

Appendix - A96 Dualling Project, Detailed Planning and Environmental Considerations

Overview

1. All routes are considered deliverable and each provides a range of positive and negative points.
2. Transport Scotland and their consultants are considered to have engaged meaningfully with the Council on known constraints to development.

Impact on Built Environment

3. All routes impact on local households to a greater or lesser extent. The team are to be commended for trying to resolve or remove these wherever possible. Some routes (Blue and Lime) have fewer impacts on the built environment, but greater impacts may arise with the interlinking C2 route at Culsalmond depending on design choices. A detailed study of the area around Colpy is recommended to find the optimum route irrespective of the route choice in the central section.

Landscape Impacts

4. The gradient and exposure of some routes (Lime, Red, Green, Violet, and Orange) will mean that some parts of these routes will be very visible in parts.
5. The V3 route will be visually prominent as a major crossing of the Don Valley will be required north of Kintore, the route will then need to ascend the hillside from some distance before cutting back across the side of Hill of Selbie. There is therefore potential for significant landscape impacts, subject to detailed design and mitigation.
6. The landscape impact of the Orange Route will depend on detailed design but the main impact is likely to be from the Don Valley crossing which lies within and is an important part of the Area of Landscape Sensitivity. The Don Valley is sensitive in landscape terms and the crossing would affect the setting of St Apolonarie's Chapel which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Orange Route requires two major river crossings, which can lead to greater potential for environmental impacts during construction.
7. Routes V1/G1 and O1 all descend a steep slope to cross the burn south of Durno, and careful design will be required in this area to avoid adverse visual impacts. Equally the intersection appears that it could have a direct impact on Pitscurry Moss LNCS.
8. The topography of the Blue Route is largely flat and therefore road design will be critical in terms of the actual level of landscape impact.
9. Given the more elevated and undulating topography of the area in which the Pink Route is located, there is potential for the route to have a degree of landscape impact. Road design will be important if this option is considered.
10. The Brown Route lies largely within a valley setting but landscape impacts may still arise, as with other routes detailed design information would be required in respect of the potential for landscape and visual impact.
11. The Red Route has potential to be visually prominent from the Inch Basin. This ridgeline is sensitive in landscape terms particularly due to sensitive archaeological interests within the Inch Basin and views from Dunnideer and Bennachie and views

to and from these features. It could directly impact on features of Archaeological Interests at Hill of Foudland.

12. The L1 route is likely to have a greater impact than the C1 route, albeit it does not breach the Inch Basin skyline like R1. The siting high on the northern side of the valley on steep contours (i.e requiring greater degrees of earthworks) is likely lead to landscape and visual impacts from the Glens of Foudland Area arising from L1.
13. The C1 route minimises landscape impacts, as it keeps the route within the lower part of the valley, minimising landscape and visual impacts.

Listed Buildings and Cultural Heritage

14. Direct impact on listed buildings and scheduled monuments has been largely avoided by the routes chosen, however all have a potential impact on historic assets. Key locations are the confluence of Pink, Brown, Green, Violet, and Orange routes where the setting of the scheduled Pitscurrie Cairn at Whiteford may be prejudiced. The Red Route may impact on the scheduled Colpy Cottage Pallisade Enclosure.
15. Impacts on the settings of a number of listed buildings can be identified including the A-listed Parish Church and C-listed Mort House at the Cyan (C2), Red (R1) and Blue routes at Culsalmond.
16. The violet route may have potential for impacts on Keithall Designed Landscape and Balbithan House.
17. V2 passes close to Harlaw Battlefield but avoids the key focus of the Battlefield which is the plateau to the south of the route.
18. Listed Buildings at Bourtie House and Fingask House may be impacted upon by the Blue route. The Blue Route route also passes close to Daviot Stone Circle however subject to detailed consideration this is not seen as being an absolute constraint.
19. The Brown and Pink route pass close to a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments however subject to detailed consideration this is not seen as being an absolute constraint.
20. The Brown Route has the potential for the greatest impact on built heritage including Williamson House and Williamson Garden and Designed Landscape, Newton House and Newton Garden and Designed Landscape, Westhall House Logie House and associated listed structures. The impact on these features should be considered in terms of the detailed design of such the route.
21. The connection point R1/R2 could have an impact on the setting of two Scheduled Ancient Monument's at Colpy.
22. Option C2 is likely to have an impact on Culsalmond Manse (A listed building).

Natural History

23. Natural heritage issues resolve into impacts on the Glens of Foudland site of Local Nature Conservation Interest, prime agricultural land, and "ancient woodlands". Specific interest is provided by the confluence of Pink, Brown, Green, Violet, and Orange routes at Whiteford. The Green Route (G1 and 2) in particular passes through land identified as Prime Agricultural Land class 2 which is relatively rare.
24. The Orange Route impacts on the long established woodland associated with Thainstone House Hotel.

25. Route G3 runs in close proximity to Sunnybrae Moss and Burreldale Moss Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) both of which could be impacted by changes to local hydrology and adjacent routes should therefore be carefully considered and investigated.
26. There are several environmentally sensitive features on the Blue Route namely on B1 Cairnhill Local Nature Conservation Site which is sensitive to hydrological changes. There is potential for impact on the Wartle Moss LNCS and associated woodland which is connected to the Wartle Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This may have a more significant impact and should be considered in detail during the next stage of assessment.
27. The Pink Route (P1) has potential for impact on ancient woodland.
28. The Brown Route has the potential for impact on woodland particularly between Carden and Durno, this area has a number of identified footpaths and mitigation would need to be carefully considered.
29. All three routes in the northern section (Lime, Cyan, Red) will potentially impact on the Glens of Foudland LNCS which is a geological/geomorphologic site. This cannot be avoided but the impact on this site will need to be considered as part of the EIA.

Development Impacts

30. Overall, very little land zoned for existing development is impacted upon by the proposals. The Orange route (O3) at Crichton passes through an employment land designation. This has shown no prospect of being brought forward and is probably compensated for in the Thainstone Mart development sites. The Violet route (V2) impacts upon a proposed (but unsupported) bid site north of the Uryside development.
31. Land that could be made available for development is promoted by the creation of a junction at Pitcaple and Durno, increasing the accessibility of both settlements.
32. Development associated with the Green or Blue routes might benefit Oldmeldrum and points north, but at this time development in Oldmeldrum cannot exploit areas proximal to the new road due to National Battlefield constraints.
33. The Orange Route opens up Ardennes for development, but any of the routes proposed would achieve this. Violet Routes and Orange Routes both place some constraints in respect of future growth of the footprint of Inverurie.

Core Paths and Tourism

34. The three routes Blue, Pink, and Brown impact on core footpath routes around Old Rayne to Whiteford, and around Meikle Wartle.
35. Some potential adverse impact on existing tourism interests has been identified with the loss of a viewpoint at Glens of Foudland to the Cyan route. The Brown (Br 1) and Pink (P2) routes impacts on the site of the Loch Insch Fishery, although this is currently closed.