

URS

Stromeferry Options Appraisal

STAG
Pre-Appraisal

Stakeholder Workshop

Summary of Workshop
No1 - Regulatory
Stakeholders

November 2012

UNITED
KINGDOM &
IRELAND



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-	November 2012	Draft Issue for Comments	Anke Menzinger Project Engineer	David Taylor Commission Project manager	David Taylor Commission Project manager

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Stromeferry Options Appraisal Stakeholder Workshop Summary of Workshop No1 Regulatory Stakeholders

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1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the STAG Pre-Appraisal process the first Stakeholder Workshop for the Stromeferry Bypass Options Appraisal was held with the Regulatory Stakeholders on the 21st November 2012 at the Columba Hotel in Inverness.

The following Stakeholders were represented at the Workshop:

- Transport Scotland
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Network Rail
- First Scotrail
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Historic Scotland
- Marine Scotland

The Highland Council, Planning were invited to the Workshop but did not attend.

Also present during the workshop were:

- Colin Howell and Gary Smith, The Highland Council (THC) TEC Services, PDU Golspie, the Client.
- David Taylor, Jonathan Campbell, Jill Irving and Anke Menzinger, URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd, STAG Appraisal team.

A copy of the workshop register taken during the event is enclosed in Appendix A of this document.

A Stakeholder Information Pack document was issued to all Stakeholders prior to the Workshop. This included a Stakeholder questionnaire, which all attending Stakeholders were asked to consider in preparation for the workshop.

2 WORKSHOP CONTENT

The aim of Regulatory Stakeholder Workshop No 1 was to provide a general introduction for Stakeholders to both the project and the appraisal processes. The Workshop provided a forum in which the Stakeholders could consider the Pre-Appraisal requirements under the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance.

The workshop agenda is enclosed in Appendix B.

The aim of the first workshop was to:

- (Re)- Introduce the Project and Key Issues
- Identify Problems, Opportunities & Constraints
- Set Project Objectives
- Commence Options / Corridor Identification
- Enable Stakeholders to understand the position of Others
- Confirm the Agenda for the follow up Workshop

2.2 The Project

Background & History

Presentation of the background and history behind the current considerations concerning the A 890 Stromeferry Bypass, to provide a general knowledge of the project to all attendees.

The question '*why is the Stromeferry Bypass necessary and why is this considered as a scheme worth spending public money on*' was presented with the following suggestions:

- Strategic West Coast Route between Ullapool and the Isle of Skye
- Important local Route between Kyle and Lochcarron / Strathcarron area
- Importance of route to local business and tourism
- Importance of route as a supply line between Inverness and the local area

Details regarding the maintenance works for the A890 Stromeferry Bypass were presented, which included emergency works carried out following the rockfall event along the bypass in December 2011, which cost approximately £2.84m. THC estimates that around £250k is required to cover for the maintenance of rock slopes along the road on an annual basis, with future spend for emergency works unknown due to the unpredictable behaviour of the existing rock faces. This is despite regular inspections carried out by THC and contingency planning.

Current Commission

Following the December 2011 rock fall event, THC presented a report to THC Committee for Transport, Environmental and Community Services in August 2012 for an options appraisal in connection with the Stromeferry Bypass.

The recommendations of the report were granted and the commission tendered in September 2012. After a successful Tender, URS were appointed and commenced work in October 2012.

The Commission involves an Options Appraisal for the Stromeferry Bypass in accordance with:

- **Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)**
- **Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)**

The Commission will re-open the previous discussions and considerations on feasible route corridors and options, applying the processes of the above guidelines to generate a robust solution.

The commission will identify the Outline Options in April 2013, and identify the Preferred route in April 2014.

2.3 Introduction of Processes under STAG

The Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidelines (STAG) require a particular process to be followed during an Options Appraisal:

- **Stage I: Pre-Appraisal, Options & Sifting**
- Stage II: Options Appraisal on Selected Options
- Stage III: Detailed Appraisal
- Stage IV: Post-Appraisal, Planning and Statutory Consent

The purpose of this STAG Stage I, Pre-Appraisal Workshop is to:

- Engage Stakeholders, in order to discuss their key issues relating to study area in general, and any route corridors or locations in particular
- Highlight any *Problems* anticipated with a particular route corridor or location
- Highlight any *Opportunities* or *Ambitions* that Stakeholder may like to realise through this appraisal process
- Highlight any *Constraints* within the study area
- Stakeholders engaged to highlight any *Key Issues*, considering aspects under:
 - ❖ Environment
 - ❖ Safety
 - ❖ Economy
 - ❖ Integration
 - ❖ Accessibility and Social Inclusion

Following identification of Problems, Opportunities and Constraints, the key aim of the workshop, was to develop these into Project *Objectives*.

The STAG process promotes an objective rather than solution led approach to avoid pre-conceived solutions being brought forward without considering all other possible options.

3 SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

The Regulatory Stakeholder Workshop Number 1 focussed on three main discussion sessions, which aimed to fulfil the requirements stipulated in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance, under the Stage 1, Pre-Appraisal process.

The targets set for these discussions were:

- Discussion 1: to identify Problems, Opportunities and Constraints,
- Discussion 2: to set Objectives, and
- Discussion 3: to start considering feasible Route Corridors.

The following pages summarise the key issues noted during the above discussions, which will later feed into the STAG Pre-Appraisal report.

3.1 Discussion 1: Problems, Opportunities & Constraints

Introduction

The identification of existing and potential problems, opportunities and constraints within the transport and land-use system ('study area') forms the starting point for the development of a transport proposal.

A key element in the STAG process is to be able to recognise the root causes of any identified problems within the study area and to develop transport improvement options that address the underlying issues. Identified problems should be supported by an analysis of available opportunities and an understanding of the constraints and uncertainties that may impact on the success of a proposed transport improvement option. Wherever reasonably practical, problems should be quantified in order to gauge the scale of the problem and to assist in defining appropriate targets as part of the established transport planning objectives.

Existing Problems

The identification of existing problems within the current transport corridor and wider study area will be an important process in the development of appropriate transport proposals in the future.

The following items were identified as 'existing problems':

- Cost and maintenance of existing route
- Safety concerns regarding the existing route
- Reliability of existing route
- No guaranteed resilience of existing route / constant risk of road closure
- Risk of personal injury and damage to property from rockfall

- Existing road alignment does not comply with modern standards for an A class road
- Village of Lochcarron is bypassed
- Lack of local confidence in stability of rockface
- Current route and associated problems prohibit enjoyment of natural heritage and area
- Emergency vehicle access to and hospital access from area potentially disrupted
- Effectiveness of existing rock netting / protection
- Existing rock netting conceals SSI area of rock cut
- Journey times during diversion, cost to local businesses, tourists etc.
- Risk of rock fall onto railway line
- Existing road provides some protection to railway line. If road removed, residual risks for railway to be considered
- Close proximity of road to railway
- Potential disruption of public and school bus services
- Mitigation measures during disruptions limited; ferry availability limited (daytime hours only)
- Railway line currently categorised as 'poor' with a local 30mph speed restriction imposed on the section of track adjacent to rock face, due to the risk of rock fall

Future Problems

In addition to 'existing problems', the following 'future problems' were also identified during the discussion:

- Increased future traffic for road and rail (future traffic growth due to local developments at Kishorn etc)
- Future weathering of rock face
- Separation road / rail
- If new route established, what happens to existing road corridor
- Community linkage during construction
- Community Transport (all transport links to and from the communities)
- Accessibility and social inclusion within the wider area of Scotland
- Confidence and deliverability of new Stromeferry bypass scheme

- Adhering to Best Practice
- Unscheduled archaeology uncovered during excavations

Opportunities

During the discussion, it was recognised that some of the problems identified could be developed into potential opportunities, listed below:

- Upgrade route to modern / appropriate standard
- Enhance driver / tourist experience on route
- Road design to be to an appropriate (design) standard and appropriate for the area considering the value of the natural environment
- Design to consider future expectations as far as possible
- Provide a wider / standard cross section with adequate separation of road and rail by improving existing transport corridor
- Consider road cantilevered over lochside (Pulpit rock design)
- Potential for new loch side access
- Enhanced Kishorn port access (local access as well as south towards Ft William)
- Reduce journey times
- Provide safe cycle route, safe routes for all Non-motorised Users (NMUs)
- Consider a shared road / rail solution
- Remove level crossings
- Improvement of whole section between Strathcarron and Strome
- Improved access to Broadford Airport, consider links between Skye and Wester Ross
- Potential for renewables schemes (tidal, wind etc) which could open up further funding
- Opening new areas for forest harvesting, fishfarming, walkers etc
- Re-instate the ferry service on a reliable basis
- Purchase sufficient land corridor to achieve full habitat / environmental mitigation measures

Constraints

The following constraints were identified during ‘Discussion 1’ for the study area:

- Nature of existing rock cuts may lead to future failures and intervention would never be guaranteed to protect longterm
- Unknown stability of future rock cuts
- Natural constraints of hillside and loch
- Railway line (no plans to close or re-align existing route)
- Level crossing at Strathcarron (if road widening or re-alignment considered)
- Existing SSSI – rock faces are site of geotechnical importance
- Existing railway line is popular tourist route
- Potential Flood risks (design consideration)
- Impact on peat and wetlands (design of new routes)
- Potential for deep peat / peat bog on inland routes
- Available corridor for land purchase too limited to achieve full habitat / environmental mitigation measures
- Deer and livestock management
- Loch, steep sided shoreline adjacent to existing road
- Strome Narrows, site of national importance with regards to it’s natural heritage, high quality landscape (but not designated site)
- Clearance requirements for bridge options
- Strome Castle, scheduled monument within area of natural beauty; listing of monument includes the setting of the castle
- Natural Heritage of area due to the high quality landscape
- Tides and currents, fish movements, fish farming
- Natural habitats; no designated sites and any impacts could be mitigated / managed
- Rail to sea provision at South Strome for Kishorn Port

The importance that all of the above listed items should receive due consideration in the development of the Project Objectives, which are to be used as part of the STAG appraisal process, was noted. To achieve this, all items were grouped and allocated an action to ensure that no aspects are lost during the assessment process. A table has been developed to cater for this process, refer to Table 4.1, which lists the information at this stage of the process.

3.2 Discussion 2: Setting of Objectives

Introduction

Setting appropriate objectives is key to the development and appraisal of any planning proposals.

During the workshop discussions, it was proposed that the objectives should be categorised into 'strategic' and 'local' objectives.

Strategic objectives would consider government objectives, policy directives and objectives led by legislation etc. Objectives set and appraised under the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance have to be considered under the following five categories:

- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Safety
- ❖ Economy
- ❖ Integration
- ❖ Accessibility and Social Inclusion

It was also proposed that local objectives would develop out of aspirations and opportunities identified when considering the existing local conditions and problems within the study area.

In order to deliver and measure performance against an objective, both categories of objectives will then be developed into 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timed) transport planning objectives. This method of defining objectives is meant to provide adequate transparency to the process of objective setting and assists in focussing on the key aspects of a project.

Workshop Discussion 2, Objective Setting

Table 3.1 lists the draft objectives discussed during the Workshop Discussion 2 Objective Session . In addition, where applicable, the relevant STAG criteria have been identified against each draft objective. .

Stakeholders attending the workshop were issued with a questionnaire prior to attending the workshop. All Stakeholders were encouraged to make their entries available to the appraisal team. Feedback was invited both verbally during the workshop, as well as in writing to URS personnel (refer to contact list included in Stakeholder Workshop Information).

TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVES DEVELOPED DURING WORKSHOP

TABLE 3.1

Ref.	Draft Transport Planning Objectives	Appraisal Criteria Objective				
		Environment	Safety	Economy	Integration	Accessibility
1	Provide a save and reliable route that users will have confidence in, now and in the future		√	√		√
2	Safeguard the natural environment and areas of national importance (SSSI)	√				
3	Apply best practice principles to engineering solution to minimise the impact on peatland	√				
4	Minimise the impact on National Heritage and Historic Scotland	√				
5	Use the opportunity to enhance the natural environment & habitat (natural heritage)	√			√	√
6	Improve accessibility & social inclusion				√	√
7	Improve integration				√	
8	Speed of scheme delivery		√	√		
9	Enabling economic / social development in local area			√	√	√
10	Provide as little disruption as possible during the works for users of all public transport links (road and rail)			√		√
11	Be open to short term disruption to (rail) travellers to achieve long term solution				√	

TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVES DEVELOPED DURING WORKSHOP

Ref.	Draft Transport Planning Objectives	Appraisal Criteria Objective				
		Environment	Safety	Economy	Integration	Accessibility
12	Maintain continuous community transport links between Lochcarron and Kyle during construction				√	√
13	Minimise journey times long term			√		
14	Maintain / enhance choice of transport links in the area	√		√	√	√
15	Reduce maintenance burden of existing route. 'Good value for money' solution			√		
16	Reduce / minimise risks during construction		√	√		
17	Deliverable of outcome with minimum of risk		√	√		
18	Solution does not increase the risk to the railway and maintains suitable access to the railway line		√	√	√	√
19	Provide a road to modern standards, considering local business, tourists, cyclists, community aspirations vs strategic, to appropriate / proportionate design standard	√	√	√	√	√
20	Policy steer from local Councillors on single track / single carriageway			√		
21	Provide appropriate single carriageway, suitable for all road users, to meet local and strategic needs			√	√	√

TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVES DEVELOPED DURING WORKSHOP						
Ref.	Draft Transport Planning Objectives	Appraisal Criteria Objective				
		Environment	Safety	Economy	Integration	Accessibility
22	Adopt best practice (with respect to road, environment, local needs etc) in developing solution	√	√	√	√	√
23	Maintain and enhance local and wider economic interests			√	√	
24	Provide proportionate and future proof solution			√	√	√
25	Consider employment			√		
26	Aspiration of Stakeholders to see this discussion / project through to realising the chosen route					
27	Aspiration to provide for non-motorised users		√		√	√

In the summary of discussion 2, ‘Setting of Objectives’, it was recognised, that all listed aspirations and objectives could fall under the category of ‘local objectives’.

Stakeholders are encouraged to feed back on ‘strategic’ objectives, based on their employer’s policy statements, applicable legislation etc.

All listed objectives, in addition to strategic objectives to be identified and added, are to be developed into ‘SMART’ objectives during the pre-appraisal assessment process. It is proposed to present these results in a joint summary report after completion of all four pre-appraisal workshops.

3.3 Discussion 3: Options & Route CorridorsIntroduction

As part of the STAG assessment process, it is important to derive a range of options. The process of considering and eliminating possible routes and options should be carried out in a logical, transparent and auditable manner.

During this part of the STAG process, both historical and new proposed routes and route corridors will be considered. The Stromeferry Bypass project has a long history of feasibility considerations for both on-line and off-line route options given the ongoing problems associated with the existing route. This historical work will be given due consideration, without prejudice for any particular option, alongside any new routes or options that may be proposed during the workshop discussions.

The Regulatory Stakeholder Workshop Number 1 aimed to provide an introduction to the local area of Stromeferry and Lochcarron with regards to existing transport links, to present historical route corridors routes, as well as open up discussions regarding the extent and suitability of a feasible study area which will be considered.

Mapping which was presented during Discussion 3 of the workshop are enclosed in the appendices of this document. Feedback from the Stakeholder Group regarding feasible route corridors and the overall study area was invited and it is proposed to continue these discussions as part of Workshop Number .

4 ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Actions

The Stromeferry Options Appraisal Regulatory Workshop Number 1 concluded with a brief presentation and discussion about where the process is to lead from here.

In order to keep all parties informed and involved, the results and outcome from this workshop will be summarised and issued to all Regulatory Stakeholders who were invited to participate in this process. For this purpose, this document has been compiled both for information and a record of the proceedings.

Next Steps

- 1) Based on this summary of discussions and proceedings, URS will:
 - Develop Transport Objectives, considering all highlighted Problems, Opportunities and Constraints, as well as noted local and published strategic Objectives, using STAG criteria and SMART categories;
 - Sift Objectives and outcome of discussions;
 - Develop proposals for a study area and route corridors.

The following table is proposed to be used to assess all aspects of 'Problems, Opportunities and Constraints' highlighted during the discussions, in order to develop these into relevant Project Objectives and to ensure, that none of the issues will be lost in the process.

An attempt to group the issues and to allocate a suitable action will be made. This is proposed to be included into the 'sifting process' during the Pre-Appraisal stage of the project.

Proposed Assessment Table			DRAFT	Table 4.1
Group	Item No	Item from List of identified 'Problems', 'Opportunities' and 'Constraints'	Action	
Health & Safety	H1	Safety Concerns & reliability of existing route	Develop into Transport Objective	
	H2	Risk of personal injury and damage to property from rockfall	Develop into Transport Objective	
	H3			
	H4			
	H5			
Environmental	E1			
	E2			
	E3			
	E4			
	E5			
		Table to be extended to suit		

- 2) All Stakeholders will be required to prepare for the next Workshop by means of:
 - Reviewing the output from Workshop Number 1 and providing further feedback regarding Policy Directives and Statements of their respective Organisation;
 - Considering possible Corridors, Route Options and emerging Routes, as well as a feasible Study Area;
 - Staying in touch and informed, either through THC website, direct contacts with the appraisal team or further Stakeholder meetings.

- 3) Further Workshops will be held as follows:
 - First Workshop for Economic Stakeholders at Strathcarron Hotel on the 4th December 2012;
 - Second Workshop for Regulatory Stakeholders on the 12th December 2012, venue to be confirmed;
 - Second Workshop for Economic Stakeholders in early January 2013.

The following Agenda is proposed for the Regulatory Stakeholder Workshop Number 2, to be held in December 2012:

1. Introduction
2. Summary of Previous Workshops
3. Option Generation
4. Route Corridors & Options proposals
5. Open Discussions
6. Feedback, set Options & Route Corridors
7. Summary of Pre-Appraisal Workshops
8. Follow up / Way Forward

Timings and venue will be confirmed in due course.

Appendix A

Workshop Register

21st November 2012

Workshop Register

Name	Company	Telephone/Mobile	Email
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Appendix B

Workshop Agenda

Workshop Agenda:

Start: 9:30 am

Coffee

10:00 to 10:10 1. Introduction

10:10 to 10:30 2. The Project

10:30 to 10:45 3. Introduction of Processes under STAG

10:45 to 11:00 4. 'Stromeferry and STAG'

11:00 to 12:15 5. Open Discussions

Discussion 1: Identify the Problems & Opportunities

Lunch

13:00 to 14:15 Discussion 2: Set Project Objectives

Coffee Break

14:30 to 15:15 Discussion 3: Options & Route Corridors

15:15 to 15:30 6. Actions and Next Steps

Finish 15:30

Appendix C

Location Plan



CONSTRUCTION RISKS	MAINTENANCE / CLEANING RISKS	DEMOLITION RISKS	
<p>In addition to the hazards/risks normally associated with the types of work detailed on this drawing, the risks of others:</p> <p>It is assumed that all works on this drawing will be carried out by a competent contractor, where appropriate, in an appropriate method statement.</p> <p>NOTE:</p> <p>SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SIZE</p>			
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<p>FOR DISCUSSION</p>			
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<p>Project Title: Stomeferry Options Appraisal</p>			
<p>Drawing Title: Site Location Plan</p>			
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Appendix D

Area Mapping



CONSTRUCTION RISKS	MAINTENANCE / CLEANING RISKS	DEMOLITION RISKS

In addition to the hazards/risks normally associated with the types of work detailed on the drawing the risks of above:
 It is assumed that all works on this drawing will be carried out by a competent **NOTICE** contractor working to appropriate standards, in an appropriate method statement.

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Revision Details	By	Check	Date	Scale

Purpose of Issue
FOR DISCUSSION



Client
The Highland Council
 Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Project Title
Stromeferry Options Appraisal

Drawing Title
Area Mapping Lochcarron

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
ST	ACM	DT	NOV 2012
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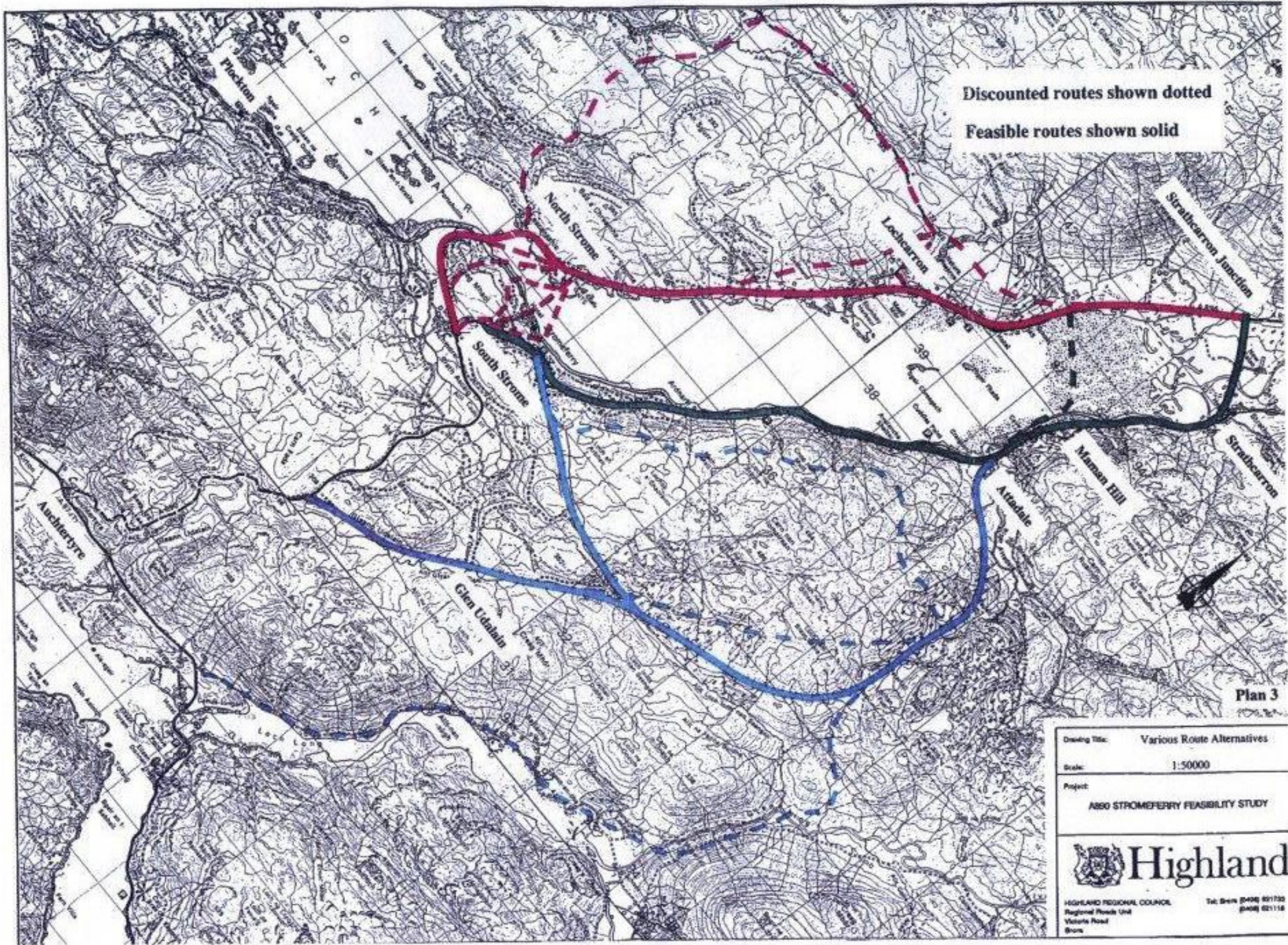
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Drawing Number	Rev
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Appendix E

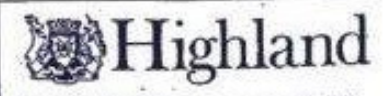
Historical Route Corridors & Routes



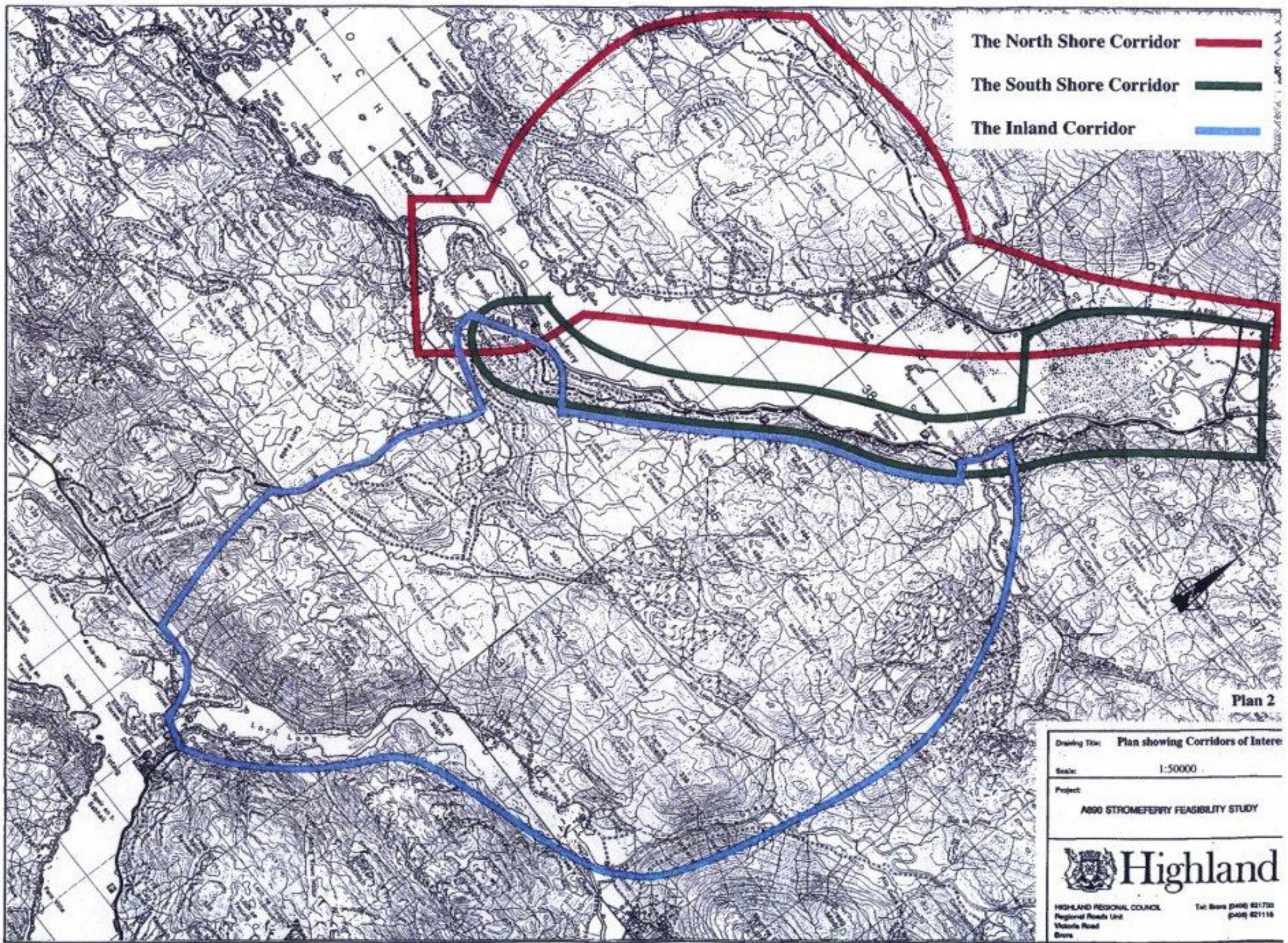
Discounted routes shown dotted
Feasible routes shown solid




Plan 3

Drawing Title: Various Route Alternatives
Scale: 1:50000
Project: A850 STROME FERRY FEASIBILITY STUDY



HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
Regional Roads Unit
Victoria Road
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- The North Shore Corridor** 
- The South Shore Corridor** 
- The Inland Corridor** 

Plan 2

Drawing Title: **Plan showing Corridors of Interest**

Scale: 1:50000

Project: **A800 STROME FERRY FEASIBILITY STUDY**



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