

The Highland Council

Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee
16 May 2013

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Agenda Item | 6 |
| Report No | TEC 39-13 |

A890 Strome ferry Bypass – Outcome of Stage 1 Options Appraisal

Report by Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Summary

This report updates Members on the outcome of Stage 1 of the Options Appraisal for the Strome ferry Bypass, and invites Members to approve that the 9 routes, as detailed in this report, are taken forward to Stage 2 of the Options Appraisal.

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 Babbie 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, and the need to secure the rock face, have required significant investment from the Council's capital programme to provide stability and protection works.
- 1.7 Emergency works in 2012 caused by a rockfall in December 2011 caused the road to be closed for four months and involved the council reinstating the passenger and car ferry at the Strome narrows, long detours for heavy goods

vehicles, disruption to school pupils and disruption to local businesses in Kyle, Plockton, Achmore, Stomeferry, Lochcarron and Applecross. The outrun cost of the emergency repair was £2.8M.

1.8 There was a further rockfall in December 2012 when the road was closed for 3 days.

1.9 The Council allocated £500K for an Options Appraisal using the Strategic Transport Assessment Guidelines (STAG), Stages 1 and 2.

- STAG Stage 1 Options generation and sifting and selection of options to take forward to Stage 2
- STAG Stage 2 Options Appraisal carried out in accordance with the Design Manual for roads and bridges.

The STAG Stage 2 will consider in more detail the routes selected from STAG Stage 1 and will allow the Council to select a preferred option, which can be taken forward to Stage 3 (Detailed Design).

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.

2. STAG Stage 1 (Options Generation and Sifting)

2.1 URS (Consultants) were appointed to carry out the STAG Stages 1 & 2. The purpose of Stage 1 is to set the objectives, generate all of the options and sift them to determine which will be carried forward to be examined in more detail.

2.2 Two stakeholder groups were established. Firstly, an economic Stakeholder Group which included the local Community Councils, business representatives, Elected Members and Council officials. The second Stakeholder Group was a regulatory group and included bodies such as Network Rail, First Scotrail, HIE, Marine Scotland, Transport Scotland, SEPA, SNH and Forrest Enterprise.

2.3 Five Stakeholder Group meetings were held in total. Each Stakeholder Group held two meetings and then one final combined Stakeholder Group meeting was held on the 31 January 2013. The outcomes of the stakeholder meetings were:-

- Identification of scheme objectives, see **Appendix A**.
- A total of 31 routes were identified, as well as improved air travel links to the west coast. There were 6 route corridors considered. All of the options considered and route corridors can be seen in **Appendix B** – Drawing 1002 and 1003

- 14 were discounted as they did not satisfy the scheme objectives
- 17 remaining routes were examined in more detail as part of the STAG Stage 1 report and considered against the Scheme Objectives and National Transport Planning Objectives. The 17 routes are identified in **Appendix B** – Drawing 1004.
- Following the detailed investigation of the 17 remaining routes the draft stage 1 report was prepared for consultation.
- The draft report identified 9 routes recommended to be taken forward to Stage 2 (Options Appraisal) and these are described in Section 3 below.

2.4 The draft STAG Stage 1 documents were made available to the Stakeholder Groups and placed on the Highland Council web site. A public consultation on the outcome of Stage 1 was held in Lochcarron on 27 April 2013, and comments were invited from the public. All comments received from the public will be circulated to Members in advance of the Committee.

3. Route Options to be considered in Stage 2

3.1 There are 9 routes which are recommended to be taken forward to STAG Stage 2 these are illustrated in the attached **Appendix C** to this report:

Northern Corridor (3)

- N6 - route through Lochcarron with bridge crossing
- N6b - route through Lochcarron with barrage
- N9 - Bypass Lochcarron with bridge crossing

The location and type of crossing of the Strome narrows is not fixed at this stage.

Online Corridor (5)

- O2 - Viaduct
- O3 - Tunnel
- O4 - Do-minimum
- O6 - Shared use with railway
- O7 - Avalanche shelter

Southern Corridor (1)

- S4 - Glen Udalain (There are additional local link roads being considered to link the communities of Achmore and Stromeferry to the S4 Route)

From the Stakeholders meeting it was clear that renewable energy should be considered further and this will be taken forward to Stage 2.

3.2 It is currently programmed to complete the draft STAG Stage 2 report in Spring 2014.

4. Implications

4.1 Funding has been allocated for the work associated with Stages 1 & 2 of the Options Appraisal from the Council's general reserve following the underspend in 2011/12.

4.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

4.3 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

4.4 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

4.5 Risk management will be identified and further developed as the scheme progresses.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are invited to approve that the 9 routes, as detailed in this report, are taken forward to Stage 2 of the Options Appraisal.

5.2 Members are invited to note that Stage 2 of the Options Appraisal is programmed to be completed in the spring of 2014.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date: 2 May 2013

Background Papers: TECS Committee Report on 16 August 2012 (TEC-37-12)

APPENDIX A

A890 STROME FERRY APPRAISAL

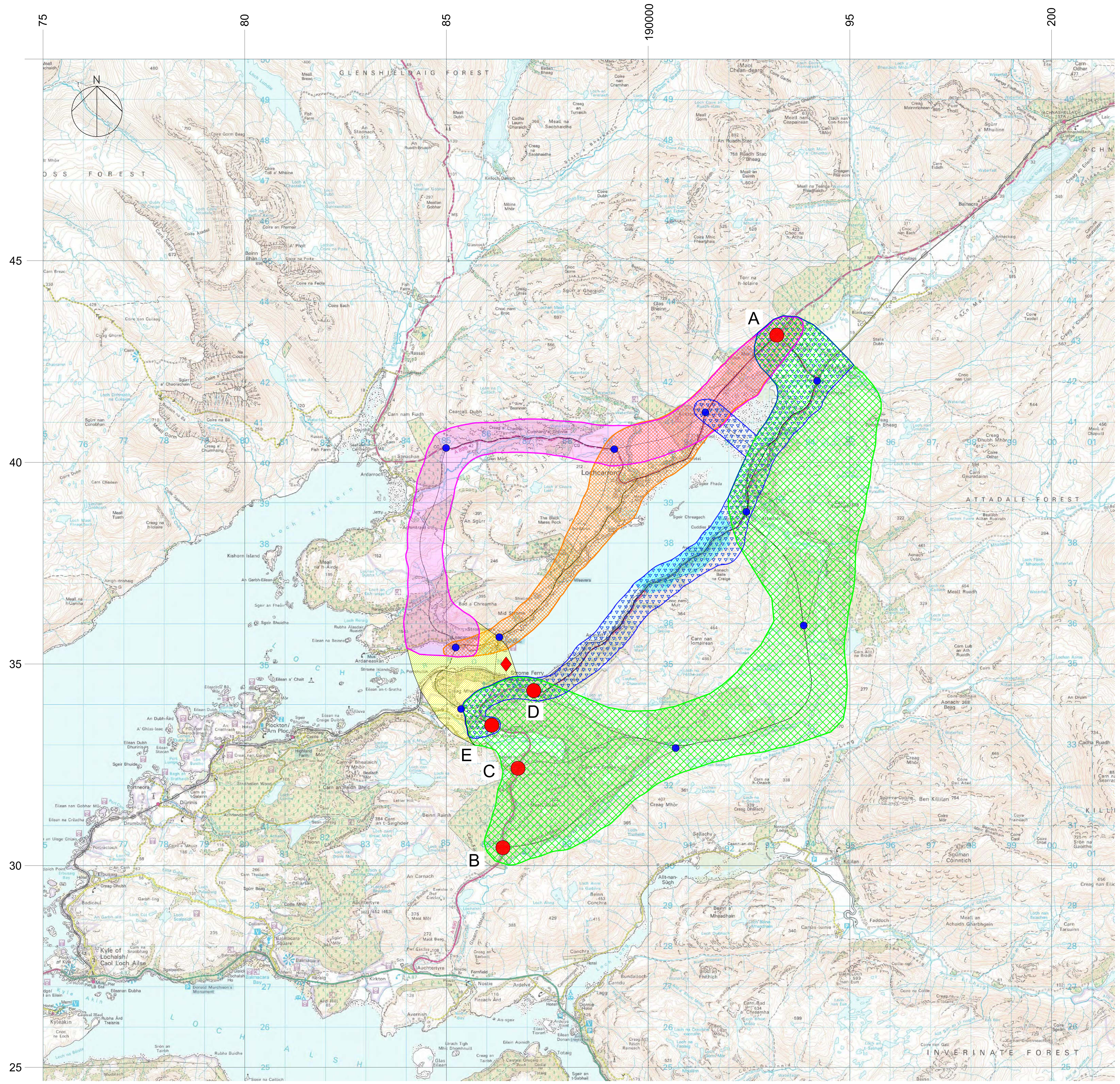
3.3.1 Summary of 'Developed Transport Planning Objectives'

The following table shows the final set of Transport Planning Objectives developed for this project during the Pre-Appraisal process and as agreed with Stakeholders at the joint meeting held on the 31st January 2013.

| TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVES TRANSLATED INTO SMART OBJECTIVES | | | | | | | Table 3.1 | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|--------|---------|-------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Ref. | Draft SMART Objectives | Ref table 2.2 | Appraisal Criteria Objective | | | | | | | | | | |
| A(1) | Safeguard and, where possible and appropriate, enhance and provide access to the natural and built environment and areas of national, regional and local importance and heritage, during construction, maintenance and operation of the scheme (with reference to environmental appraisal) | L&E1, L&E2, L&E4, L&5 L&E6, L&E9, L&E10, L&E11, L&E13 | Environment | Safety | Economy | Integration | Accessibility | √ | | | | | |
| B(2) | Minimise all risk during design, construction, operation and maintenance (with reference to Risk Register) | H4, H6, H7, D1, L&E7, L&E8 | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | | | |
| C(3) | Ensure deliverability of scheme within programme and to agreed capital cost and maintenance budgets, thus providing 'Value for Money' | L&E8, S12, F1, F3, R7, R8 | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| D(4) | Deliver a safe and reliable, 2 lane carriageway, by applying appropriate / proportionate design standards | H1, H2, H4, H5, H6, H7, D1, D2, D5, L&E3, L&E6 L&E7, L&E8, L&E9, L&E10, L&E14, S3, S6, S7, S9, S13, F2, R2, R6, R7, R8 | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| E(5) | Solution reduces, or does not increase, the risk to and liability of the railway and maintains suitable access over the life of the scheme | H5, L&E7, F2, R1, R2, R3, R6, R7, R8 | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| F(6) | Keep the A 890 and peripheral road network open during construction | D2, D8, S2, S10, S13, F2 | | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | |
| G(7) | Maintain and improve local social cohesion by improving accessibility for emergency services responding to call-outs, as well as for the local population making use of local and regional leisure, health and educational facilities | H3, D3, L&E12, S1, S4, S5, S10, S11, S13 | | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | |
| H(8) | Maintain and improve choice of transport mode and integration of public transport links over the lifetime of the scheme | D3, D4, S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S11, F2, R4, R5 | | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | |
| I(9) | Scheme to take account of relevant local, regional and national planning policies (during the design stage) | H6, L&E12, S11 | | | | | | √ | | | √ | | |
| J(10) | (Objective removed during Joint Stakeholder Workshop discussions, as included in K(11) below) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K(11) | Maximise / improve network efficiency, sustainable connectivity and social cohesion in terms of journey times and journey reliability in the Wester Ross area | D2, D3, D6, D7, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S9, S11, S13, S14, F2, R4, R5 | | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | |
| L(12) | Deliver a scheme that assists both the local businesses to maximise opportunities for sustainable development and economic growth over the life of the scheme | D2, L&E12, S3, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, F2, F3 | | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | |

APPENDIX B

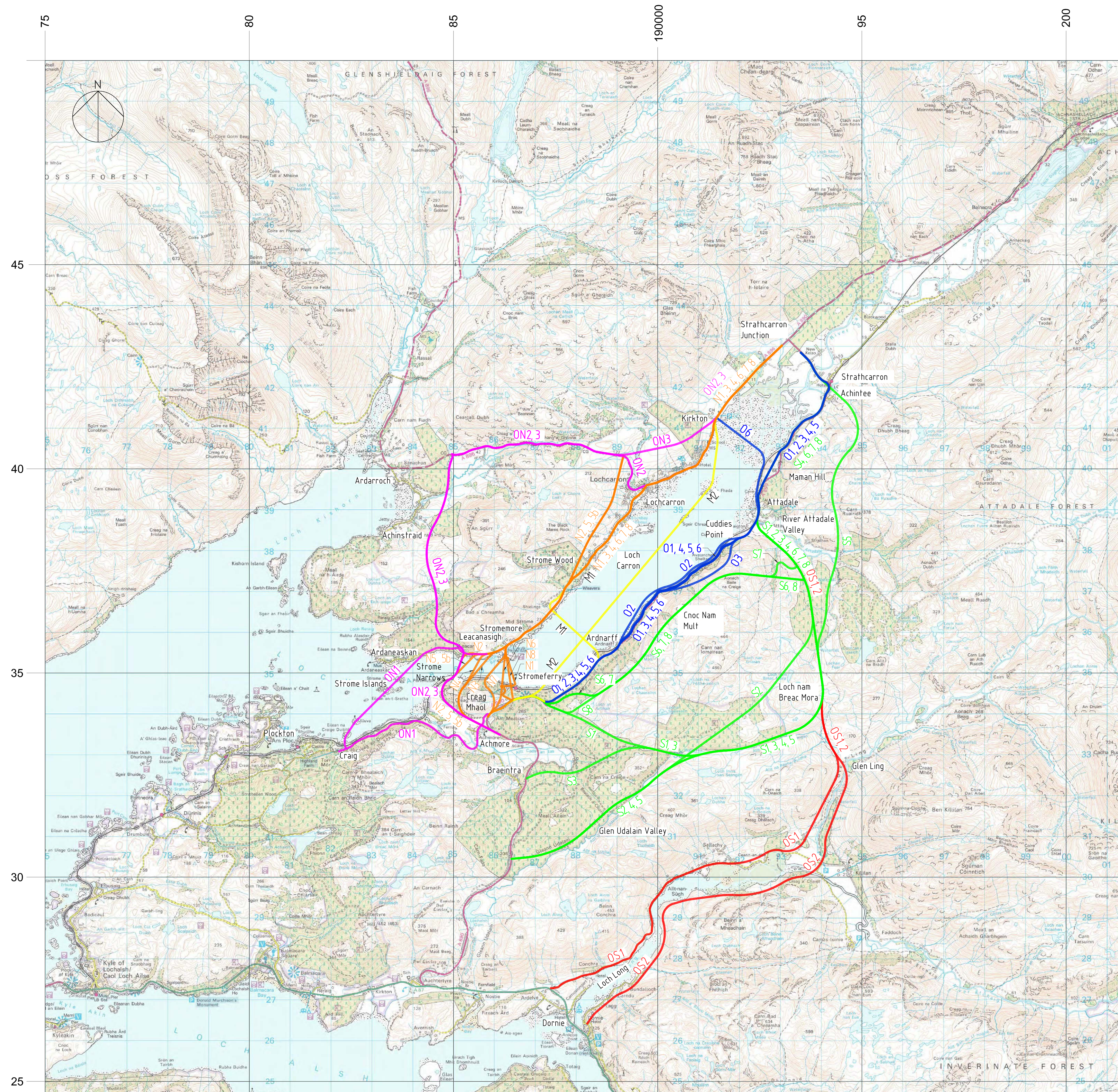
A890 STROME FERRY APPRAISAL









- Key:
- Outer North Corridor
 - North Shore Corridor
 - Online Corridor
 - South Corridor
 - Outer South Corridor
 - Mid Loch
 - Rock Fall
 - Start / End
 - Tidal Option
 - Route Junction Points

Title: Stage 1 Route Options & Corridor Plan
Drawing Number: 47065084 - 1002

Stromeferry Appraisal



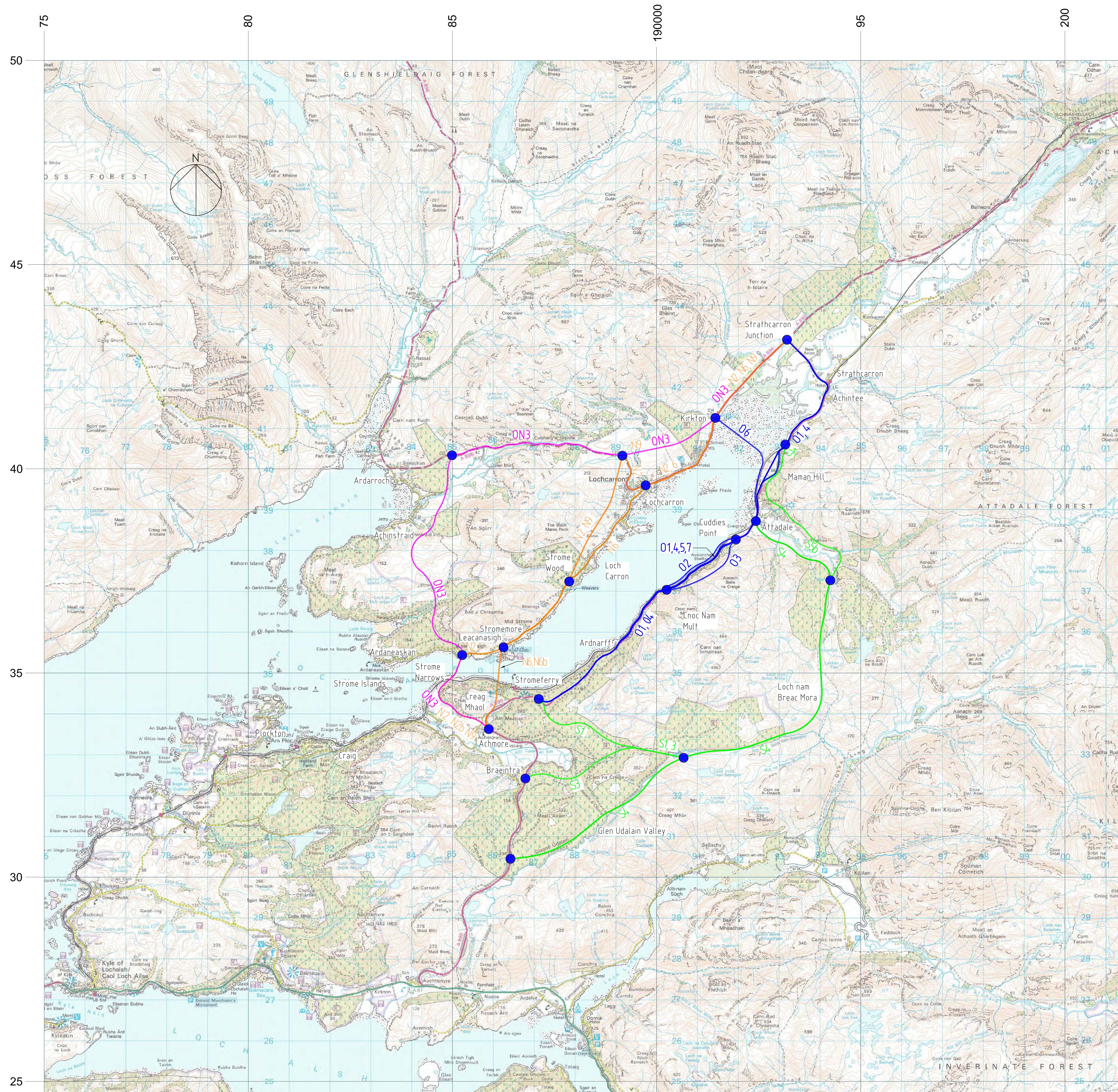
Key:

-  Outer North Corridor Route Option
Prefix **ON**
-  North Shore Corridor Route Option
Prefix **N**
-  Mid Loch Corridor Route Option
Prefix **M**
-  Online Corridor Route Option
Prefix **O**
-  Southern Corridor Route Option
Prefix **S**
-  Outer South Corridor Option
Prefix **OS**

Title Pre-Appraisal
 Preliminary
 Route Option Plan

Drawing 47065084 - 1003
Number:

Stromeferry Appraisal



- Key:
- Outer North Corridor Route Option
Prefix ON
 - North Shore Corridor Route Option
Prefix N
 - Online Corridor Route Option
Prefix O
 - Southern Corridor Route Option
Prefix S
 - Route Junction Points

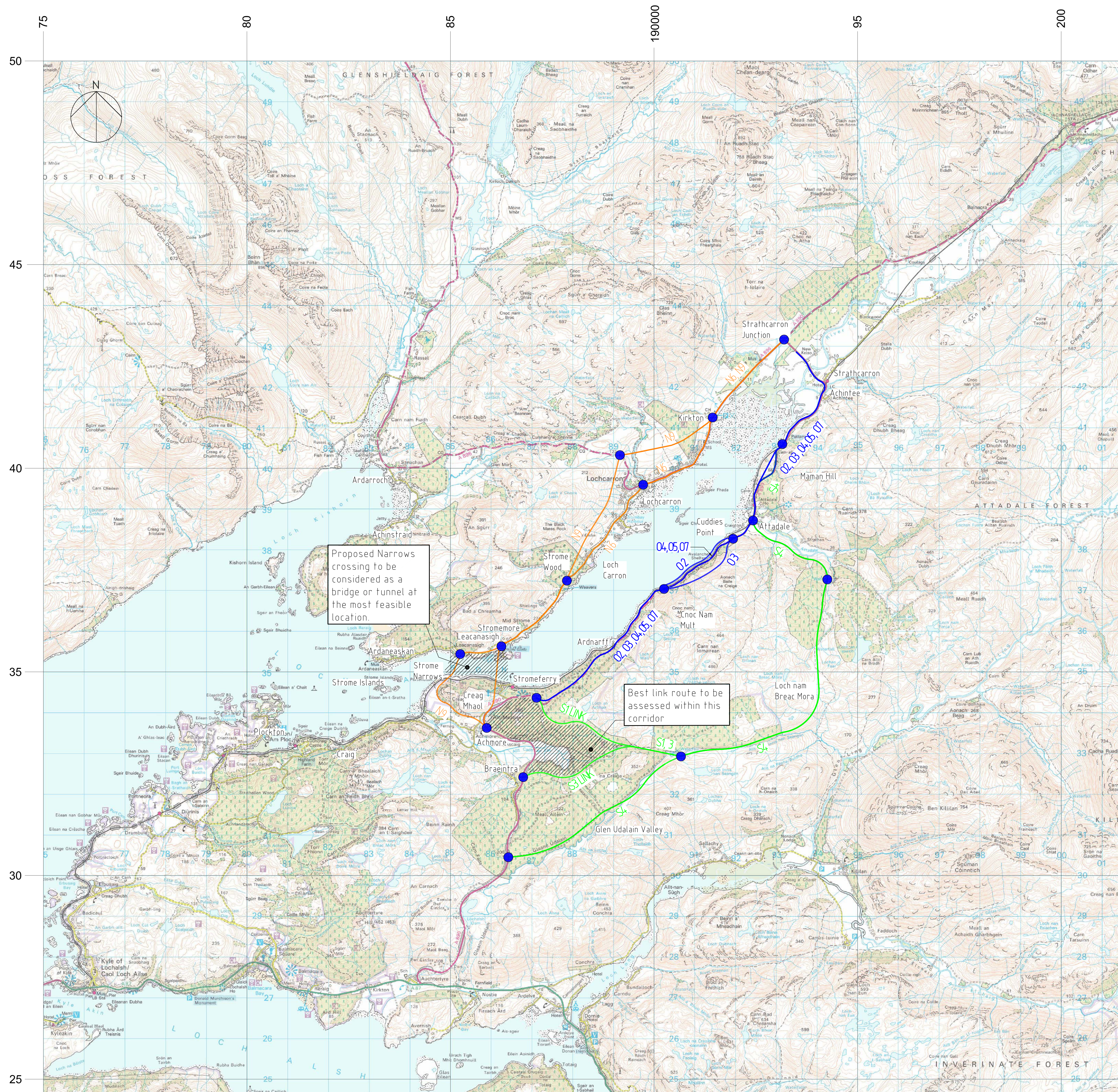
Title: Stage 1 Assessment
Route Options Plan
Route Options Sifted
at Pre-Appraisal

Drawing
Number: 47065084 - 1004

Stromeferri Appraisal

APPENDIX C

A890 STROME FERRY APPRAISAL



- Key:
- Outer North Corridor Route Option Prefix ON
 - North Shore Corridor Route Option Prefix N
 - Online Corridor Route Option Prefix O
 - Southern Corridor Route Option Prefix S
 - Discounted Routes
 - Route Junction Points

Title
Emerging Route Options -
Stage 1 Assessment

Stromeferry Appraisal