

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2132: Publish a timeline for the dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Nairn by Easter 2025, lodged by The Inverness Courier

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The A96 is a trunk road that links Inverness (Raigmore interchange) and Aberdeen (Craibstone roundabout). It passes through, or around, several towns including Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Keith, and Inverurie.

The single carriageway section of the A96 between Inverness and Nairn is roughly 15 miles long. The dualling of this part of the road was first mentioned in the final report of [the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review, published in October 2009](#), which slated it as a priority for investment. The [Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011](#) then committed the Scottish Government to the dualling full length of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, following the completion of A9 dualling – which was then expected to happen by 2025.

Transport Scotland launched a consultation on options for dualling the A96 between Inverness to Nairn in November 2013 and, following consideration of issues raised during this consultation, announced a preferred route in October 2014. This was followed by [the publication of Draft Orders](#), which when approved give legal authority to build the road, in November 2016.

A public inquiry was held in late 2018 to consider objections to specific proposals in the Draft Orders. Following consideration of the report of the public inquiry, [Scottish Ministers agreed that the Orders could be made](#) subject to amendment. The [Road Orders and Compulsory Purchase Order](#) were made on 22 February 2024 and came into force on 12 March 2024.

It is worth noting that [the Bute House Agreement, the joint policy programme of the SNP and Scottish Green Party Government between August 2021 and April 2024](#), stated that Scottish Government would "...take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96...This will include...dualling from Inverness to Nairn."

The latest update on the Inverness-Nairn dualling project is provided in the answer to [a Parliamentary Question published on 17 January 2025](#), which states:

"The publication of Made Orders for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme in 2024 is a strong sign of the Scottish

Government's commitment to build this key project. Further to this, the Scottish Government has confirmed through its Programme for Government, that Transport Scotland will take forward the final stage of the process for acquisition of land required to construct the project, and progress work to determine the most suitable procurement option.

Funding is included in the 2024-25 budget and draft 2025-26 budget to take forward this work – thereafter a timetable for procurement and construction phases can then be set in line with annual budget setting process for future years.”

Alan Rehfish
Senior Researcher
27 January 2025

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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