

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Edward Mountain MSP
Convenor
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
By email: netzero.committee@parliament.scot

22 December 2022

Dear Convenor,

A96 Corridor Review

As you are aware, the Bute House Agreement set out that the Scottish Government would take forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues.

The public consultation, undertaken earlier this year, received an unprecedented level of engagement with approximately 4,600 responses, generating more than 11,000 suggestions and potential opportunities for the route.

Given the sheer volume of responses received and the high level of options this generated, it has taken Transport Scotland more time than originally anticipated to examine and appraise all of these options, but we are now able to report on the Public Consultation and the Initial Appraisal with today's publication. Links to these reports have been provided below for your information:

A96 Corridor Review Public Consultation Report -
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/stakeholder-public-engagement-consultation-report-december-2022-a96-corridor-review/>

A96 Corridor Review Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Report -
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/initial-appraisal-case-for-change-december-2022-a96-corridor-review/>

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It is vitally important to listen and to understand the views and experiences of local people and those that travel along the corridor. These views have helped us understand how the A96 corridor is used given the changes to travel patterns, following the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing climate emergency, and the extent to which these challenges will impact on how people travel on the A96 in the future.

I wish to advise that Transport Scotland is now pushing forward with the next phase of further detailed work to inform the remaining stages of the Review.

For the Committee's awareness, I shall be arranging a meeting for the North and Northeast elected members in the new year where the Review's technical advisors and Transport Scotland officials will provide MSPs with an interest in the A96 corridor a summary of the report findings and allow an opportunity to discuss and set out the next steps.

Yours sincerely

JENNY GILRUTH

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



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