rural sections along the A96 corridor by providing enhancements which would aim to encourage a shift to sustainable modes, increase active travel and public transport options and improve road safety.

6.6.2 The location of the settlements concerned in relation to the wider A96 Corridor Review transport appraisal study area is illustrated in **Figure 6-4**. Whilst this package is primarily targeted at rural sections, it also includes corridor-wide interventions which are anticipated to result in benefits to other areas across the corridor.

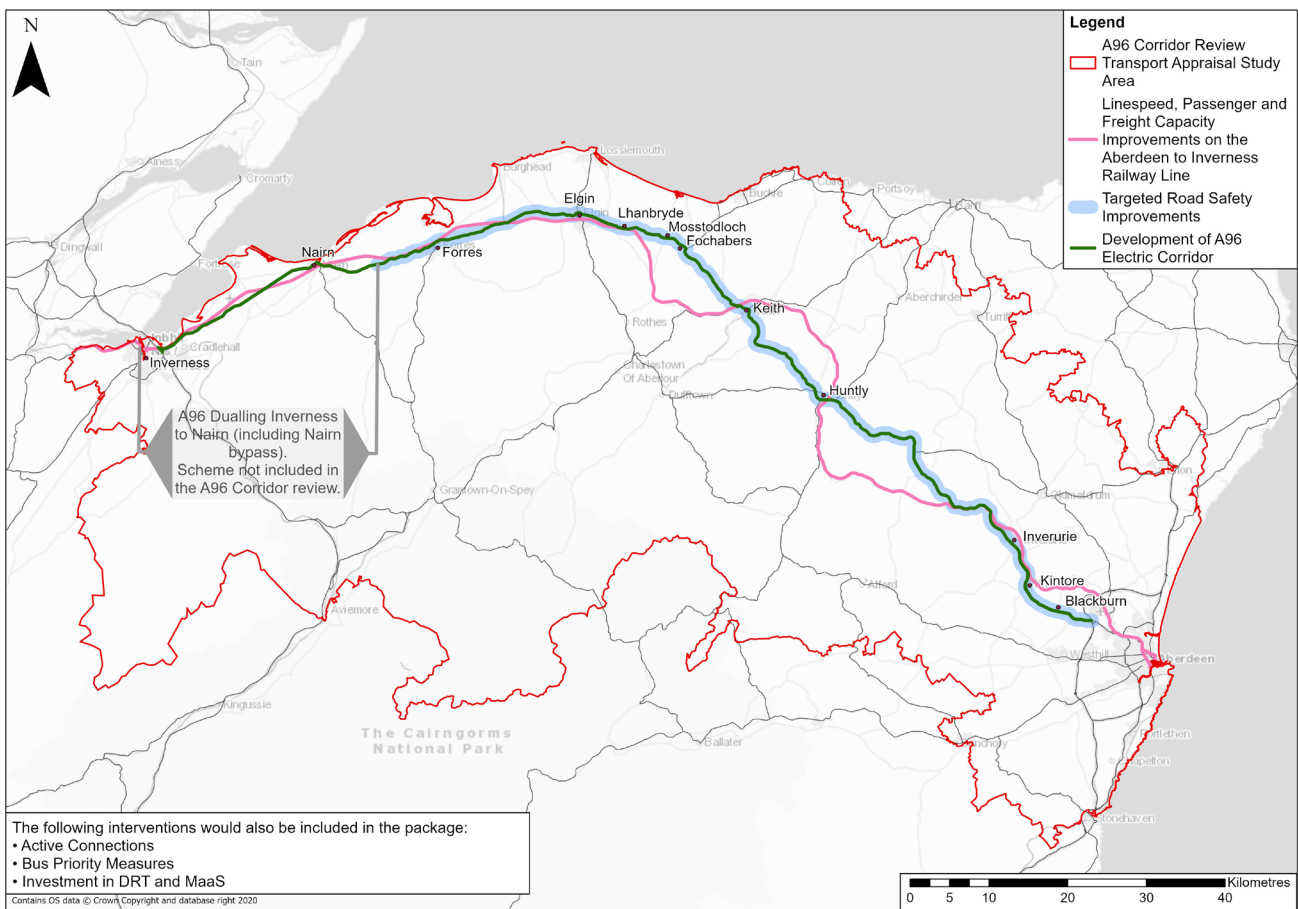


Figure 6-4: Package 3 Extents

- 6.6.3 Modelling undertaken using NaPTAT anticipates that this package would improve the journey time access to essential services, including employment and education sites, for socio-economically disadvantaged groups across the region. There could be a large beneficial impact in tackling inequality, with improved public transport connectivity supporting reduced social isolation and improved health and wellbeing.
- 6.6.4 Given that 48% of the most deprived households (SIMD quintile 1) do not have access to a car and are twice as likely to use the bus to travel to work as households in the least deprived three quintiles, the beneficial impacts are likely to be highest for those from the most deprived households. However, only 6.9% of SIMD datazones within the transport appraisal study area fall into the most deprived quintile. Nevertheless, the barriers created through not having access to a car are likely to be exacerbated in rural areas where public transport service levels are lower. As such, the positive impact of improved public transport for socially excluded groups in these areas is likely to be greater.
- 6.6.5 NaPTAT modelling observed the largest journey time accessibility benefits in Aberdeenshire, where it is anticipated an additional 150 people aged 16-24 who reside in areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area would be able to access the nearest higher education site within 50 minutes by public transport. Those journey time accessibility benefits would particularly be observed in Inverurie, with a journey time reduction of between six to 12 minutes to the nearest higher education site. Further journey time accessibility benefits in Aberdeenshire would be observed in access to employment opportunities found in Aberdeen City. The package would enable, on average, an additional 1,700 existing jobs to be reached within 60 minutes using public transport from Aberdeenshire for people aged 16 to 64 who reside in areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area. These benefits would be predominately found in Kintore, Inverurie, Kemnay and Insch (located 12 miles to the north-west of Inverurie).
- 6.6.6 Furthermore, in the absence of viable alternatives to travel, some low-income households living in rural areas may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. Therefore, there could be benefits for those groups with regards to the provision of alternative options to private vehicle use and ownership. However, this would depend on public transport fares being affordable. Moreover, if schemes delivered through the package are dependent on MaaS, it is likely to exclude certain groups without access to this technology, bank accounts or the appropriate level of support to apply for entitlement schemes, and as such this would need to be considered in the design of the schemes to ensure that they are able to benefit. Similarly, improved access to employment opportunities in Aberdeen City is identified by NaPTAT modelling, particularly across Kintore, Inverurie, Kemnay and Insch.

- 6.6.7 One of the alternative options expected to create benefits for socio-economically disadvantaged groups is an improved active travel environment. Including active travel measures in conjunction with safety measures, such as junction improvements, could aid the removal of barriers in communities through an improved sense of road safety and security for those walking, wheeling and cycling. The construction works associated with these interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.6.8 There is also the potential for a reduction in inequalities of health in disadvantaged and deprived communities through improved air quality at a local level. This is a result of an uptake in active travel being accompanied by reduced congestion and as a result of mode shift, which could contribute towards a reduction in traffic volumes, as shown in traffic modelling outputs.
- 6.6.9 Evidence shows that people from deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to be injured or killed as road users. Therefore, improved safety of the trunk road network could benefit those from deprived areas. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.6.10 However, the extent to which this option would reduce inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups would depend on the extent that the interventions listed are adopted, the location of the interventions, proximity to local services in rural areas and the ability for those from deprived and disadvantaged rural communities to access the active travel network.
- 6.6.11 The construction works associated with the interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.6.12 Overall, this package is expected to have a **minor positive** impact on addressing this criterion in both 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios.

6.7 Package 4 – Potential Impacts

- 6.7.1 This package of interventions is targeted at longer distance journeys along the A96 corridor, with a focus on delivering transport network improvements aiming to encourage a shift to sustainable modes and improve road safety. The options considered under Package 4 are shown in **Figure 6-5**.

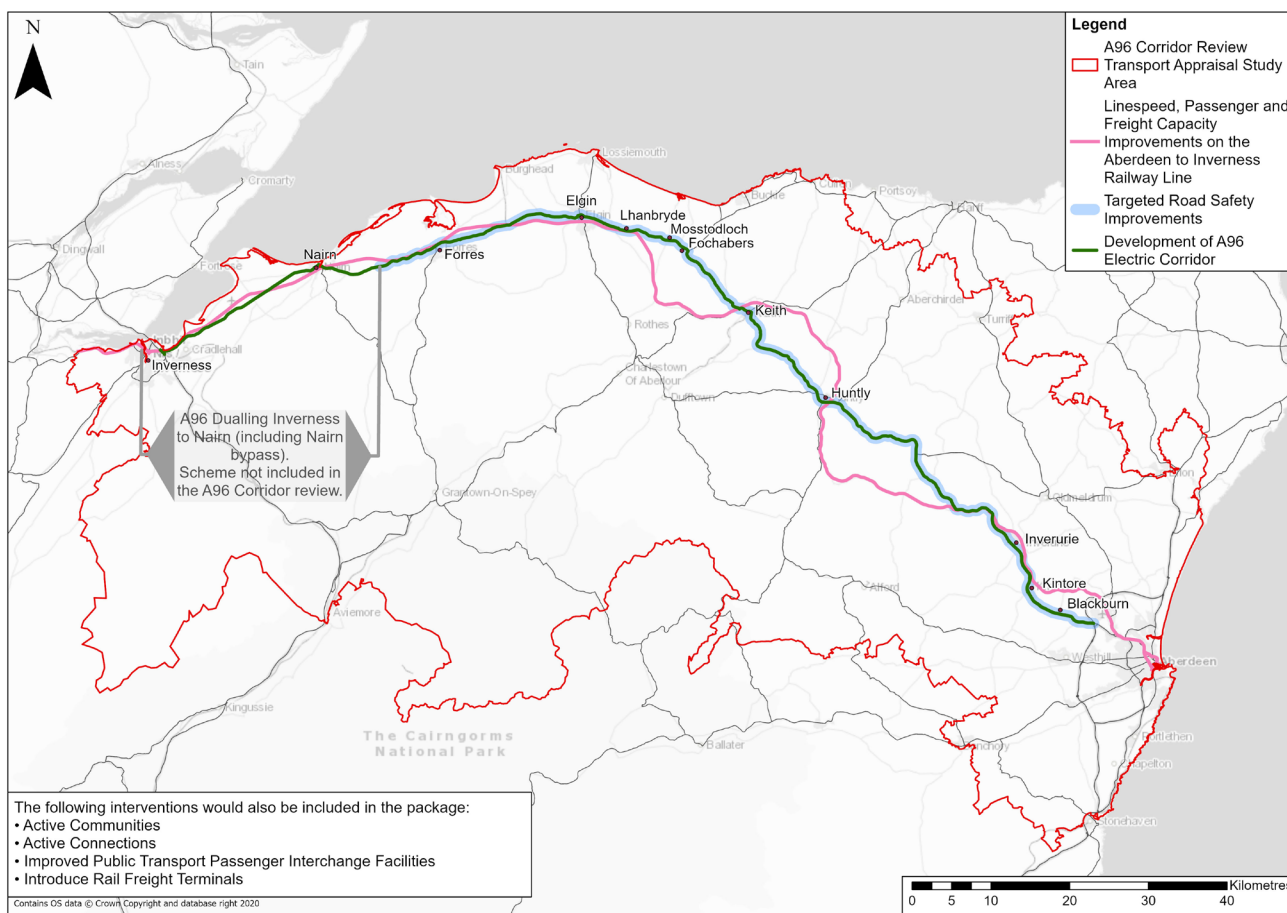


Figure 6-5: Package 4 Extents

- 6.7.2 Modelling undertaken using NaPTAT anticipates that this package would improve the journey time access to essential services, including employment and education sites, for socio-economically disadvantaged groups across the region. There could be a large beneficial impact in tackling inequality, with improved public transport connectivity supporting reduced social isolation and improved health and wellbeing.
- 6.7.3 Given that 48% of the most deprived households (SIMD quintile 1) do not have access to a car and are twice as likely to use the bus to travel to work as households in the least deprived three quintiles, the beneficial impacts are likely to be highest for those from the most deprived households. However, only 6.9% of SIMD datazones within the transport appraisal study area fall into the most deprived quintile. Nevertheless, the barriers created through not having access to a car are likely to be exacerbated in communities where public transport service levels are lower. As such, the positive impact of improved public transport for socially-excluded groups in these areas is likely to be greater.

- 6.7.4 NaPTAT modelling observed the largest journey time accessibility benefits to key destinations and essential services in Aberdeenshire. These benefits would be linked to the rail interventions within the package and result in reduced public transport journey times between settlements along the rail line, particularly to Inverness and Aberdeen. In particular, Inverurie observed a journey time reduction of between six to seven minutes across most of the town in travelling to the nearest education site, benefitting 100 young people (aged 16 to 24) who reside in areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area. Further journey time accessibility benefits in Aberdeenshire are observed in access to employment opportunities found in Aberdeen City. The package would enable, on average, an additional 2,900 existing jobs to be reached within 60 minutes using public transport from Aberdeenshire for people aged 16 to 64 who reside in areas where the gross household income is found within the 20% lowest in the study area. These benefits would be predominately found in Kintore, Inverurie and Kemnay.
- 6.7.5 In the absence of viable alternatives to travel some low-income households living in the area may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. Therefore, there could be benefits for those groups with regards to the provision of alternative options to private vehicle use and ownership. However, this would depend on public transport fares being affordable.
- 6.7.6 One of the alternative options expected to create benefits for socio-economically disadvantaged groups is an improved active travel environment. Including active travel measures in conjunction with safety measures, such as junction improvements, could aid the removal of barriers in communities through an improved sense of road safety and security for those walking, wheeling and cycling. The construction works associated with these interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.7.7 There is also the potential for a reduction in inequalities of health in disadvantaged and deprived communities through improved air quality at a local level. This is a result of an uptake in active travel being accompanied by reduced congestion as a result of mode shift, which could contribute towards a reduction in traffic volumes, as shown in traffic modelling outputs.
- 6.7.8 Evidence shows that people from deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to be injured or killed as road users. Therefore, improved safety of the trunk road network could benefit those from deprived areas. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.7.9 Rail freight is a key component of the rail sector's contribution to Scotland's economy. The provision of rail freight terminals is expected to enhance economic growth and private sector investment, thereby creating employment opportunities and potentially reducing socio-economic disadvantage.

6.7.10 However, the extent to which this package would reduce inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups would depend on the extent that the interventions listed are adopted, the location of the interventions, proximity to local services, and the ability for those from deprived and disadvantaged communities to access the active travel network. As this package does not remove through traffic from communities, the potential benefits resulting from active travel interventions may be more difficult to fully realise.

6.7.11 The construction works associated with the interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

6.7.12 Overall, this package is expected to have a **minor positive** impact on addressing this criterion in both 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios.

6.8 Package 5 – Potential Impacts

6.8.1 This package is focused on delivering transport network improvements to settlements and rural sections across the A96 corridor, which would aim to encourage a shift to sustainable modes, increase opportunities for residents and businesses and improve road safety. The options considered under Package 5 are shown in **Figure 6-6**.

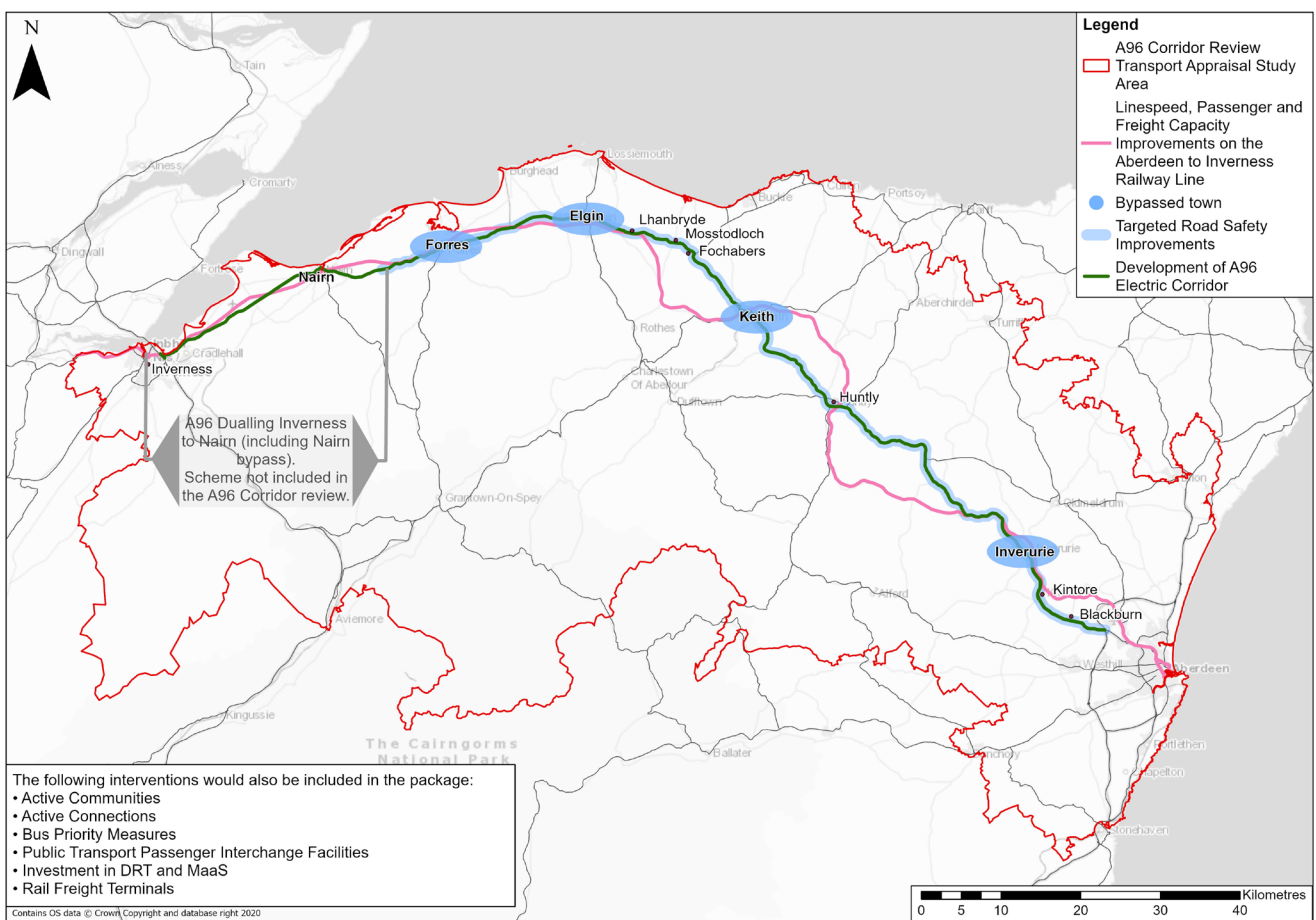


Figure 6-6: Package 5 Extents

- 6.8.2 Modelling undertaken using NaPTAT anticipates that this package would improve access to essential services, including employment and education sites, for socio-economically disadvantaged groups across the region. For example, forecasts estimate that an additional 400 people aged 16-64 from income deprived areas would be able to access Aberdeen from Elgin within two hours.
- 6.8.3 NaPTAT modelling observed the largest journey time accessibility benefits to key destinations and essential services in Aberdeenshire. These benefits would be linked to the rail interventions within the package and result in reduced public transport journey times between settlements along the rail line, particularly to Inverness and Aberdeen. The package would reduce the journey time to the nearest higher education site for 300 young people aged 16-24 who reside in areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area. Of these, 150 young people would be able to access their nearest higher education site within approximately 60 minutes and the remaining 150 young people able to access their nearest higher education site within approximately 100 minutes. The increased accessibility of higher education sites would largely be found in rural settlements including Kemnay and Alford. Further journey time accessibility benefits in Aberdeenshire would be observed in access to employment opportunities found in Aberdeen City for residents in geographically-deprived areas (20% most deprived in the country). The package would enable, on average, an additional 3,100 existing jobs located in Aberdeen City to be reached within 60 minutes using public transport from geographically-deprived areas in Aberdeenshire.
- 6.8.4 Traffic modelling forecasts a reduction in traffic within the bypassed towns (Forres, Elgin, Keith and Inverurie) following the introduction of this package, in both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios. This is expected to create benefits for socio-economically disadvantaged groups by improving the active travel environment for those who are unable to afford a car. Including active travel interventions in conjunction with bypasses could aid the removal of barriers in communities through an improved sense of road safety and security for those walking, wheeling and cycling and the public transport interventions included within this package could encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes. There is also the potential for a reduction in inequalities of health in disadvantaged and deprived communities through improved air quality at a local level.
- 6.8.5 There is generally a heavier reliance on the use of the private car along the A96 corridor compared with the rest of the country. This is primarily due to the rural nature of the region, where there is greater dependency on the private car to access employment, education, healthcare and for social purposes. In the absence of viable alternatives, those on low incomes may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. However, there could be benefits through a reduction in journey time and improvement in journey time reliability for these drivers, providing more economical and efficient journeys.

- 6.8.6 In the absence of viable alternatives, those on low incomes may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. Therefore, there could be benefits for those groups with regards to the provision of alternative options to private vehicle use and ownership. However, this would depend on public transport fares being affordable. Moreover, if schemes delivered through the package are dependent on MaaS, it is likely to exclude certain groups without access to this technology or bank accounts, and as such this would need to be considered in the design of the schemes to ensure that they are able to benefit.
- 6.8.7 The provision of bypasses could reduce the number and severity of road traffic accidents on the sections of the existing A96 Trunk Road which route through towns. This could benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups, as evidence shows that people from deprived areas are more likely to be killed or injured as road users. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.8.8 Rail freight is a key component of the rail sector's contribution to Scotland's economy. The provision of rail freight terminals is expected to enhance economic growth and private sector investment, thereby creating employment opportunities and potentially reducing socio-economic disadvantage.
- 6.8.9 However, the extent to which this package would reduce inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups would depend on the alignment of bypasses, the level to which all other listed interventions are adopted, the location of the interventions, proximity to local services, and the ability for those from deprived and disadvantaged communities to access the active travel network. It is noted that this would depend on local circumstances within each key community. This in turn would have an impact on the level of reduction of through traffic within disadvantaged and deprived communities.
- 6.8.10 The construction works associated with the interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- 6.8.11 Overall, this package is expected to have a **minor positive** impact under both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios on addressing this criterion.

6.9 Refined Package – Potential Impacts

- 6.9.1 The Refined Package is focused on primarily delivering transport network improvements to both settlements and rural sections throughout the A96 corridor, by providing enhancements which would aim to encourage a shift to sustainable modes, increasing opportunities for residents and businesses and improving road safety.
- 6.9.2 The options considered under the Refined Package are shown in **Figure 6-7**.

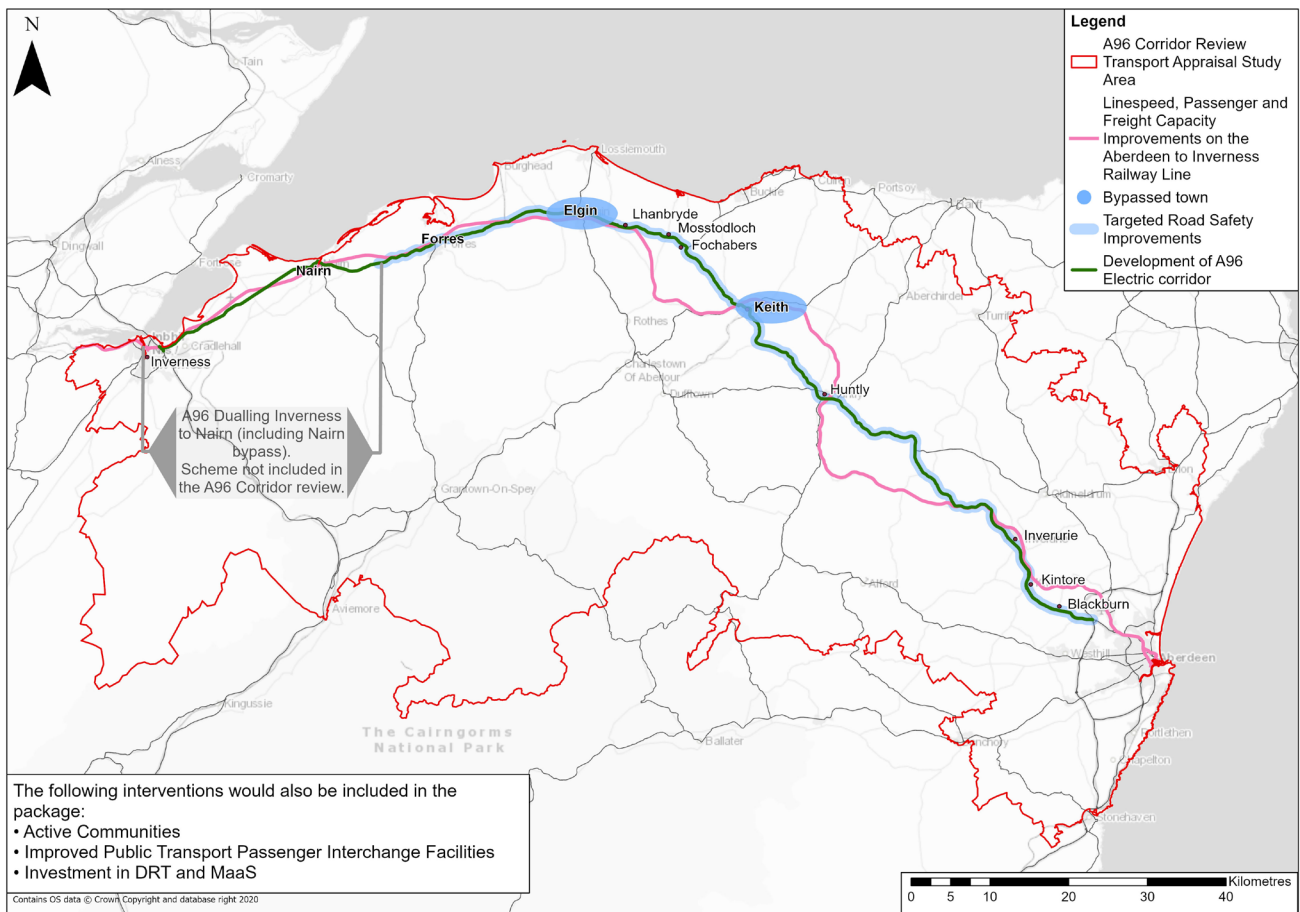


Figure 6-7: Refined Package extents

- 6.9.3 Modelling undertaken using NaPTAT anticipates that this package would improve the journey time access to essential services and key destinations, including education sites, employment opportunities and healthcare, benefiting socio-economic disadvantaged groups across a range of age groups within the study area.
- 6.9.4 NaPTAT modelling showed journey time improvements to the nearest higher education site for young people aged 16-24 who reside in areas where the gross household income is within the 20% lowest in the study area, enabling an additional 100 people to access the nearest site within 50 minutes, a further 150 within 65 minutes, and 150 within 100 minutes. These benefits would largely be found in Inverurie, Kemnay and Alford respectively and would be expected to improve the access to education services for young people from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 6.9.5 The package is also shown to improve the access to employment opportunities found in Aberdeen City, whereby on average, an additional 3,800 existing jobs would be accessible within 60 minutes using public transport from Aberdeenshire for people aged 16 to 64 who reside in areas where the gross household income is found within the 20% lowest in the study area. These benefits would be predominately found in Kintore, Inverurie, Kemnay and Inch.

- 6.9.6 In the absence of viable alternatives to travel some low-income households living in the area may have no alternative to car ownership despite financial constraints. Therefore, there could be benefits for those groups with regards to the provision of alternative options to private vehicle use and ownership. However, this would depend on public transport fares being affordable. Moreover, if schemes delivered through the package are dependent on MaaS, it is likely to exclude certain groups without access to this technology or bank accounts, and as such this would need to be considered in the design of the schemes to ensure that they are able to benefit.
- 6.9.7 Traffic modelling forecasts that traffic would divert away from Elgin and Keith following the introduction of the Refined Package in both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios. This is expected to create benefits for socio-economically disadvantaged groups by improving the active travel environment for those who are unable to afford a car. Including active travel interventions in conjunction with bypasses could aid the removal of barriers in communities through an improved sense of road safety and security for those walking, wheeling and cycling. The diversion of traffic would also generate a reduction in inequalities of health in disadvantaged and deprived communities through improved air quality at a local level.
- 6.9.8 The provision of bypasses could reduce the number and severity of road traffic accidents on the sections of the existing A96 Trunk Road which route through towns. This could benefit socio-economically disadvantaged groups, as evidence shows that people from deprived areas are more likely to be killed or injured as road users. However, it is acknowledged that wider factors affect road casualty rates and that more detailed assessment work is required to understand the safety benefits associated with individual schemes and how this might impact on people from deprived areas.
- 6.9.9 There is generally a heavier reliance on the use of the private car along the A96 corridor compared with the rest of the country. This is primarily due to the rural nature of the region, where there is greater dependency on the private car to access employment, education, healthcare and for social purposes. In the absence of viable alternatives to travel, those on low incomes may be 'forced' into car ownership despite financial constraints. However, there could be benefits through an improvement in journey times and reliability of journey times for these drivers, providing more economical and efficient journeys.
- 6.9.10 The extent to which this package would reduce inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups would depend on the extent that the interventions listed are adopted, the location of the interventions, proximity to local services, and the ability for those from deprived and disadvantaged communities to access the active travel network.
- 6.9.11 The construction works associated with the interventions in this package could result in job opportunities for local communities including those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

6.9.12 Overall, this package is expected to have a **minor positive** impact on this objective under both the 'With Policy' and 'Without Policy' scenarios.

7. Conclusions and Next Steps

7.1 Conclusions

- 7.1.1 This report sets out the approach undertaken in the assessment of socio-economic impacts and demonstrates Transport Scotland's due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty throughout the A96 Corridor Review process. The feedback received in relation to the SEqIA Scoping Report consultation has also been reviewed and used to inform this FSDA Report.
- 7.1.2 This FSDA has outlined the key evidence and issues relating to socio-economically disadvantaged groups. It has identified both positive and negative impacts relating to Full Dualling and the transport intervention packages assessed as part of the A96 Corridor Review. Overall, there is likely to be a minor positive impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups with Full Dualling and the transport intervention packages contributing to reducing inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups by increasing accessibility to a range of transport options and enabling improved access to key employment, education and other destinations along the corridor.
- 7.1.3 The FSDA process started at early stages of transport intervention development to ensure intervention options maximise positive socio-economic outcomes and, where possible, included appropriate engagement with organisations representing socio-economically disadvantaged groups to understand specific requirements.
- 7.1.4 There are a number of factors outside the scope of the A96 Corridor Review that will have an impact on reducing inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged groups. For example;
- Enhancing the benefits of Community Transport for socio-economically disadvantaged groups may require overcoming the technology barriers that some groups may face.
 - Social value or community benefits plans as part of any transport package taken forward can help to target more deprived communities to promote job opportunities along the A96 corridor where unemployment may be concentrated.
 - Public transport fares and costs associated with bike ownership or hire could be a challenge to reducing inequalities experienced by socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

- 7.1.5 Furthermore, it is important to recognise localised circumstances within each settlement or rural community impacted by Full Dualling or the transport intervention options. The combination of interventions, location of interventions, proximity to local services and accessibility for deprived and disadvantaged groups all require consideration. Therefore, while this impact assessment can provide a high-level overview of impacts, further assessment is required for Full Dualling or any of the transport intervention options to be taken forward. This should include engagement and consultation with those directly experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- 7.1.6 A detailed FSDA should be undertaken of any selected packages taken forward for detailed design. This should include further consultation with socio-economically disadvantaged groups and actions to enhance positive impacts and reduce negative impacts.

7.2 Next Steps

- 7.2.1 The feedback received in relation to the FSDA Report consultation will be reviewed and used to inform the finalised version of the FSDA Report.
- 7.2.2 The key FSDA milestones are as follows:
- Consultation on the public consultation version of the FSDA Report; and
 - Finalisation of the FSDA Report following consultation.

Appendices


Appendix A. FSDA study area



Legend

- FSDA Study Area
- Scottish Electoral Wards
- A96 Trunk Road

Jacobs AECOM



TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND

A96 CORRIDOR REVIEW

Drawing title

A-1
FSDA Study Area

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Appendix B. SEqIA Scoping Report Consultees

Consultee Organisation
Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Age Scotland
Article 12 Scotland - Travelling and Gypsy Representation
Bureau of Ethnic Minorities in Scotland (BEMIS)
CEMVO - Strategic Partner of the Scottish Government Equality Unit
Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) Scotland
Citizens Advice Scotland
Community Transport Association
Cycling UK
Disability Agenda Scotland
Disability Equality Scotland
Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland (EHRC)
HITRANS
Improvement Service
Inclusion Scotland
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Living Streets
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
Moray Council
Nestrans
People First Scotland
Poverty and Inequality Commission
Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance
Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)
Scottish Islands Federation
Scottish Refugee Council
Scottish Rural Action
Scottish Rural Network
Sustrans
The Highland Council
The Poverty Alliance

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INVERNESS

NAIRN

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