

URS

Stromeferry Options Appraisal

STAG
Pre-Appraisal

Stakeholder Workshops

Information Pack

November 2012

UNITED
KINGDOM &
IRELAND



REVISION SCHEDULE					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
-	November 2012	Draft Issue for Comments	Anke Menzinger Project Engineer	David Taylor Commission Project manager	David Taylor Commission Project manager

URS
6 Ardross Street
Inverness
IV3 5NN

Stromeferry Options Appraisal Stakeholder Workshops Information Pack

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since the A890 Stromeferry bypass opened in 1970, there has been an ongoing problem with rock face failures, causing rock fall onto both the public road, as well as the adjacent Dingwall to Kyle of Lochalsh railway line.

The most recent event occurred in December 2012, causing both road and railway to be closed and disrupted for several weeks and forcing local traffic to take a 140 mile diversion via Loch Ness (refer to location plan on page 4). The Highland Council put alternative transport links in place at the time and has since developed contingency plans to alleviate the problems during a future failure.

The rock stabilisation works, together with temporary alternative measures put in place earlier this year, cost The Highland Council an estimated £2.8million out of their emergency funds.

After the recent rock failure and expenditure, The Highland Council Transport, Environmental & Community Services Committee decided in August 2012 to commission an Options Appraisal, to be undertaken under current Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and processes in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This is to examine the options for developing a secure and effective transport link between Lochcarron and the Lochalsh area longterm.

The process is to actively involve various Stakeholder Groups, which are to be 'Regulatory' and 'Economic' parties.

This Information Pack has been put together to provide background information to the Stakeholder groups, prior to the workshops to be held as part of the STAG appraisal process. Workshops during the first, pre-appraisal phase, are proposed to be held in November and December 2012. The aim of these workshops is to:

- Inform Stakeholder Groups of the current situation at Stromeferry;
- Introduce the STAG and DMRB processes;
- Actively involve Stakeholders to develop 'Objectives', considering key issues, problems & opportunities, as well as ambitions, together with constraints due to current legislation, landownership, natural barriers etc.;
- Actively involve Stakeholders to develop route options, which are to form part of the appraisal process.

Active involvement of Stakeholders is an important part of the appraisal process and ongoing feedback is welcomed by the appraisal team. Contact details are provided in this pack, together with a Stakeholder Questionnaire and further background information.

In addition, Appendix D of this document includes a proposed agenda for the Stakeholder workshops to be held in 2012.

Location Plan:

Location of
 Stromeferry
 Bypass



The above plan shows the 140 mile diversion route which was required during the recent emergency works when the A90 had to be closed to public traffic after the rock fall in December 2011.

Lochcarron is located approximately 60 miles from Inverness, a car journey of approximately 1.5 hours via Dingwall and Achnasheen.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In order to provide all Stakeholders with a brief insight of the problems that The Highland Council have faced over the past four decades, and to allow informed discussions during the proposed workshops, this Information Pack includes the following information regarding the Stromeferry Bypass:

- A 890 Stromeferry Bypass, Feasibility Study, Executive Summary, produced by the Regional Roads Unit Brora in May 1994;
- A 890 Strome Ferry Bypass, Report by the Director of Transport, Environment & Community Services to The Highland Council TEC Services Committee, August 2012.

The above information can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Further information regarding the Stromeferry Bypass can be found on The Highland Council website,
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/roads/stromeferry.htm>

An additional Project website will be installed by The Highland Council in order to keep all Stakeholders and the general public informed of the progress of this current appraisal work. Details of this are to follow.

3 **STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE**

Appendix B of this document includes a Stakeholder Questionnaire.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide all Stakeholders with an opportunity to consider some of the issues to be discussed at the workshops prior to the workshops being held and to gather some relevant information concerning the issue, where applicable.

All feedback will be relevant and gathered during the workshops in order to form part of the appraisal process.

4 STAKEHOLDER LIST

The following Stakeholder Groups have been established at this pre-appraisal stage and will be invited to attend the workshops:

A) Regulatory Stakeholders

- Transport Scotland
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Network Rail / first Scotland
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Historic Scotland
- Marine Scotland
- THC Planning

B) Economic Stakeholders

- Lochcarron Community Council
- Achmore Community Council
- Plockton Community Council
- Applecross Community Council
- THC Planning Authority
- THC Public Transport
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Forrest Enterprise
- Lochcarron and District Planning Association
- Biz Campbell – THC Elected Member
- Audry Sinclair – THC Elected Member
- Robbie Bain THC Ward Manager

Please note that the above list will be reviewed as the project develops and will be extended to include other parties where appropriate.

5 CONTACT LIST

Appendix C of this document includes a contact list for the team members in connection with the proposed workshops and appraisal process.

The Team will mainly consist of:

The Highland Council, Project Design Unit, Transport, Environment and Community Services	
Colin Howell	Project Design Unit Manager
Gary Smith	Principal Engineer
Carolyn Smith	Technician
URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited	
David Taylor	Commission Project Manager
Anke Menzinger	Stakeholder / Consultation Manager
Jill Irving	Principal Roads Engineer
Zoe McClelland	Principal Consultant (Landscape & Environment)
Russell Bissland	Principal Consultant (Traffic & Economics)

The Highland Council are the Client on this commission and are represented through the Project Design Unit in Golspie.

The commission for the Stromeferry Options Appraisal has been awarded to URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited (formerly Scott Wilson Ltd). URS will manage this project from their office at 6 Ardross Street, Inverness.

6 STAG PRE-APPRAISAL WORKSHOPS

Two Stakeholder Groups as outlined in this document have been established at this pre-appraisal stage of the project.

It is proposed to hold 2 No. workshops with each Stakeholder Group, in order to inform the Stakeholders adequately of the requirements in relation to the appraisal process under the STAG and DMRB guidelines, and develop suitable Transportation Objectives whilst considering all available (route) options.

The workshops are proposed to be held over the coming months, the individual nominated representatives will be informed of the location and timing of each meeting.

Proposed agenda, giving an indication of the proposed workshop contents, as well as timings for both workshops are included in Appendix D of this document.

Appendix A

Background Information

The Highland Council, TEC Services Committee Report
August 2012

A890 Stromeferry Bypass Feasibility Study, Executive Summary
May 1994

Roinn na
Gaidhealtachd



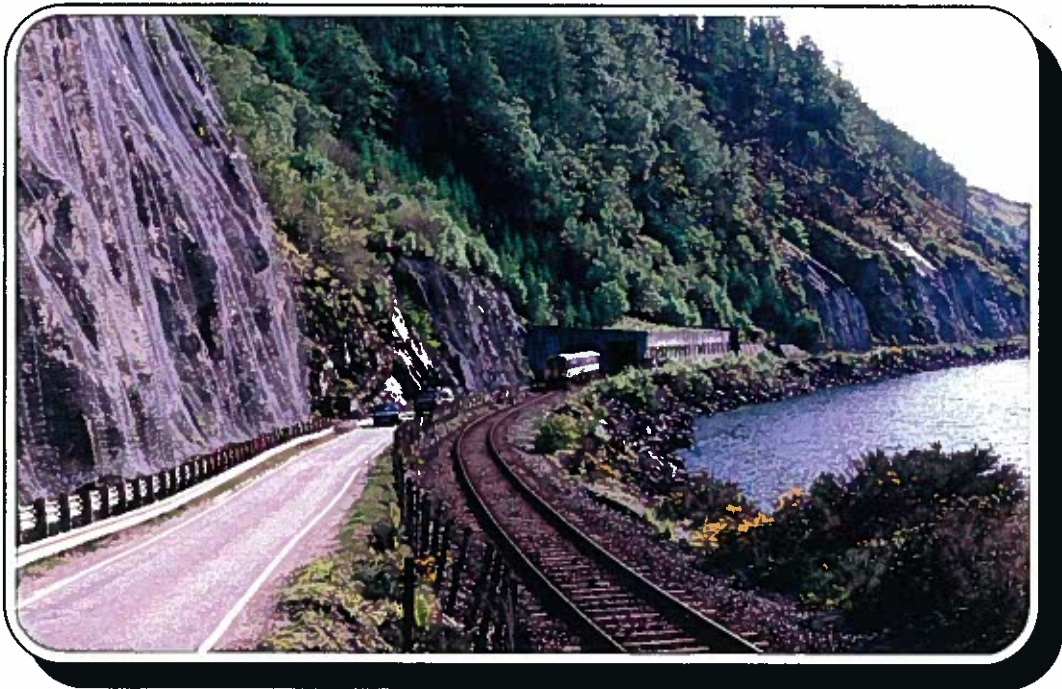
Highland

DEPARTMENT OF ROADS AND TRANSPORT

A890 STROME FERRY BYPASS

FEASIBILITY STUDY

Executive Summary



Regional Roads Unit
Victoria Road
Brora
KW9 6QN

Director :-
P. H. Shimmin BSc CEng FICE FIHT

May 1994

A890 STROME FERRY BYPASS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Introduction

The Strome Ferry Bypass was opened by the Secretary of State in 1970 and the problems of rockfall which beset it during construction have been a source of continuing difficulty ever since. A report in 1991 by Consultants Mott Macdonald concluded that some £8M would require to be spent to eliminate the danger to the existing road, which would still be to single-track standard.

The matter was considered by the Roads and Transport Committee on 12 December 1991 when the construction of an inland road to bypass the problem was approved in principle and further investigation authorised. At that time it was believed that the public were wholly behind this alternative but subsequent correspondence with Achmore Community Council, the owner of Attadale Estate, environmental groups and individuals has indicated that it did not have universal support. Since then the Regional Roads Unit has been carrying out a full investigation into the alternatives available to provide a safe long term route to acceptable modern standards between Strathcarron and Auchtertyre.

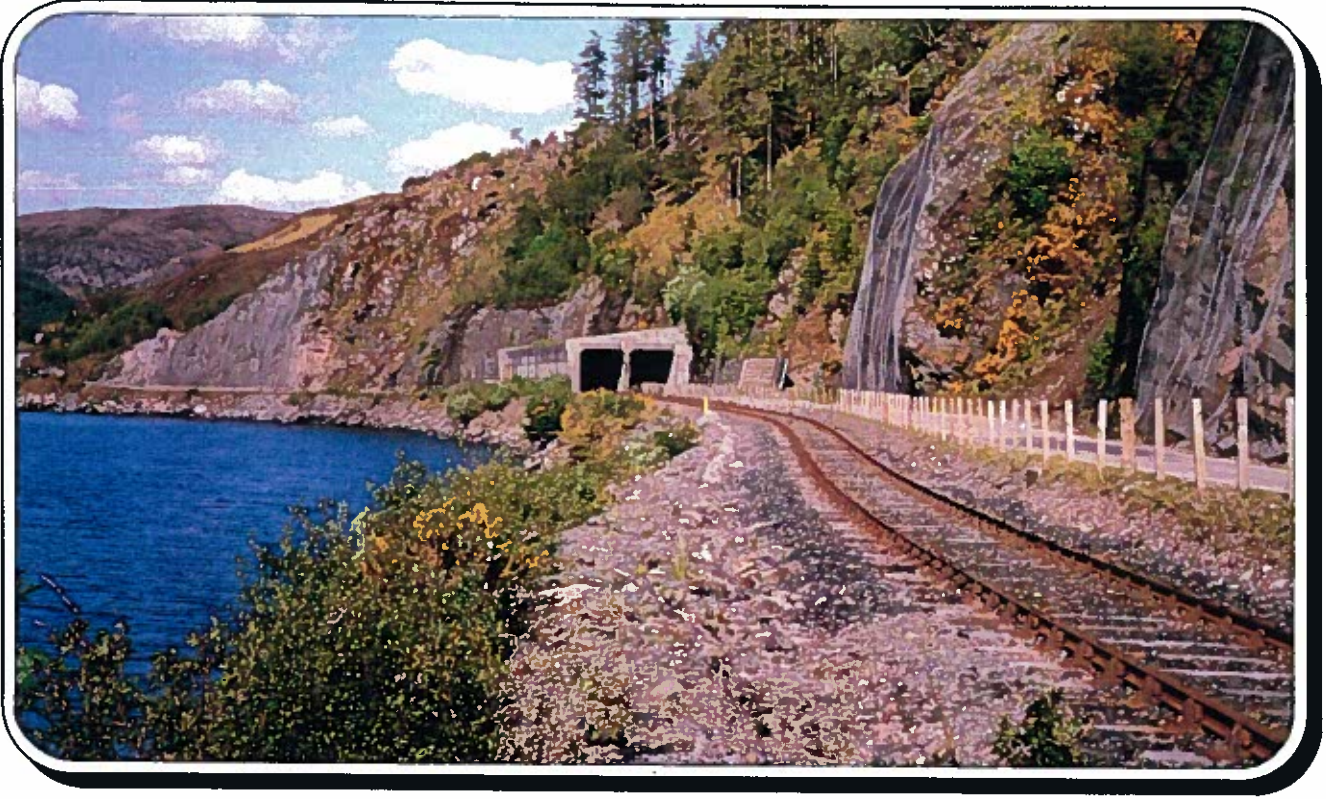
Background

The history of Strome Ferry Bypass is well documented and it is clear that in the early 1960's the Councillors of the then Ross & Cromarty County Council found themselves in a difficult position. Delays of up to 5 hours were being reported on the private sector Strome ferry which was proving totally inadequate to deal with the booming tourist traffic. With a round trip of 140 miles to avoid the ferry it was inevitable that this would have an adverse effect on the economy of the West Coast. However, the funds for a bypass were simply not available.

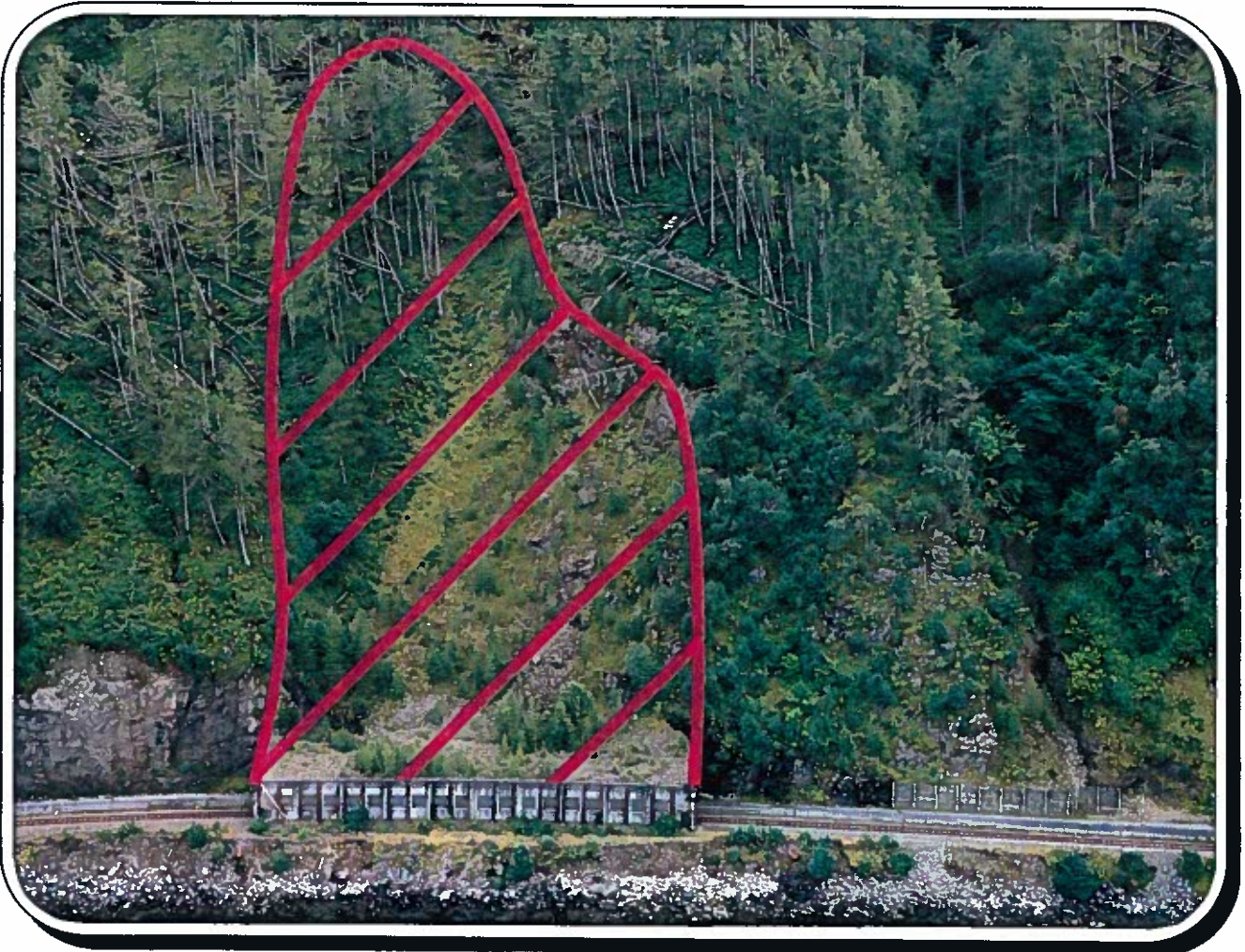
From 1958 onwards the County Council's Consultants prepared a series of reports on the possibilities for a bypass but each time were asked to produce a cheaper scheme in an attempt to meet Scottish Office and Treasury restrictions. Despite the fact that the engineering difficulties were well known, even the scheme which went to tender in 1968 had to be cut back to that which could be built for a notional budget of £500,000. It was perhaps inevitable that the construction would be beset with problems.

Rockfalls delayed progress, a landslide closed the Inverness to Kyle Railway Line for several months, a major avalanche shelter had to be built and the main contractor went into liquidation. In the end the funds had to be found and the road was completed at almost double the original cost - the modern equivalent would be a cost escalation from £5M to £10M. However this belated application of resources did not eliminate the problems which are still with us today. (Photos 1 & 2)

This is one of the most difficult sections of road in the Scottish Highlands and whatever alternative solution is now chosen history underlines the need that it must be adequately resourced.



Existing rock faces and Avalanche Shelter
Photo 1



Avalanche Shelter showing site of 1969 landslide
Photo 2

Existing Conditions

The existing Stromeferry Bypass extends some 12km (7.5 miles) from Strathcarron to South Strome. Apart from being mainly single-track the road has three major deficiencies:

1. The Maman Hill where the road climbs to 60m (200 feet) by way of a 1:7 gradient. The approach from the West is particularly steep and known to cause difficulties for caravans and motorists generally in winter conditions. (Photo 3)
2. The section between Cuddie's Point and Ardnarff runs along the Inverness to Kyle Railway Line hemmed in on the landward side by excavated and natural cliffs rising some 300m (1000 feet) and on the seaward side by the loch which plunges to 60m (200 feet) below sea level. The width available for the road, immediately adjacent to the railway, is well below modern safety standards and there is no effective barrier to separate the two. It is on this section and particularly the 1.5km (1 mile) between Cuddie's Point and Frenchman's Burn that the worst rockfall problems have been encountered, but the well publicised rockfall on 27th February 1993 occurred further to the west.
3. The section between Ardnarff and South Strome has a tortuous alignment following the line of an earlier forest track. At Ardnarff Hill the road rises 60m (200 feet) by a 1:8.2 gradient. (Photo 4)

Study Area

Although the main focus of concern is the south side of Loch Carron between Cuddie's Point and Ardnarff the area of study was extended to include all feasible alternatives between Strathcarron Junction and Auchtertyre. (Plan 1) This was then split into three corridors and the alternative routes in each considered. (Plans 2 & 3)

- (a) The North Shore Corridor
- (b) The South Shore Corridor
- (c) Inland Corridor

Alternative Solutions

The North Shore Corridor:-

The options in this corridor generally involve upgrading the road between Strathcarron and South Strome with the main road traffic going through the villages of Lochcarron and Slumbay. A bypass of Lochcarron was considered but discounted as, amongst other things, the 100m (330 feet) rise and fall of the bypass would discourage heavy through traffic from using it.

To cross the Strome Narrows, bridges, causeways, bascule bridges, a tidal barrage and sub-sea tunnels have all been investigated. A medium level bridge (similar to the Skye Bridge but with a clearance of 15m (50 feet) instead of 30m (100 feet) at Skye) appears to be the best North Shore alternative at a cost of some £17M including approaches. If improvement of the road between Strathcarron Junction and Lochcarron is deferred this reduces to £15.7M. (Photos 5 & 6)



**Looking towards
The Maman from the West**
Photo 3



Ardnarff Hill following line of earlier forest track

Photo 4



North Shore bridge route

Photo 5



North Shore bridge route

Photo 6

The South Shore Corridor:-

The preferred route in this corridor involves improving the first section of the existing road from Strathcarron to Attadale and in particular dealing with the unacceptably steep gradient of The Maman. Thereafter, for the worst rockfall section, the 1.5km (1 mile) between Cuddie's Point and Frenchman's Burn, the options considered include:

- (a) A road tunnel
- (b) A rail tunnel
- (c) Rock excavation on the landward side
- (d) Filling into the sea by means of a rockfill causeway
- (e) An avalanche shelter; both single, two storey and cantilevered
- (f) A sheet piled retaining structure on the seaward side
- (g) A viaduct on the seaward side
- (h) A high level road.
- (i) A floating bridge.

The rockfall problems extend beyond Frenchman's Burn as far as Ardnarff and it is proposed that this section would be dealt with by moving the railway and/or road seaward to give more space. Beyond Ardnarff the existing road would be realigned and doubled tracked as far as South Strome.

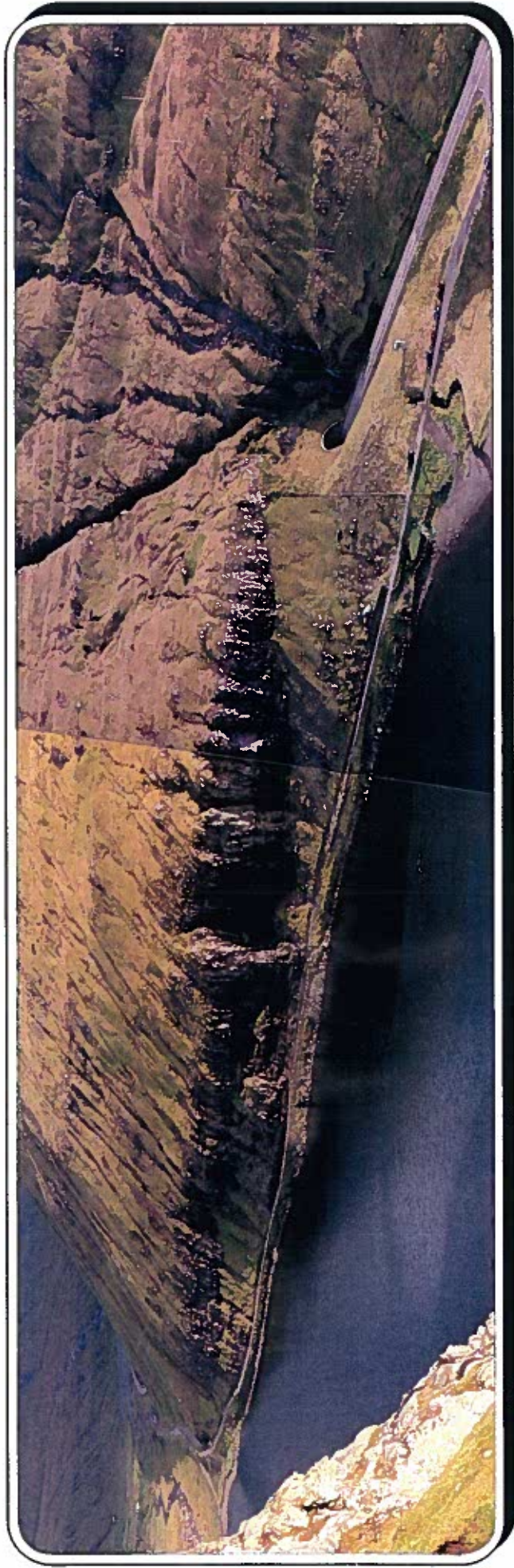
All of these options are fraught with technical difficulty compounded by the presence of the Inverness to Kyle Railway Line immediately adjacent to the road. Attempts have been made to evaluate the risk not just of cost escalation but also of serious disruption to road and rail traffic and at present the rockfill causeway appears to have fewest disadvantages. The possibility of a tunnel similar to those used extensively elsewhere in Europe has received publicity but has been found to be costly in this situation. (Photo 7)

The cost of the South Shore Route is of the order of £16.3M. The most pressing section between Cuddie's Point and Ardnarff is estimated to cost £9.5M, although a further £2.5M is needed to reach South Strome i.e. a total of £12.0M.

The Inland Corridor:-

A number of alternative routes have been investigated going inland at Attadale to avoid the rockfall area and joining back to the existing road near South Strome or further south at Glen Udalain. These routes generally avoid areas of technical difficulty. The currently favoured alternative, a 14km link from Attadale to Glen Udalain, is both economic and technically straightforward. (Photos 8 & 9) However it does cut through the deer forest of Attadale Estate and adds some 10km (6.2 miles) to the journey between Lochcarron and Plockton, affecting mainly local and tourist traffic on the network. This problem could be alleviated by constructing a link from the head of Glen Udalain to South Strome at a cost of some £2.5M.

The overall cost of this option is some £12.8M although if the section from Strathcarron to Attadale is set aside the cost reduces to £8.5M. This represents the minimum capital cost of solving the current rockfall problems.



A tunnel in the Faroe Islands dealing with similar problems as Stromeferry.

Photo 7



Looking west towards Glen Udalain
Photo 8



Looking north down Attadale Valley
Photo 9

Environmental & Economic Aspects

Messrs Holford Associates were commissioned to investigate the environmental aspects and whilst they have identified significant environmental impacts on all routes these are capable of mitigation.

An economic impact study was carried out by the Department of Planning to determine the effects of bypassing the communities of Strathcarron and Achmore/Stromeferry. This concluded that there would be significant adverse economic effects on these communities and suggested ways in which these might be alleviated.

Finance & Timing

This project will be one of the largest commissioned by the Council and will consume the equivalent of over two thirds of the total annual capital budget of the Roads & Transport Department. Putting it another way this amounts to between two and four times the total current annual expenditure on improvements to the Regional and Sub-Regional network in the whole of the Highlands. Expenditure of this magnitude on a road built only 20 years ago must be considered wholly exceptional.

A meeting was held with the Scottish Office Industry Department on 7 February 1994 to put forward the clear case for special funding. Whilst understanding the real difficulties faced by the Council they were unable to make any early commitment and stressed the need for the selected scheme to be affordable.

Although it is entirely correct in strategic terms to look for the scheme with the highest cost benefit between Strathcarron and Auchtertyre this limitation of funds means that consideration has also had to be given to shorter and cheaper schemes which address all the safety and maintenance problems.

The timing of the project will in part be determined by finance but also by statutory procedures. Any alternative which involves moving the railway will require a Parliamentary Order taking about 2 years and a scheme resisted at a Compulsory Purchase Order or Planning Inquiry is likely to require a similar length of time.

Dealing with Risk

The risk of cost overruns and engineering difficulties has been mentioned above in relation to the South Shore routes although this also applies to some extent with the North Shore bridge route.

Lump Sum contract procurement has gone some way to identifying these costs at Tender Stage and would currently be favoured for this project. A more recent development is Design Build Commission where the contractor is responsible for refining the scheme, building it and maintaining it for some years after completion. This is intended to improve quality and has the added advantage of spreading construction costs over a longer period. However, whilst such procedures may improve the management of risk they do not eliminate it and do not affect the judgements or predictions of overall capital cost made in this report.

Summary

It is clear that the final choice of route will have to balance a number of conflicting and complex factors. For example the South Shore Routes maintain existing traffic patterns but involve risk of technical difficulty and cost overrun. The Inland route through Glen Udalain has clear attractions but will be strongly resisted by the major landowner, the environmental lobby and others. The bridge option has the best cost/benefit justification but involves the highest initial investment and may well not be welcomed by the peaceful communities of Slumbay, Lochcarron and the then bypassed Strathcarron.

Alternative Scheme	Total Estimated Scheme Cost	
	Full strategic scheme compared between Strathcarron Junction and Auchtertyre.	Minimum comparable scheme in each corridor dealing with the rockfall problem
North Shore: Bridge	£17.0M	£15.7M Lochcarron - Auchtertyre
South Shore: Causeway	£16.3M	£12.0M Attadale - Auchtertyre
Inland: Glen Udalain	£12.8M	£8.5M Attadale - Auchtertyre

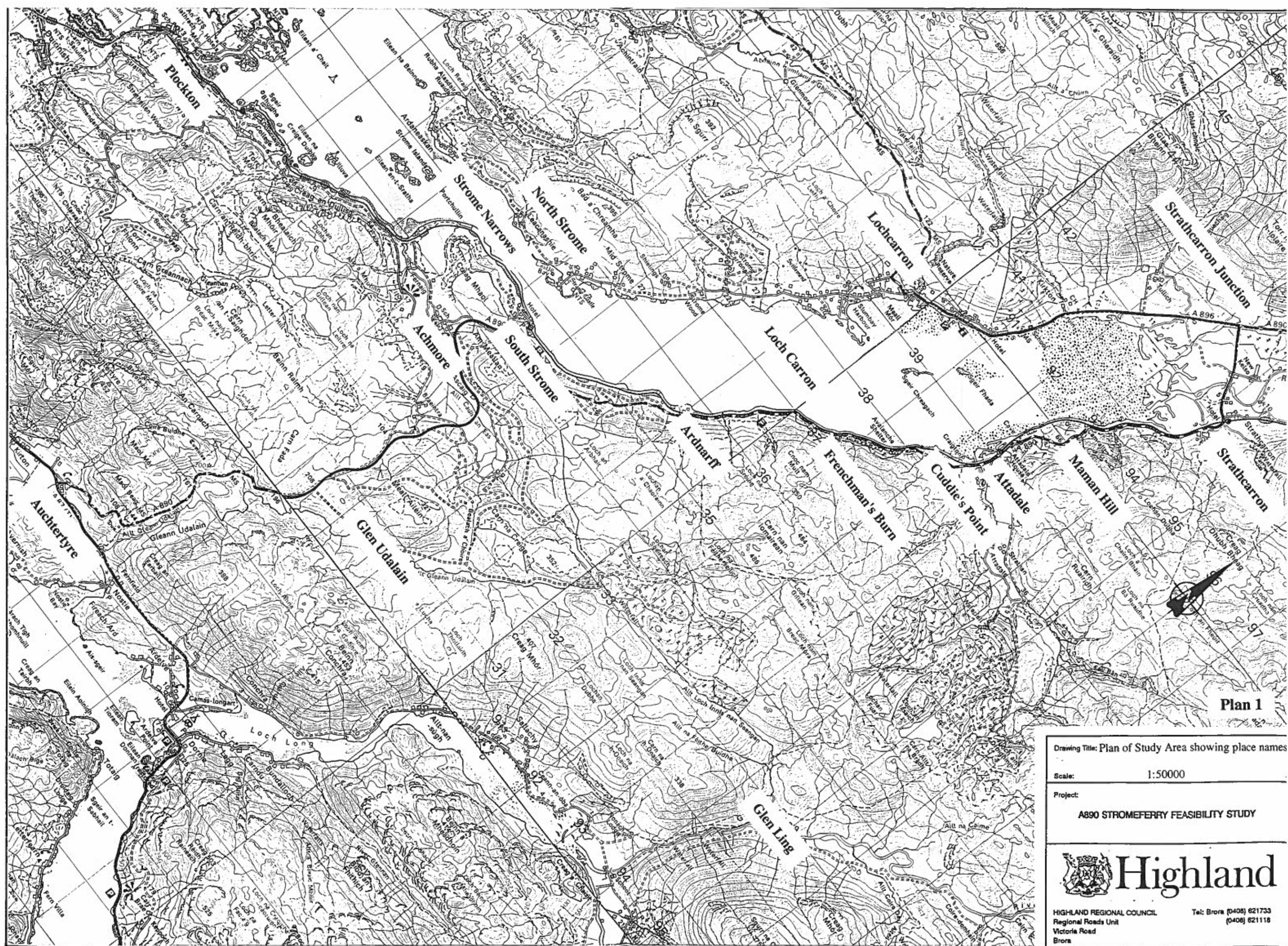
Recommendations

The strictures of the capital programme and the limited capital resources available are well known to the Council. It can be assumed that the Scottish Office, with the best will in the world, will have difficulty in diverting additional Section 94 Consent to the Council for this scheme. Additional E.C. Objective One Funding will be pursued as a priority but cannot be assumed as being available.

The key considerations are therefore:-

- 1) To solve all the existing problems of rockfall and landslip by adopting a road to replace the existing, free from these hazards.
- 2) To do so at reasonable capital cost so as to avoid depleting resources elsewhere within the Region.

It is therefore recommended that the Council adopt the most affordable solution; namely the Inland Route through Glen Udalain and that they formally approach the Scottish Office (if necessary at Ministerial level) to obtain the necessary additional capital consent.



Plan 1

Drawing Title: Plan of Study Area showing place names

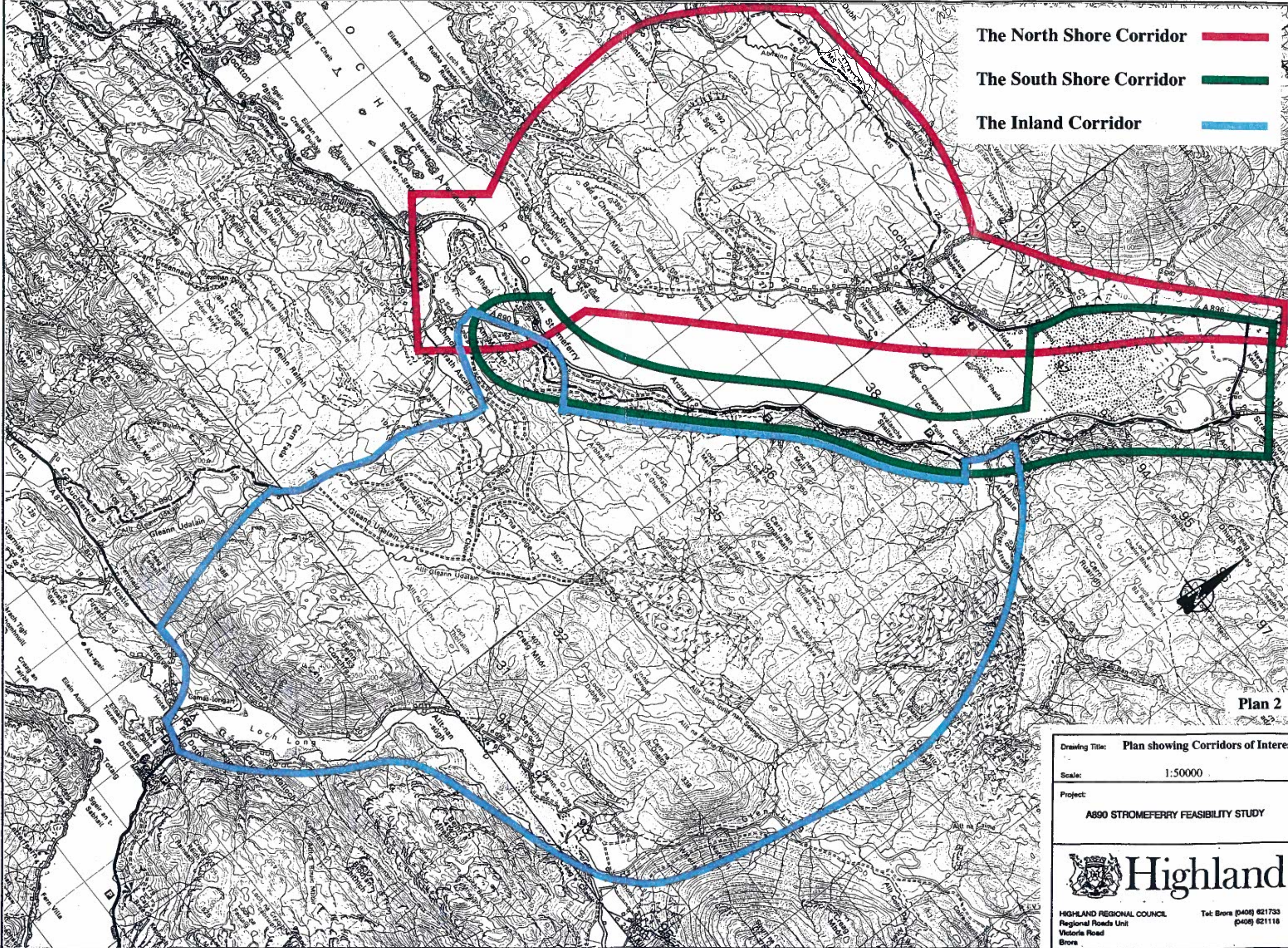
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Project:
A890 STROME FERRY FEASIBILITY STUDY



HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
Regional Roads Unit
Victoria Road
Brora

Tel: Brora (0408) 621733
(0408) 621118



- The North Shore Corridor** █
- The South Shore Corridor** █
- The Inland Corridor** █

Plan 2

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

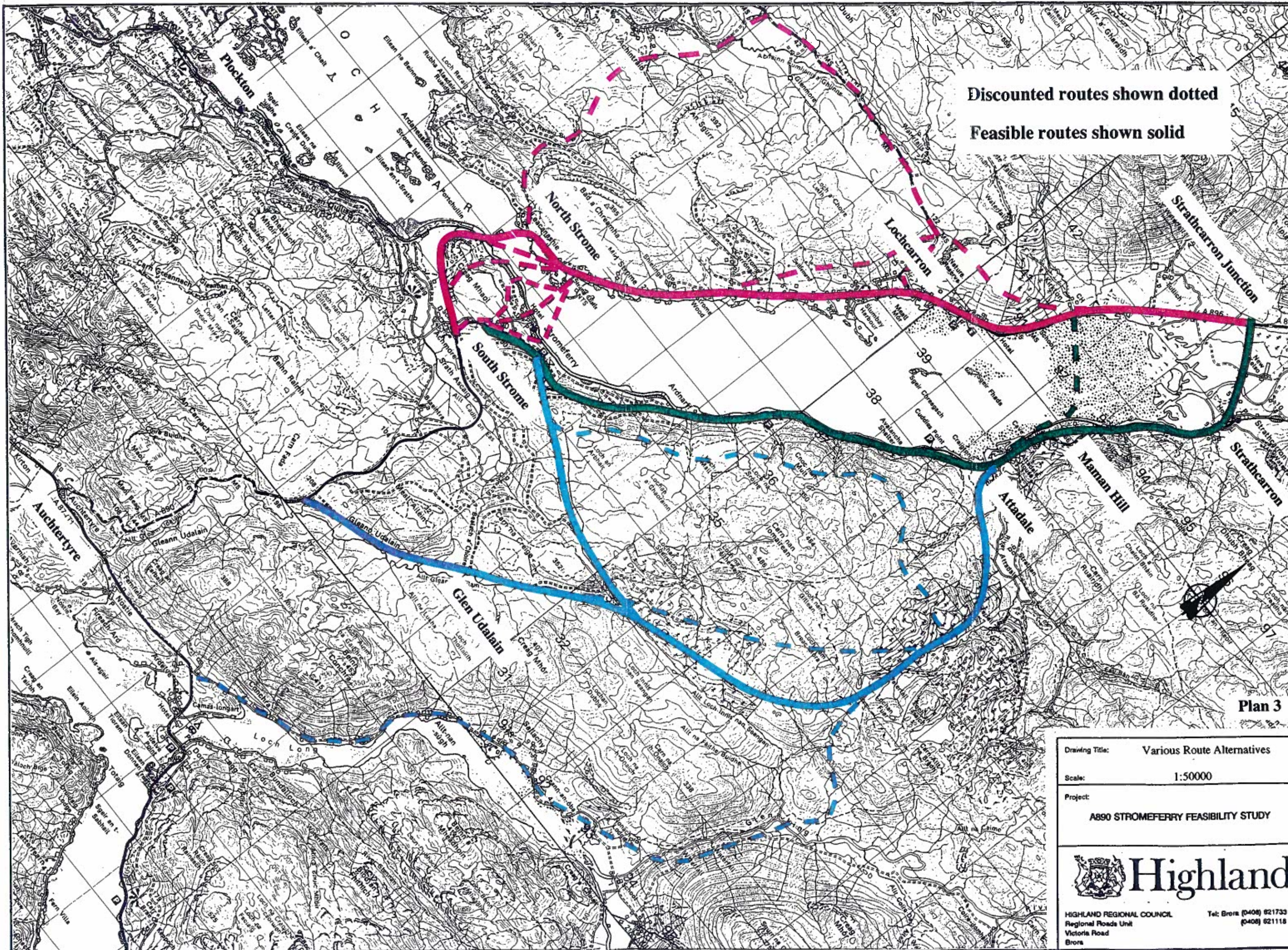
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Project: **A890 STROME FERRY FEASIBILITY STUDY**



HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
 Regional Roads Unit
 Victoria Road
 Broxa

Tel: Broxa (0408) 621733
 (0408) 621116



Discounted routes shown dotted
 Feasible routes shown solid

Plan 3

Drawing Title: Various Route Alternatives
 Scale: 1:50000
 Project: A890 STROME FERRY FEASIBILITY STUDY



HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
 Regional Roads Unit
 Victoria Road
 Brora

Tel: Brora (0408) 821733
 (0408) 821118

The Highland Council

**Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee
16 August 2012**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

A890 Strome Ferry Bypass

Report by Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve that an Options Appraisal is undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) assessment process and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges to examine the options for developing a secure and effective transport link between Lochcarron and the Lochalsh area in consultation with partners and the local community, and that options for external funding are explored as part of the Options Appraisal.

Note: The Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) conforms with best practice. It is objective-led and evidence-based, ensuring consideration of the widest possible range of options avoiding pre-conceived solutions to transport challenges.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Strome Ferry Bypass was developed in the 1960s to relieve pressure on the small car ferry that operated for many years across the Strome narrows to the west of Lochcarron in Wester Ross.
- 1.2 The project was promoted by the former Ross and Cromarty County Council with the objective of improving the transport links in Wester Ross and encouraging development.
- 1.3 The road was designed by Babtie Shaw and Morton and constructed by Duncan Logan Contractors Ltd. The new road was opened to traffic in 1970.
- 1.4 The road lies on the line of the Moine Thrust, a geological area of shattered and fragile rock which runs through the West Highlands. This geological formation of overlapping tectonic plates has led to instability in areas where the rock is exposed through excavation, such as on the Strome Ferry Bypass.
- 1.5 Before the Strome Ferry Bypass was completed there was a major rock/landslip failure at the eastern end of the scheme which culminated in the construction of the current avalanche shelter. This avalanche shelter encompassed both the road and the railway and provided protection from unstable rock faces high above the road.
- 1.6 Over the period since the road was opened there have been a number of rock face failures. These failures have required investment from the Council's capital programme to provide stability and protection works.

2. Emergency Works

- 2.1 On 22 December 2011 there was a major rock fall some 500m to the west of the avalanche shelter which closed the road and resulted in a 140 mile diversion for local traffic.
- 2.2 Over the Christmas and New Year holidays emergency plans were put into operation to provide diversionary route signing and information to the media.
- 2.3 Measures were put in place in early January to provide alternative transport links, including:
 - Passenger Ferry
 - Car ferry with 6 car turntable
 - Bus Connections
 - Additional train service to Kyle
- 2.4 At the same time TRAC Engineering, a specialist contracting firm, were appointed to carry out stabilisation work on the rock face. This work commenced on 31 January 2012.
- 2.5 The stabilisation work involved 24 hour working and some 1,500 tonnes of unstable rock was removed from the rock face. The rock face was then stabilised by installing 100 rock anchors with 250 netting anchors covering an area of 3,000 square metres with specialist rock face netting.
- 2.6 The contract took 12 weeks to complete and the road was re-opened to traffic on 23 April 2012.

3. Review of Contingency Plan

- 3.1 The Council had a contingency plan in place which was used following the rock fall in December 2011.
- 3.2 In the light of the experience gained during the recent event, the Contingency Plan is being updated to take account of the lessons learned.
- 3.3 The recent experience from working with Transport Scotland, First Scotrail, Network Rail, bus companies and the local ferry operators will be incorporated into the contingency plan. This includes the arrangements for moving light vehicles on to the railway. The specialist Holdfast Units, which allow the railway to be used by light vehicles, have been purchased and are stored in Lochcarron.
- 3.4 All those involved in providing the temporary transport solutions (ferry, bus and rail) worked well together and made a significant effort to alleviate the problems experienced by the local communities during the period of the road closure.

4. Review of Inspection Regime

- 4.1 The Council has a 3 stage inspection regime covering the 3.5 km length of the rock

face which is vulnerable to potential rock fall.

4.2 The 3 stages of this inspection plan are

- Stage I – daily drive through inspections carried out in the early morning. Primarily examining the road and adjacent rock face for any failures or rock fall.
- Stage II – monthly walking inspection with any rock falls however minor noted and passed to specialists for assessment and interpretation.
- Stage III – annual specialist consultant inspection carried out by abseiling geotechnical engineers with an annual report presented outlining the recommendation of remedial measures which should be carried out to the rock face.

4.3 This inspection regime is now being reviewed with a view to considering how it can be improved to better predict rock falls and where possible identify intervention measures to prevent rock falls.

5. Public Meeting

5.1 A public meeting / exhibition was held in Lochcarron on 25 June 2012 to present the options for developing a secure and sustainable transport link between Lochcarron and Lochalsh.

5.2 The proposals presented related to three route corridors. The general route descriptions and early estimates of the costs are set out below:

A number of options were presented for upgrading the existing route, including stabilising the existing rock face and extending the avalanche shelter.	Costs range from £59m to £115m
A new route through the Attadale Estate between the Strathcarron Junction and Glen Udalain.	Estimated cost £23m
A bridge close to the Strome Narrows with associated approach roads.	Estimated cost £60m

5.3 The purpose of the public meeting was to establish the views of the local community on the options presented and to identify if there were any further options the Council needs to consider before progressing to the Options Appraisal.

5.4 No further options were proposed, apart from examining the option of incorporating renewable energy in the crossing close to the Strome Narrows. The public also expressed a wish to be involved in the Options Appraisal process.

6. Design Process

- 6.1 The determination and delivery of a permanent solution for the Strome Ferry Bypass will be a complex and expensive project. The preferred option may eventually be challenged through a Public Inquiry, and it is important that the Options Appraisal is robust and stands up to scrutiny.
- 6.2 Given the complex nature of the project it is recommended that the nationally recognised Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) assessment process and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges are used for this project.

This process involves 3 stages as follows:

- **Stage 1** – option generation, sifting and selecting options to take forward to Stage 2.
 - **Stage 2** – options appraisal carried out in accordance with the Design Manual for roads and bridges. This options appraisal would be carried out on the alternatives taken forward from Stage 1.
 - **Stage 3** – detailed design and layout to be taken forward for statutory consent including planning consent and land acquisition.
- 6.3 In addition it is recommended that two Stakeholder Groups are established. The first of these Groups will involve all the regulatory bodies including:
- Marine Scotland
 - Network Rail/First ScotRail
 - Transport Scotland
 - Highlands and Islands Enterprise
 - SNH
 - SEPA
 - Historic Scotland

The Chair of the TECS Committee has written to Keith Brown, Minister for Housing and Transport asking for his support in establishing the Regulatory Stakeholder Group.

- 6.4 The second Stakeholder Group would cover the Economic Impacts and include:
- Local Businesses
 - Planning
 - Highlands & Islands Enterprise
 - Renewables interests
- 6.5 The Stakeholder Groups would inform the STAG process and the Groups would be fully involved in the study such that critical issues can be identified and evaluated as the study progresses.

6.6 In addition it is also recommended that a public consultation be carried out at the end of each of the three stages to ensure that no information or data has been omitted from the study process.

7. Appointment of Engineering Consultants

7.1 To carry out the Stage 1 and Stage 2 work it will be necessary to appoint civil engineering consultants as resources are not available in house.

7.2 It is proposed to appoint consultants through the Highlands and Islands Consultancy Framework using the mini-bid process.

7.3 The brief for the Consultants will include all aspects of the STAG process (Stage 1 and 2) and also include environmental issues as it is likely that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required.

7.4 The estimated cost of this design work is likely to be in the order of £500k spread over two financial years but the detailed costs will only be known when tenders have been received and a consultant appointed.

8. Funding

8.1 It is proposed that the funding for the work associated with Stage 1 (Options Generation and Sifting) and Stage 2 (Options Appraisal), estimated at £500k, is met from the increase in the Council's general reserve following the underspend in 2011/12. This will take the project to the stage where the Council can select a preferred option which can be taken forward to Stage 3 of the process which is the detailed design.

8.2 All of the options are likely to be expensive, and it is proposed that opportunities for external funding are explored as part of the Options Appraisal.

9. Timescales

9.1 The timescale for carrying out the STAG assessment is as follows:

Stage 1 – Option generation and sifting: 6 months

Stage 2 – Options Appraisal: 12 months

Stage 3 – Detailed design: 18 months (depending on preferred solution)

9.2 Public consultation has already taken place in relation to the range of options to be considered at Stage 1, and it is proposed that a further public consultation will be carried out when Stage 1 is completed to allow the public comment on the outcome of the process. This will help determine the options which are taken forward to Stage 2 of the process.

9.3 It is proposed to hold a further public consultation at the end of Stage 2 to ensure

that all appropriate parameters have been considered and if there are any further factors which should be incorporated in the Options Appraisal prior to the outcomes of this stage being considered by the Council.

- 9.4 At the end of Stage 3 when the detailed designs are concluded and prior to the commencement of the statutory procedures the public will be asked for comments on the detailed design such that this may be considered within the statutory process.
- 9.5 The first opportunity for a public consultation is likely to be March 2013 when the outcome of Stage 1 is known.

10. Implications

- 10.1 The cost of completing the Stage 1 (Options Generation and Sifting) and Stage 2 (Options Appraisal) is estimated at £500k, and it is proposed that this is met from the increase in the Council's general reserve following the underspend in 2011/12.
- 10.2 There are no are no known legal implications arising from this report.
- 10.3 There are no are no known equality implications arising from this report.
- 10.4 There are no are no known climate change implications arising from this report.
- 10.5 There are no are no known risk implications arising from this report.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 Members are invited to approve that an Options Appraisal (Stage 1 and Stage 2) is undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) assessment process and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges to examine the options for developing a secure and effective transport link between Lochcarron and the Lochalsh area in consultation with partners and the local community, and that options for external funding are explored as part of the Options Appraisal.
- 11.2 Members are invited to recommend to the Council that the funding for the work associated with Stage 1 (Options Generation and Sifting) and Stage 2 (Options Appraisal), estimated at £500k, is met from the increase in the Council's general reserve following the underspend in 2011/12.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date: 1 August 2012

Report Author: S MacNaughton

Appendix B

Stakeholder Questionnaire

Stromeferry Options Appraisal

Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance – Pre-Appraisal Workshop Stakeholder Questionnaire

Nr	Question	Answer	Notes / Comments
1	Consider the key issues affecting you or your organisation in relation to the ongoing discussions regarding the A 890 Stromeferry Bypass.		
2	Identify any problems you are aware of affecting the current route.		
3	Identify any problems you are aware of affecting any of the historical route corridors / route options.		
4	Consider any opportunities available to you with regards to a route improvement.		
5	Outline the Objectives you or your Organisation have in relation to this Options Appraisal (refer note below).		
6	Provide details of any constraints you are aware of that may affect the development of a particular route.		
7	State if you would have a preferred route corridor or route option, historical or any new proposals, and state your reasons why.		

Note: Objectives should include any considerations / wishes/ comments you may have concerning the affect of a proposal on the Environment, Safety, Economy, Integration and Accessibility and Social Inclusion.
Objectives can also be set by requirements of current legislation, legal agreements, policy directives etc.

Appendix C

Appraisal Team Contact Details

Stromeferry Options Appraisal

Appraisal Team Contact List

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL Officers			
Civil Engineering Design			
Colin Howell	Project Design Unit Manager	01408 635315 07884 113798	Colin.howell@highland.gov.uk
Garry Smith	Principal Engineer PDU Golspie	01408 635313 07901 008700	Garry.smith@highland.gov.uk
Carolyn Smith	Technician PDU Golspie	01408 635319	Carolyn.smith@highland.gov.uk
URS Project Team			
Management Team			
David Taylor	Commission Project Manager	0141 354 6051	David.taylor02@urs.com
Anke Menzinger	Stakeholder / Consultation Manager	0141 354 6053	Anke.menzinger@urs.com
Johnathan Hewitt	Commission Assistant	0141 354 6056	Johnathan.hewitt@urs.com
Roads Team			
Jill Irving	Principal Roads Engineer	0141 354 5731	Jill.irving@urs.com
Environmental Team			
Zoe McClelland	Team Leader Environment & Landscaping	0131 718 5202	Zoe.mcclelland@urs.com
Transportation & Economics Team			
Russell Bissland	Transportation & Economics Specialist	0141 354 5843	Russell.bissland@urs.com
Geotechnical Team			
Peter Morgan	Principal Geotechnical Engineer		

Appendix D

Proposed Stakeholder Workshop Agenda

Stromeferry Options Appraisal Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance Pre-Appraisal Workshop Proposal:

Workshop I:

Purpose: Re-Introduce Project and Key Issues
Identify Problems & Opportunities
Set Project Objectives

Start:
10:00 am

- Agenda:
1. Introduction
 - Introductions around the table
 - Purpose of Workshops
 2. The Project
 - Background & History
 - Current Commission (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance /Design Manual for Roads & Bridges)

10:45am

Break

11:00am

3. Introduction of Processes under STAG
 - Problems & Opportunities
 - Objectives
 - Options Appraisal
4. Introduction to 'Stromeferry and STAG'
 - Problems & Opportunities
 - Objectives
 - Historical Route Corridors & Options
5. Open Discussions – Set Objectives
 - Develop Stakeholder Objectives using STAG Criteria

12:30pm

Lunch

Break

13:30pm

6. Summary
 - Presentation of Objectives / Results from Discussions
 - Establish Relationship to Route Corridors

14:30

Break

14:45

7. Actions and Next Step
 - Issue of Workshop Summary / Outcome (Objectives / Sifting / Development of Options)
 - Stakeholders to prepare for next workshop
 - Workshop II

Finish
15:15

Workshop II:

Purpose: Re-Iterate Workshop I Discussions
Confirm Stakeholder Objectives
Discuss Option Proposals

Start:
09:30 am

- Agenda:
1. Introduction
 - Purpose of Workshops
 2. Previous Workshop
 - Summary of Discussions
 - Stakeholder Objectives & Comments
 - Confirmation of main Stakeholder Objectives

10:45am

Break

11:00am

3. Option Generation, Sifting & Development
 - Problem & Opportunities
 - Objectives
 - Options Appraisal
4. Route Corridors & Option Proposals
 - Route Corridors
 - Historical Route Options
 - New Options
5. Open Discussions
 - Develop Route / Option Proposals

12:30pm

Break

13:30pm

6. Summary
 - Presentation of Option Proposals / Results from Discussions
 - Apply Stakeholder Objectives to Option Proposals

14:30

Break

14:45

7. Summary of Discussions
 - Stakeholder Objectives
 - Route Corridors & Options
 - Main Points of Concern
 - Emerging Route Option

15:30

8. Way Forward
 - Issue of Results from Workshops
 - Preparation of STAG Stage 1 report
 - Preparation of STAG Stage 2 report
 - Future

Finish
15:45