URS

Stromeferry Options Appraisal

STAG

Pre-Appraisal

Stakeholder Workshop

Summary of Workshop No1 - Economic Stakeholders

December 2012

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND









The Highland Council Stromeferry Options Appraisal Stakeholder Workshop

Summary Workshop No1 – Economic Stakeholders

REVISI	ON SCHEDUL	.E	REPORT NO: 47065084 / ECO-STK-WS 01 REV A			
Rev	Rev Date Details		Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by	
-	December 2012	Issue for Comments	Anke Menzinger Project Engineer	David Taylor Commission Project manager	David Taylor Commission Project manager	
А	January 2013	For Issue on THC website	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 Economic Stakeholders

TABLE OF	1	INTRODUCTION	3
_		WORKSHOP CONTENT	
	3	SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS	8
	4	ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS	19

Appendices:

Appendix A: Workshop Register

Appendix B: Workshop Agenda

Appendix C: Location Plan

Appendix D: Area Mapping

Appendix E: Historical Route Corridors & Routes





1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the STAG Pre-Appraisal process to date, two Stakeholder Workshops have been held in connection with the Stromeferry Bypass Options Appraisal.

The first Stakeholder Workshop was carried out with Regulatory Stakeholders on the 21st November 2012 at the Columba Hotel in Inverness. The second workshop in this process was the first workshop held with the Economic Stakeholder Group, and took place on the 4th December 2012 at the Strathcarron Hotel near Loch Carron.

This report summarises the discussions held during the first workshop with the Economic Stakeholder Group. It should be noted that these discussions also included some feedback from the first Regulatory Stakeholder workshop. A separate report has been prepared to summarise discussions held during this Statutory Stakeholder meeting. This report, with reference 47065084 / REG-STK-WS-01, can be made available on request.

It is also proposed to hold follow up workshops with both Stakeholder groups in December 2012 and January 2013, to confirm all issues discussed during the first workshops, and to develop these issues further in view to finalising the first stage of the process towards issue of the Pre-Appraisal report.

The following Stakeholders were represented at the Economic Stakeholder Workshop held on the 4th December 2012:

- The Highland Council, Chief Executive's Service, Ward Manager (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh)
- The Highland Council, Planning, Environment & Development Service
- · Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Kirkton Woodland & Heritage Group
- Lochcarron Community Council
- Stromeferry & Achmore Community Council
- Plockton Community Council
- Lochcarron and District Business Association
- Area Highland Councillors
- Forestry Commission

Representatives of the Applecross Community Council, as well as THC Public Transport Services were invited to the Workshop but were unavailable to attend on the day.



The Highland Council
Stromeferry Options Appraisal
Stakeholder Workshop

Summary Workshop No1 – Economic Stakeholders

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.

Some questionnaires were received during the workshop. Information provided is included in Part 3 of this report.

47065084 / ECO-STK-WS 01 Rev A



2 WORKSHOP CONTENT

The aim of the Economic 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

The presentation of some background information concerning the A 890 Stromeferry Bypass was to acknowledge the long history behind the project and to introduce the requirement for the current commission 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

Stakeholders were encouraged to add to the above statements and the following amendments were made:

- Route vital to local business and tourism
- Supply line between Inverness North, Kyle / Skye and Dingwall
- School bus route to Plockton





Details regarding the maintenance works for the A890 Stromeferry Bypass were presented. This included emergency works carried out following the rockfall event along the bypass in December 2011, at a total cost of approximately £2.84m. In addition, The Highland Council 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 The Highland Council and rigorous contingency planning.

Also briefly presented were the results from a previous questionnaire circulated around the Loch Carron communities in 1994 after a presentation made by the Council on various schemes considered at the time. This was included in the presentation in order to demonstrate the variety of proposed options, as well as the diversity of public opinion and individual objectives regarding the scheme. This was also to illustrate the need for a rational appraisal process like the process offered by STAG.

Current Commission

Following the December 2011 rock fall event, The Highland Council presented a report to THC Committee for Transport, Environmental and Community Services in August 2012 regarding 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.

Queries were raised at this point concerning the relevance of applying the STAG processes to the current project. Concerns were voiced that these processes could prolong the timescales to realise the project, and the urgency of a solution was clearly evident amongst workshop attendees.

The Highland Council representatives confirmed that complying with the STAG processes was paramount to the success of the project, as this would ensure that the current appraisal work was carried out in accordance with processes which are recognised and approved by the Scottish Government. This is assumed to provide crucial support for the project at funding stage, as well as when presenting the case through a likely Public Inquiry.





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 & SiftingStage 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 preconceived solutions being brought forward without considering all other possible options.



3 SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

The Economic 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.

Workshop attendees were also encourage to (re) consider the questionnaire issued as part of the information pack and provide further feedback beyond the workshop discussions.

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' during the workshop:

- Existing road structure of poor standard and alignment, with existing bottlenecks, unsuitable for heavy traffic (considering Kishorn etc)
- Lack of reliability due to risk of future rock fall and associated road closures, with potential detours of 140 mile length, on existing route
- Potential for disruptions due to rockfall on railway line





- Potential of disruptions to crucial lifeline route from Lochcarron / Applecross area to Broadford hospital on Skye
- Potential delays due to disruptions of route could add to journey times, which would be particularly felt by school services, local business and haulage of livestock to Dingwall (added stress to animals)
- Existing route congested during summer months
- Poor access for young people in particular, to leisure facilities in Kyle, Plockton & Auchtertyre
- Isolation of Lochcarron Village due to existing route
- No direct link from Lochcarron south to Kyle, which was previously provided by ferry.
 Current journey times approximately 15 minutes longer
- Long term maintenance obligation of THC regarding existing corridor?
- Existing route crucial for postal services between Inverness and Potree (via Strathcarron)
- Existing route important for utility company access from Kyle north (services cut off during road closures)
- Potential road closures prevent forest operations in local areas due to risk of cut-off supply lines (site supervision, emergency access etc)
- Winter maintenance services based in Kyle, ie no services to Loch Carron during road closures
- No suitable crossing from North to South Strome at present, with difficult / restricted access routes at both ends
- Railway timetable unsuitable for local, regular and commuter use & currently not used to full potential
- Railway track unsuitable for heavy goods transport?
- No suitable public transport routes from Loch Carron area at present
- Low railway bridge at Lair and level crossings at Balnacra and Strathcarron
- Steep gradients on existing route
- No suitable access for timber extractions from Glen Udalain.
- Insufficient finance available from Local Government to sustain maintenance costs long term if further 2011 events occur
- Insufficient finance available from Local Government to realise new alignment scheme.





Future Problems

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

- Securing adequate funding of road scheme
- Potential difficulty to identify preferred solution
- Village of Lochcarron not suitable to take through traffic; bypass would be required if new route was to be along the north shore
- Causeway construction could have potential effects on existing environment
- Visual impact of a Strome bridge onto natural beauty of area
- Potential for increased journey times during road closures or if longer route was realised (Glen Udalain route)
- Attadale Glen Udalain route may be affected due to its exposure during winter months
- Tunneling through potentially unstable rock appears unsafe. Tunnel option would not provide benefits to other sections (steep gradients, bottlenecks etc)
- Heavy traffic associated with future developments (Kishorn, renewables, Forestry etc)
- Bottleneck at Lair bridge restricts transport route from Lochcarron east
- Existing railway line not suitable for heavy goods transport (Kishorn, Forestry etc).





Opportunities

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

- Provide a safe and reliable road to a better standard and lesser gradients, thus
 establishing A890 as recognised through route from Inverness to Skye with long term
 impact on local economic development
- Improve access to leisure facilities
- Improve access to and integration of Lochcarron Village
- Re-instating route via Strome would cut current journey times (in half)
- Improved access for forestry operations. If off-line route chosen, this would enable easier extraction of timber from South Strome and Stromeferry woodlands
- Kishorn Port development, providing adequate access north, south and east towards Invergordon
- General improved employment opportunities in the area
- Reduced journey times, in particular for school bus services
- Solution with integrated renewable option (if causeway bypass Lochcarron village)
- Potential for new developments, business and employment opportunities
- Explore options for renewable energy developments
- Explore opportunities for access to sea transport
- Explore opportunity for enhanced rail network to allow heavy transport and more regular services
- Improve accessibility through improved reliability of route
- Enhance Public Transport
- Positive effect on local businesses if journey times are reduced
- Opportunity to increase up-market tourism in the area (yachting)
- Opportunity to enhance experience by opening new areas, applying aesthetic design.

During the discussions it became clear that there is a strong feeling of opportunity amongst local communities with regards to the potential of development at Kishorn Port, as well as the wish to explore potential renewable energy developments in the area. In conjunction with discussions regarding potential for forestry developments in the area it was recognised, that suitable and reliable transport routes and journey times can be the deciding factor when it comes to the feasibility and financial viability of developments, particularly if these are considered to be marginal operations.



Constraints

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

- Identifying suitable funding for the project
- Existing topography
- Bridge clearance requirements
- Water voles, pine martins, eagles in Glen Udalain
- North / east facing ascent of southern routes (likelihood to cause problems during winter months)
- Crofting tenure on northern side of loch
- Landownership & current land use (crofting)
- Instability of rock
- No disruption of tourist and business traffic acceptable at any time (no road closures)
- Railway
- Bottlenecks on eastern road link (Lair bridge)
- Journey times and restricted timetable on ferry crossing
- Steep road gradients (cyclists, heavy goods transport etc).



The Highland Council Stromeferry Options Appraisal Stakeholder Workshop

Summary Workshop No1 - Economic Stakeholders

The importance that all of the discussed 'Problems, Opportunities and Constraints' 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 will be 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 included in part 4 of this report.

Samples of this table were shown at the end of this workshop discussion, which included results from the first Regulatory Stakeholder workshop held in November.

URS explained the intention to issue this summary report to indicate the specific discussions held during this workshop, as well as the intention to later combine all the results in a joint report, which will be made available to all Stakeholders.





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. 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.

All objectives set and appraised under the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance will then have to be considered under the following five categories:

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

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

The second discussion held during this workshop focused on the setting of project objectives.

Table 3.1 lists the draft objectives discussed during this session. In addition, the results from the discussions have been, where applicable, set in relation to the relevant STAG criteria as listed above.

Stakeholders attending the workshop were issued with a questionnaire prior to attending the workshop. All Stakeholders were further 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).



The Highland Council
Stromeferry Options Appraisal
Stakeholder Workshop
Summary Workshop No1 – Economic Stakeholders

TRAN	SPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVES DEVELOPED DURING	G WORKSHOP				TABLE 3.1
		Appraisal Criteria Objective				
Ref.	Draft Transport Planning Objectives	Environment	Safety	Economy	Integration	Accessibility
1	Create a safe, reliable route to modern day standards, realised at reasonable timescales		√	√	√	\checkmark
2	Aspiration should be to provide a two lane route		\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
3	Recognise THC long term ambition to upgrade whole route between Dingwall and Kyle to single carriage way standard					
4	Route to be sustainable & reliable, maximising opportunities for local sustainable development and economic growth, considering current and future housing requirements		V	V	V	√
5	Consider a reliable route to adequate, modern standards in between Kishorn Port and Invergordon, which would be of regional importance			V	V	√
6	Maximise the opportunities available to the Lochcarron and Lochalsh communities to access potential new regional economic activity such as at Kishorn, a potential base for wind turbine assembly			V	V	V
7	Reduce journey times			\checkmark	√	
8	Deliverability of scheme; identify feasible and affordable option			V		
9	Consider phased approach to allow integrated renewable energy solutions and to maximise the benefits at particular locations			\checkmark		

47065084 / ECO-STK-WS 01 Rev A 15



The Highland Council
Stromeferry Options Appraisal
Stakeholder Workshop
Summary Workshop No1 – Economic Stakeholders

		Appraisal Criteria Objective					
Ref.	Draft Transport Planning Objectives	Environment	Safety	Economy	Integration	Accessibility	
10	Consider renewable development as potential funding opportunity			V			
11	Improve accessibility and community integration, particularly for young people, considering leisure facilities, schools etc				V	\checkmark	
12	Improve transport links (to forests) and markets to east and north			√		\checkmark	
13	Ensure new route option does not restrict access to forestry areas					\checkmark	
14	New route should improve tourist experience , considering West Coast link, Yachting etc			√		\checkmark	
15	Improve access for people and equipment in order to exploit the potential renewable energy sector and sustainable energy provision that is possible at, for example, the Narrows scoped for tidal power, and also various potential wind farm sites in the area			V	V	V	
16	Improve public transport links (consider bus, ferry, railway)			\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	

47065084 / ECO-STK-WS 01 Rev A



The Highland Council Stromeferry Options Appraisal Stakeholder Workshop

Summary Workshop No1 – Economic Stakeholders

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

In addition to a summary of the above, again results from the first Regulatory Stakeholder Workshop were presented in order to inform the group of objectives discussed previously. It was noted that there were various similarities between the two stakeholder group discussions.

It is proposed that all listed objectives, in addition to any 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 Corridors

Introduction

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 Economic Stakeholder Workshop Number 1 aimed to re-examine the local area of Stromeferry and Lochcarron with regards to existing transport links and present historical route corridors and routes, as well as open up discussions regarding the extent and suitability of a feasible study area which will be considered throughout the appraisal process.

Mapping which was presented during Discussion 3 of the workshop is 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 the next workshop.

At the discussions held during this part of the workshop, the following was taken note of:

- This project is potentially of international importance but restraint by the local road network
- Kishorn Port access should be included in considerations.
- Recognition that route upgrade east of Strathcarron Junction (Balnacara level crossing, Lair bridge and single track road up to Lair bridge) is common to all options likely to be considered. Funding for an upgrade of this route would have to be sought independently of the Stromeferry considerations, and may become part of THC proposals for inclusion into the 10 year Capital Programme
- Study area considered for route options and corridors will be smaller than the area considered during the economic and traffic part of the appraisal
- Include route east of Glen Attadale connecting from Glen Udalain directly into Strathcarron
- Include route from Plockton across the Strome Islands towards the north shore of Loch Carron
- Consider cantilever structure along south shore to bypass existing rock fall areas
- · Consider road on railway line
- Recognition that tunnel option dismissed too early in previous process.





4 ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Actions

The Stomeferry Options Appraisal Economic Stakeholder 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 Economic Stakeholders who were invited to participate in this process. For this purpose, this document has been compiled both for information and as 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 Item from List of identified 'Problems', Action Group Item No 'Opportunities' and 'Constraints' H1 Safety Concerns & reliability of existing route Develop into Transport Objective Health & Safety H2 Risk of personal injury and damage to property Develop into Transport Objective from rockfall Н3 H4 Н5 E1 Environmental E2 E3 E4 E5

Table to be extended to suit

47065084 / ECO-STK-WS 01 Rev A 20



- 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 if possible;
 - 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:
 - Second Workshop for Regulatory Stakeholders on the 12th December 2012 in Inverness;
 - Second Workshop for Economic Stakeholders on the 10th January 2013 at the Strathcarron Hotel.

The following Agenda is proposed for the second Economic Stakeholder Workshop:

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Presentation of Previous Workshop Findings & Discussions
- 3. Route Corridors & Options proposals
- 4. Open Discussions
- 5. Feedback, confirm Options & Route Corridors
- 6. Summary of Pre-Appraisal Workshops
- 7. Follow up / Way Forward

It was suggested to hold an afternoon workshop again, and timings will be confirmed in due course.

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Appendix A	1
Workshop Register	_



Stomeferry Options Appraisal Pre-Appraisal Workshop No.1



4th December 2012

Workshop Register

	Name	Company	Telephone/Mobile	Email
	Ceus Howai	Highwas Gener	01408 635315	colin. navel Chighland, gov. wk.
	GARRY SMITH	()	0408635313	boghted, go . Uk.
	MAGKENZIE			May 1
	Helen Muchos	LOCHEAVERDA		
	an fathera	Plackton		
	WILFARMATHESON	ACHMORE.		
	TEABELLE CAHPBEL	HICHIAD COUK		isabelle campbellelle
	CHRIS NIXON	FORESTRY COMMISSION		highland. gov. uk
	<u> 24</u>			forestry gsigov. JK
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P	Natal Bexte	LadBA		
	LU DELLIN WOLVEN			
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		133	2	
	5 pt		5	
		VIII		

Appendix	В
Workshop Agend	da





Workshop Agenda:

Start: 13:30

Welcome Coffee & Tea

14:10 to 14:20 2. The Project

14:20 to 14:25

3. Introduction of Processes under STAG

14:25 to 14:35 4. 'Stromeferry and STAG'

Discussion 1: Identify the Problems & Opportunities

Coffee Break

16:00 to 17:00 Discussion 2: Set Project Objectives

Tea Break (Soup & Sandwiches)

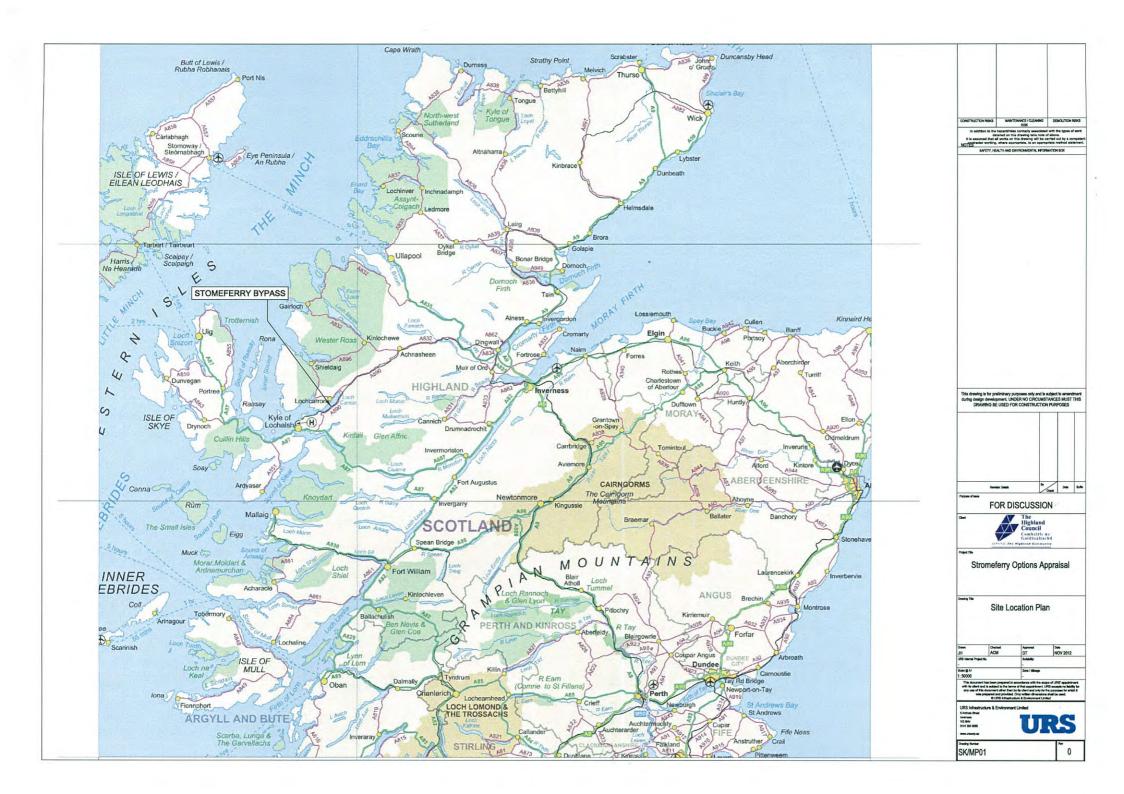
17:45 to 18:15 Discussion 3: Options & Route Corridors

18:15 to 18:30 6. Actions and Next Steps

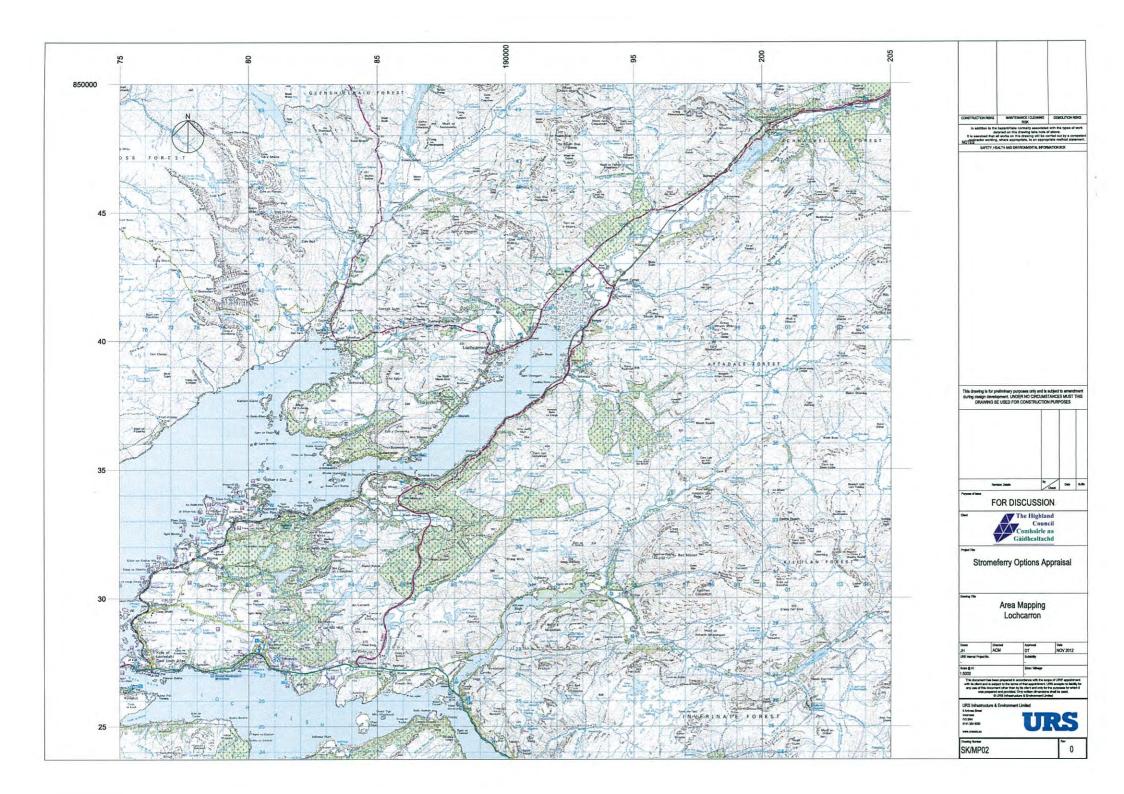
Finish 19:00

Appendix C

Location Plan



Appendix DArea Mapping



Appendix E
Historical Route Corridors & Routes
47065084 / ECO-STK-WS 01 Rev A

