

# Fort William to Glenfinnan Walking and Cycling Route

Feasibility Study

HITRANS





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Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

HITRANS, in partnership with the West Highland Community Rail Partnership and Lochaber Environmental Group, commissioned AECOM to undertake a feasibility study to investigate the route options for a safe active travel path between Fort William and Glenfinnan. As an alternative to the busy A830 Trunk Road, the proposed route would link communities with each other, with railway stations and with other trip generators and compliment the new West Highland Line active travel carriages, to encourage everyday journeys by foot, bicycle and train.

The A830, 'The Road to the Isles', is a busy trunk road linking the town of Fort William with the ferry port of Mallaig on the west coast of Scotland. The speed limit between Corpach, Fort William and Glenfinnan village is 60 mph, and the fishing, forestry and fish farming industries along the route generate a constant flow of goods vehicles, posing a real danger to anyone wishing to travel on the route by bicycle. Over the years, local community groups, Sustrans and HITRANS have investigated a "Route to the Isles" extension to the National Cycle Network (NCN78/The Caledonian Way), with Fort William to Mallaig being one of the routes identified for further appraisal. A feasibility study for a cycle path to Glenfinnan will begin the process of delivering a Route to the Isles.

At 16 miles west of Fort William, the village of Glenfinnan is a nationally significant tourist destination which attracts a daily influx of motor vehicles, including many large motorhomes. Data from roadtrafficstats.uk indicates that road traffic between Glenfinnan and Fort William is more than twice as high as traffic between Mallaig and Glenfinnan. An active travel route all the way to Mallaig would be desirable, but the heavier road traffic to Glenfinnan makes it clear that this section of the route is in most urgent need of a safe corridor for more vulnerable road users.

## 1.1 Project Scope

The feasibility study will investigate route options for a high-quality rural active travel route at a safe distance from the A830, linking the residential areas between Fort William and Glenfinnan with each other and with railway stations and other trip generators along the corridor. This should include a link from the end of the off-road active travel network at Corpach out to the industrial estate and holiday park at Annat. The feasibility study will:

- Outline business case and strategic vision for the project, to satisfy Project Stage 0, Strategic Definition, of Sustrans Places for Everyone funding;
- Identify route options and appraise their potential challenges, ecological impact and practicality, to satisfy Project Stage 1, Preparation and Brief, of Sustrans Places for Everyone funding;
- Begin engagement with landowners and Transport Scotland;
- Engage with local community groups, community councils, businesses, schools and other public sector organisations along the corridor – assisted by members of the project steering group who all live between Glenfinnan and Fort William and are familiar with local concerns and ambitions.
- Fulfil the requirements to support a funding application to Sustrans for Stage 02: Concept Design, including Equality Impact Assessment and Designer's Risk Register.

## 1.2 Project Aims and Objectives

1. Set out project vision and strategic need / business case for the route.
2. Support WHCRP to carry out initial community engagement.
3. Understanding of key aspirations of local communities, barriers to active travel, and wider social and political aspirations for the area.
4. Route options and appraisal, including Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
5. Communications plan: how the project will be communicated, key audiences & key messages.
6. Monitoring and Evaluation plan to demonstrate how project outcomes will be measured.

1.3 Study Area

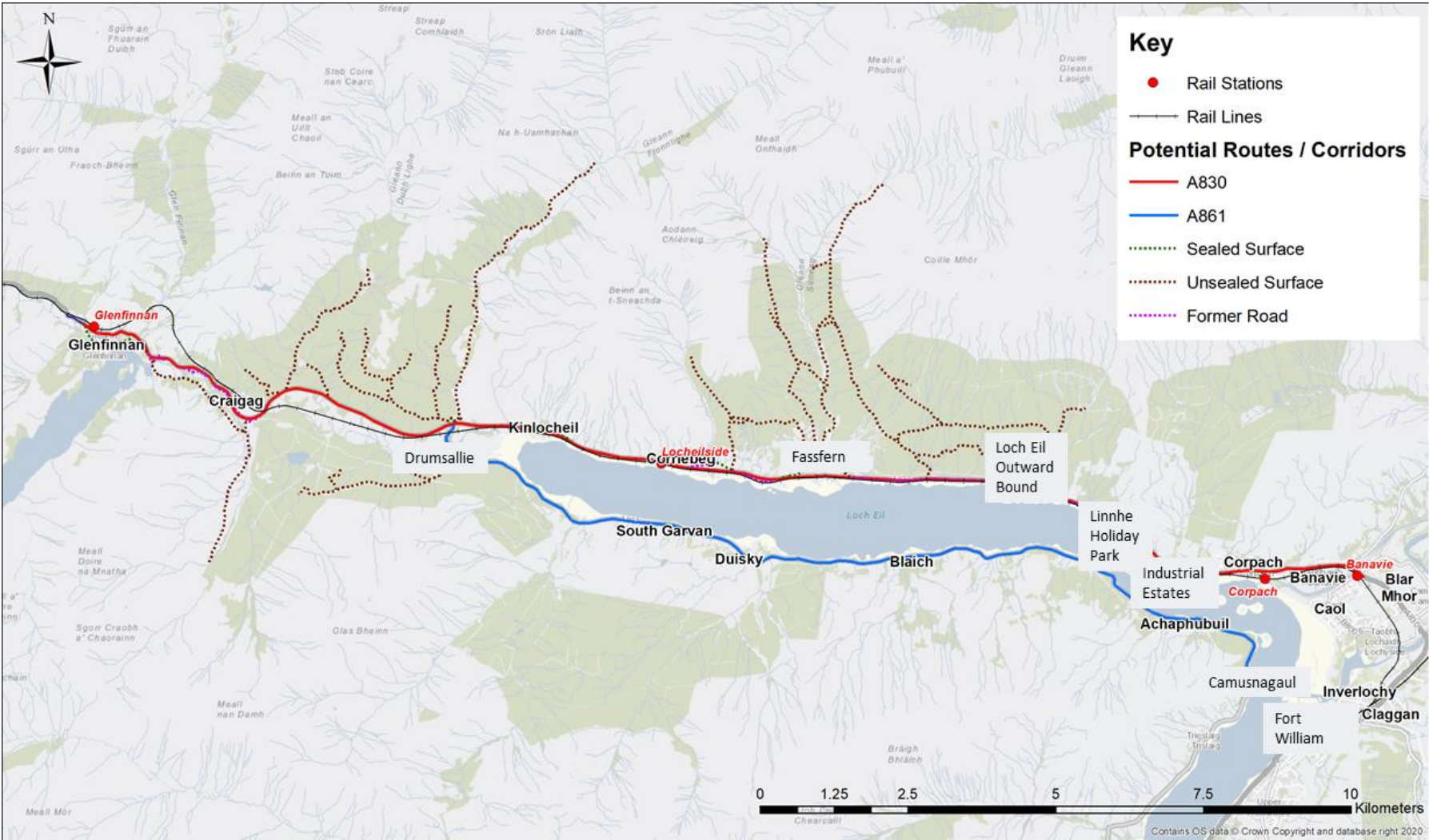


Figure 1 - Project Study Area

## 2. Desktop Review

### 2.1 Geographic Context

As outlined in Section 1 of this report, the A830 Road to the Isles is a strategic Trunk Road linking Fort William to Mallaig via Glenfinnan. At Mallaig is a strategically important ferry terminal providing services to Knoydart and the isles of Skye, Rum, Canna, Muck, South Uist and Eigg.

Glenfinnan lies approximately 16 miles to the west of Fort William, much of that distance runs alongside Loch Eil, where the Trunk Road and West Highland Rail Line closely follow the northern loch shoreline, rising to steep and often mountainous terrain to the north. West of Loch Eil, the route passes through wider and often open hinterland referred to as Drumsaille, before following closely the Callop River to Glenfinnan and the head of Loch Shiel. The land rises steeply to the west of Glenfinnan village alongside the Slatach River. There are significant areas of managed and natural forestry along the route which provide both a great attraction and a potential challenge to route proposals.

Several small communities lie along the route with no link to each other or to Fort William other than the Trunk Road. These include Annat, Camus na h-atha, Braeside, Loch Eil Outward Bound, Fassfern, Corriebeg, Drumbeg and Kinlocheil. Communities from Fassfern to Annat are within 4.5 miles (20 minutes' cycle) of the Fort William Active Travel Network, which begins at Corpach. With the increasing popularity and availability of electric bikes, all these communities are within a reasonable cycling distance of Fort William. In addition, there are two railway stations on the route which can only be accessed by the Trunk Road: Locheilside and Loch Eil Outward Bound. Both of these are within comfortable walking/cycling distance of nearby communities; Locheilside serves Kinlocheil and Corriebeg, and Loch Eil Outward Bound serves Fassfern and Braeside.

## 2.2 Local Transport Network

### 2.2.1 Trunk Road Network

The A830 is a national Trunk Road known as 'The Road to the Isles' which starts at its junction with the A82 at Lochy Bridge Roundabout and runs approximately 41

miles westwards before terminating at Harbour Road Roundabout in Mallaig. The A830 is a rural single carriageway subject to the national speed limit for the majority of its distance, though has 40mph and 30mph reductions through all major settlements.

Outside of the major settlements, the route is unkerbed with grass verges on both sides. There are several laybys along the route, mostly on the southern side of the carriageway. The carriageway is estimated to be an average of 7.3 metres wide over the majority of its distance.

The majority of the route is unlit, including around the minor train stations, though has street lighting in most of the major settlements along its distance. Glenfinnan is the one main settlement which has no street lighting available where the Trunk Road passes through.

The Trunk Road is owned by Transport Scotland and currently maintained by BEAR Scotland Ltd.

### 2.2.2 Public Transport

The West Highland Rail Line runs east west through the wider study area linking Mallaig to Fort William and beyond to Glasgow. The rail line runs closely between the A830 and the northern shore of Loch Eil and features the famous Glenfinnan Viaduct. Abellio Scotrail operate services to Banavie, Corpach, Loch Eil Outward Bound, Locheilside and Glenfinnan, which are the rail stations within the study area.

The rail line is also used by the Jacobite Steam Train which carries tourists along the rail line between Fort William and Mallaig from April to October<sup>1</sup>.

Shiel Buses currently operate services in the area. The 500, 505 and 534 services use the A830 between Mallaig and Fort William five times a day on weekdays and once on Saturdays. The 502 Acharacle to Fort William bus also provides one service per day through the A830 Corridor. The 522 Treslaig – Fort William via Kinlocheil operates a number of smaller services which stops at a number of locations along both the A830 and A861 on both sides of Loch Eil. It should also be noted that Glenfinnan is a designated Clear Way and that buses can only stop at designated bus stops which include: Prince's House Hotel (Station Road entrance for travel to Fort William and Opposite Station road end for travel to Mallaig) and

<sup>1</sup> <https://westcoastrailways.co.uk/jacobite/steam-train-trip>



Slatach Road End (for travel to Mallaig, and opposite for travel to Fort William, by the entrance to the gated Glenfinnan Estate road<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.2.3 Exiting Active Travel Network

The vast majority of the study area has no dedicated cycle facilities west of Fort William. While there are a significant number of people who utilise the wider A830 for on-road long-distance cycling, these are generally more confident or experienced cyclists. Fort William and the wider Lochaber area is home to National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 78 which utilises a number of quiet streets or on road routes through Fort William, Inverlochy, Lochyside and Caol. To the north-west NCN78 follows the Caledonian Canal via Neptune's Staircase (see Figure 2) and onward through the Great Glen, to the south-east NCN78 utilises the A861 on the west side of Loch Linnhe from the Camusnagaul – Fort William passenger ferry (see Figure 3 - NCN78 Route Signage by Camusnagaul Ferry) and the Corran Ferry to the south which is free to passengers on foot or by bike. The NCN78 also forms part of the Caledonia Way, part of a 234- mile long distance cycle route through Scotland from Campbelltown to Inverness<sup>3</sup>.

Within Glenfinnan there are a number of smaller walking paths around the monument, through the village and a hill path to the back of Glenfinnan rail station and towards the viaduct, however these paths are generally unsuitable for everyday cycling and are much more suited to leisure / recreation.

There are both pedestrian and shared use footway links alongside the A830 through Blar Mhor, Banavie and Corpach. On the south side of the A830 carriageway there is a footway which is signed as shared-use between Lochy Bridge Roundabout and Banavie Train Station. The footway, however, continues over the swing bridge to Annat Point Industrial Estate, where it terminates. Between Kilmallie Road junction on the south side of the A830 and Banavie Train Station, The National Cycle Network (NCN) 78 connects and runs along the shared-use footway and crosses the Trunk Road at Banavie Swing Bridge. On the north side of the A830 Trunk Road, there is also a footway which runs from Lochy Bridge Roundabout to opposite the BSW Timber Mill entrance, where the speed limit signage for National Speed Limit/ 40mph is located at the end point of Corpach. This footway is only signposted as shared use between Camagael Road and Neptune's Staircase. Both north and south shared-use footways have existing flag-type directional signage pointing down the B8006 Corpach Moss Road (Kilmallie Road) to access for Caol

and Corpach where there are on-carriageway cycle lanes. The B8006 also connects into the NCN-78 at the Great Glen Way crossing over the River Lochy.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.shielbuses.co.uk/timetables>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/find-other-routes/the-caledonia-way>



Figure 2 - NCN78 at Neptune's Staircase, Banavie

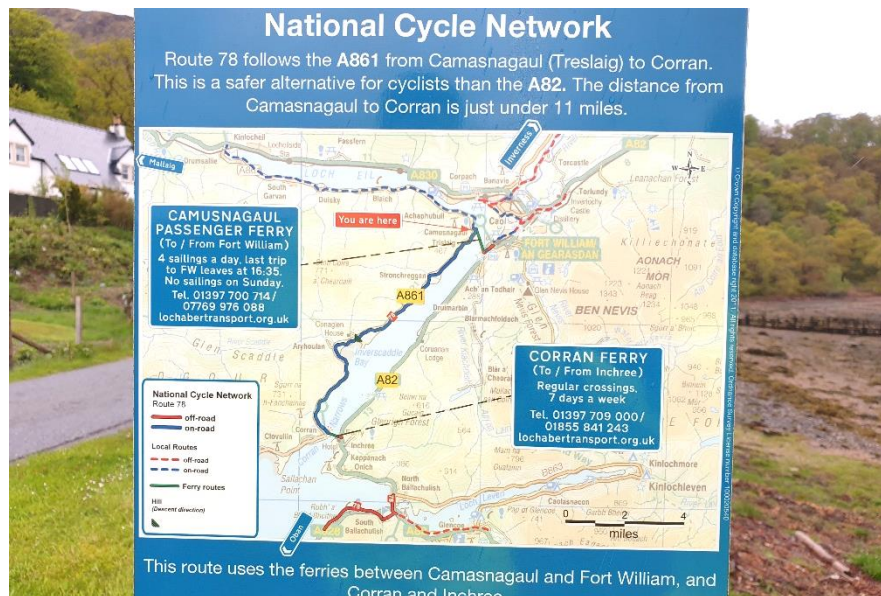


Figure 3 - NCN78 Route Signage by Camasnagaul Ferry

## 2.2.4 Core Paths

The West Highlands and Islands Core Paths Plan has been under review since May 2015. In 2019 the Highland Council published an amended core paths plan for consultation and once again in 2021 a further consultation will be undertaken. At time of writing July 2021, the amended Core Paths Plan was unavailable due to the ongoing consultation. Below are a list of the previously designated Core Paths within the study area<sup>4</sup> as it is anticipated that many of these will remain designated:

Table 1 - Designated Core Paths within Study Area

Map No.	Path No.	Path Name/Route	Path Type	Length (kms)
4	LO07.30	Fassfern Forest Walks	Forest tracks	5.1
5	LO10.01	Glenfinnan Estate Road	Track (tar)	4.1
5	LO10.02	Village Access Track 'Back Track', formerly Farm Lane	Stone track	1.3
5	LO10.03	NTS Car park to Callop	Boardwalk/forest track	2.8
5	LO10.04	St Mary's Church to Glenfinnan House Hotel	Track	0.3
5	LO10.05	Pavement on A830	Tarred pavement	1.1
5	LO10.06	Road to Glenfinnan pier/ Slatlach Road	Tarred road	0.3
9	LO07.12	Great Glen Way; Corpach Basin to Banavie	Canal towpath	1.8

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/198/core\\_paths\\_in\\_lochaber](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/198/core_paths_in_lochaber)

Map No.	Path No.	Path Name/Route	Path Type	Length (kms)
9	LO07.13	Banavie to Torcastle to Strone by Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way	Canal towpath	7.1
9	LO07.15	Caol to Corpach Basin on Great Glen Way	Canal towpath	2.3
9	LO07.20	Corpach Link to Great Glen Way	Constructed track	0.6
9	LO07.21	Caol Community Shore Path	Constructed stone path	0.8
9	LO07.29	Lochybridge to Blar Mhor to Corpach	Tarred track	3.2
9	LO07.32	Corpach Nature Trail	Constructed stone path	1.1
9	LO07.34	Blar Mhor to Canal	Track (tar)	0.6

Figure 4 shows an extract from the Highland Council Core Path Plan Map 5, showing the existing Core Path Network in and around Glenfinnan.

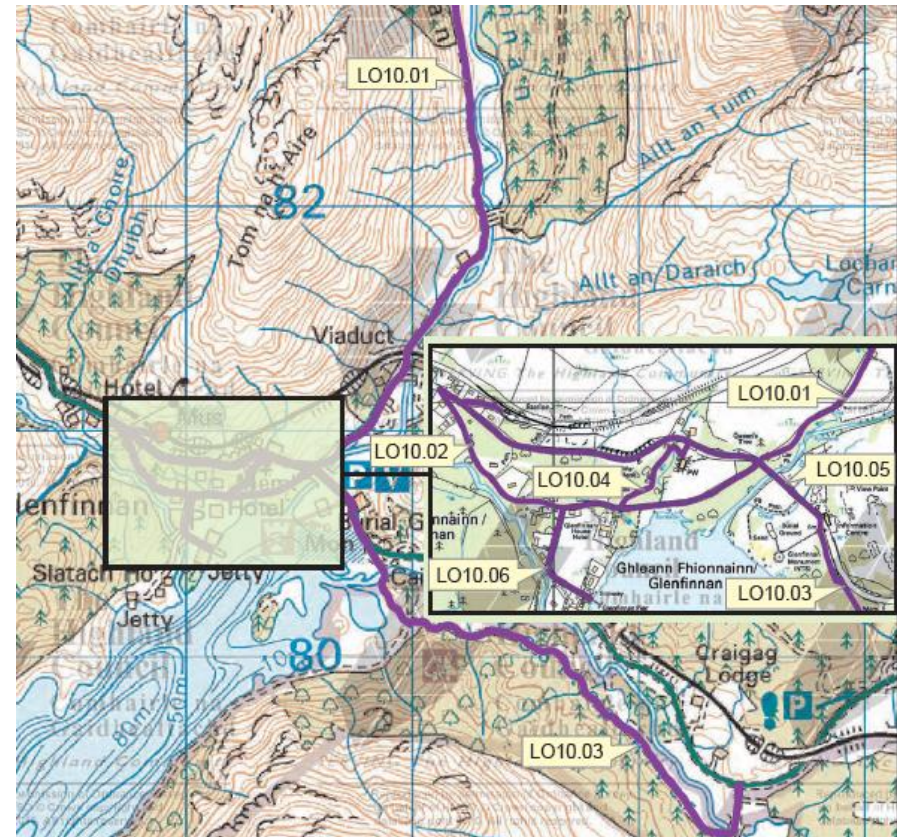


Figure 4 - Extract from Highland Council Core Path Plan Map 5



## 2.2.5 Heritage

There are a large number of designated listed buildings and sites along the study area, these have been located, including the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Online Designations Mapping Service<sup>5</sup>. These protected areas will be subject to additional protections and more stringent requirements when it comes to changes and development.

Significantly, the Caledonian Canal is designated a Scheduled Monument. Four separate areas of The Canal are designated to the east of the project study area:

- Caledonian Canal, Banavie to Moy Bridge (SM6492)
- Caledonian Canal, Neptune's Staircase, canal locks, Banavie (SM3530)
- Caledonian Canal, Corpach to Banavie (SM6491)
- Caledonian Canal, Corpach Locks and Basin (SM5297)

Improvements works to, or in the vicinity of the canal are likely to require Scheduled Monument Consent as a result of the designations.

In addition to the Scheduled Monuments, there are a large number of Listed Buildings and Structures on, or directly nearby the study area, summarised below in.

**Table 2 - HES Listed Buildings/ Structures**

Category	Title	Reference
A	GLENFINNAN RAILWAY VIADUCT OVER RIVER FINNAN	(LB310)
B	GLENFINNAN RAILWAY STATION, TICKET OFFICE/ WAITING ROOM AND SIGNAL BOX	(LB312)
B	GLENFINNAN BARN AND STEADING	LB311
B	GLENFINNAN, ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY AND ST FINNAN AND BELFRY.	LB309

<sup>5</sup>

<https://hesportal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=18d2608ac1284066ba3927312710d16d>

Category	Title	Reference
A	GLENFINNAN MONUMENT	LB308
B	KINLOCHEIL, DRUIM NA SAILLE BRIDGE OVER FIONN LIGHE RIVER	LB7072
C	KINLOCHEIL, SNOWBURN STEADING	LB7074
C	KINLOCHIEL MISSION CHURCH	LB7073
B	FASSFERN HOUSE, STEADING RANGES AND REAR WALLED GARDEN	LB7069
C	FASSFERN BRIDGE OVER THE AN T-SUILEAG BURN	LB7070
B	BLAICH, BLACK CROFT	LB1693
C	BLAICH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND	LB1692
C	CORPACH, ICEHOUSE	LB7068
C	CORPACH, OLD KILMALLIE CHURCH AND BURIAL GROUND	LB7095
B	CORPACH, OBELISK	LB7066
C	CORPACH, KILMALLIE PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND ENCLOSING WALL WITH GATE PIERS AND CAMERON MEMORIAL	LB7094
B	CORPACH, KILMALLIE HOUSE	LB7067

Category	Title	Reference
B	FORMER STABLES AND STORE, CALEDONIAN CANAL, CORPACH	LB7083
B	CALEDONIAN CANAL, BANAVIE, SWING RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER CALEDONIAN CANAL	LB7079

Further details of the Listed Buildings and additional considerations for development and preservation can be found available on HES website<sup>6</sup>..

Long stretches of the existing A830 road alignment follows that of the original early 1800s road constructed by Thomas Telford, however there are long sections of the historic road alignment running largely parallel to the current road. Along this former road alignment there are also a number of bridge structures including the Category B listed Druim na Saille bridge over Fionn Lighe River (reference LB7072) by Kinlochail<sup>7</sup>. This slightly humpback rubble bridge was constructed between 1803-04 by Thomas Telford and covers an approximate 45m span.

While the Druim na Saille bridge is perhaps the finest example of the rich historic build environment, it remains one of a number of similar structures within the study area which provide a great opportunity not only for movement and active travel, but for reclaiming and embracing the rich local heritage.

## 2.2.6 Existing Monitoring Data

### 2.2.6.1 The Great Glen Way Counters

Data has been extrapolated from cycle counters mounted on The Great Glen Way which runs from north to south adjacent to Neptune's Staircase, crossing the A830 Trunk Road at the Banavie Swing Bridge and continuing south towards Corpach Basin.

The data was recorded over a four-month period (Jan-Apr 2020) and indicates that there was an average of 20 cyclists using the route each day in January, though this rises through each subsequent month to 47 users in April. There was also an

average of 15 pedestrian users of the route each day in January, rising to an average of 38 users per day in April.

Further analysis of the data indicates that – on average – there are 65 cycle users and 57 pedestrian users of the route each weekday throughout the 4-month period. There were 55 cycle users and 45 pedestrian users of the route each weekend.

This gives an indication that this route is being used for non-motorised commuting and therefore shows the potential for further active travel commuting which can be implemented by further installation and upgrading of active travel links.

### 2.2.6.2 National Trust for Scotland Survey

The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) surveyed 3,150 people in 2020 on their views on their visits to Glencoe and Glen Etive. As this is relatively nearby to this scheme's location, there are a few points which can be taken from the survey.

- 52% of those polled lived within 3hrs drive of the survey location, all within Scotland.
- 55% travelled by car, and 14% travelled by either cycle or public transport.
- 85% viewed positively the introduction of a park & ride facility with public transport connection into the area.
- 86% viewed positively the introduction of better public transport connections to the area.
- 91% viewed positively improvements for both walking and cycling facilities into the area. Creating a traffic-free route.

Even though this survey does not encompass this site's location, what can be drawn from this data is that there is tourism willing to drive to the area, but also preferring to stop and take either public transport or to use traffic-free facilities if they were to be available.

<sup>6</sup>

<https://hesportal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=18d2608ac1284066ba3927312710d16d>

<sup>7</sup> <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB7072>

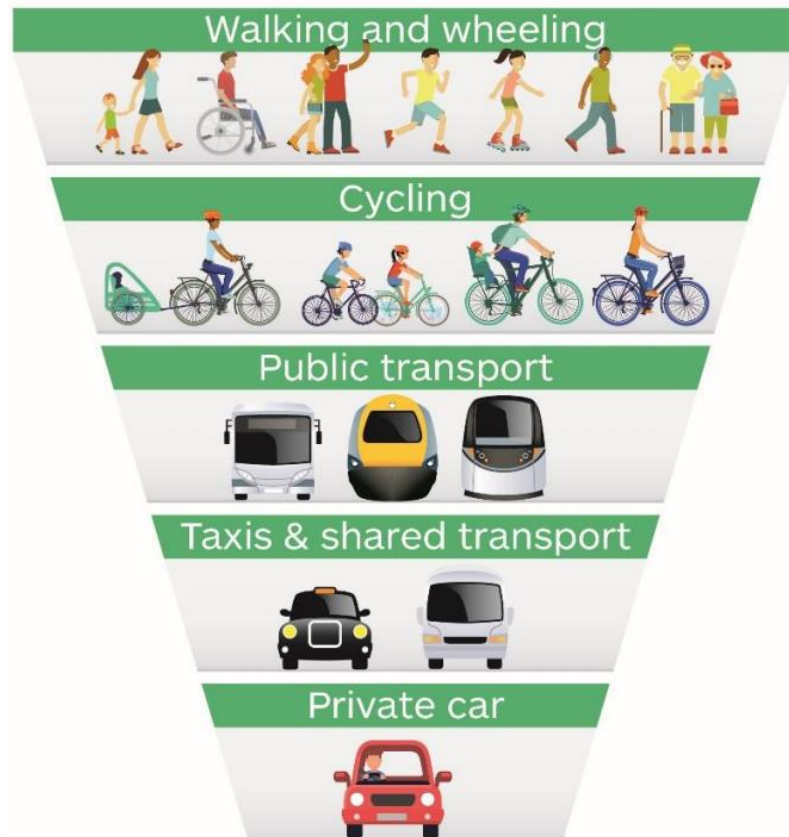
Also, it has been advised through consultation with the NTS Glenfinnan Visitor Centre, that during the peak tourism months that the centre receives upwards of 1,000 visitors every day.



## 2.3 Policy and Strategy Context

### 2.3.1 National Policy and Strategy

#### Prioritising Sustainable Transport



**Figure 5 - Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (NTS2, 2020)**

In 2020 the Scottish Government released the Updated National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) to set out a vision for the transport system for the next 20 years<sup>8</sup>. The overarching Vision in NTS2 is:

*We will have a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors.*

Underpinning the Vision are the four Priorities:

- Reduced inequalities
- Takes climate action
- Helps deliver inclusive economic growth
- Improves our health and wellbeing.

Significantly, the NTS2 outlines, overarching all the Policies, to address the challenges and achieve the Priorities, to embed the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in decision making by promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people (Figure 5 - Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (NTS2, 2020)**Error! Reference source not found.**)

The Active Travel Framework brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland for travel<sup>9</sup>. At the heart of the framework is the ambition that by 2030, Scotland's communities are shaped around people and place, enabling walking and cycling to be the most popular mode of travel for short, everyday journeys.

The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) 2017-2020 is the third iteration setting out actions for how the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and all key partners will respond to the needs of stakeholder and how active travel commitments will be achieved<sup>10</sup>. This CAPS refresh maintains the vision for 10% of everyday journeys to be made by bike and that the key focus should be changing physical environments and providing infrastructure for short journeys to enable anyone to cycle.

Let's Get Scotland Walking (2014) is the National Walking Strategy<sup>11</sup> outlining a vision for:

*A Scotland where everyone benefits from walking as part of their everyday journeys, enjoys walking in the outdoors and where places are well designed to encourage walking.*

The National Planning Framework 3<sup>12</sup> sets out the long-term vision for development and investment across Scotland over the next 20-30 years and emphasises the importance to build the following across Scotland:

- Successful and sustainable places: supporting sustainable economic growth and generation and the creation of well-designed places.
- Low Carbon places: reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.
- Natural and resilient places: helping to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets and facilitating their sustainable use.
- Connected places: supporting better transport and digital connectivity.

### 2.3.2 Regional Policy and Strategy

HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy was approved by Scottish Ministers in 2008. The HITRANS Board agreed to undertake a review and refresh of the Strategy to consider updated policy changes and better align with present conditions across the region for developing transport for the Highlands and Islands. A Draft Regional Transport Strategy is currently available online<sup>13</sup>. The Strategy highlights Delivery Plan Items to:

- Develop strategy/s for establishing transport routes / corridors as visitor attractions including NC500, Hebridean Way and Whisky Trail; and
- Implementation of Regional Active Travel Strategy and Active Travel Town Masterplans.

HITRANS also have a Regional Active Travel Strategy which highlights key objectives to increase the levels of walking and cycling to work and school across the Region.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/national-transport-strategy/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/active-travel/active-travel-framework/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/cycling-action-plan-for-scotland-2017-2020/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/lets-scotland-walking-national-walking-strategy/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-3/>

### 2.3.3 Local Policy and Strategy

The Highland Council Local Transport Strategy was drafted to set the framework for transport policy and decisions and to guide future decision making<sup>14</sup>. The Document was dated 2010/11-2013/14 but has not been replaced. The Strategy highlights the key importance of active travel and public transport to sustainability in transport stating that the Council envisages promotion of active travel and public transport within the sector of commuter travel where demand flows are concentrated and major reductions to the carbon footprint can be obtained. In addition, central to the Council's strategy for sustainability is the removal of barriers to cycling and walking and the development of an efficient public transport network within urban networks.

In partnership with HITRANS, The Highland Council have developed a series of Active Travel Audits and Masterplans for a number of locations including Fort William (Refreshed in 2019)<sup>15</sup>. Public consultation undertaken during the refresh highlighted:

- a missing link and a desire to see the active travel network extended to connect Annat Industrial Estate and Linnhe Holiday Park along the A830.
- Very narrow footpaths along the A830 through Corpach; and
- A crossing required across the A830 by the Caledonian Canal swing bridge. It was also highlighted that the narrowness of the canal bridge restricted options on this section of the active travel network.

New and improved active travel links were proposed including along the A830 alignment past Linnhe Holiday Park as part of an "Outer Orbital Route" linking through to Fort William and beyond.

## 2.4 Relevant Guidance and Standards

Going forward and throughout the feasibility and design stages of this project, various guidance and standards documents will need to be taken into

<sup>13</sup> [https://hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional\\_Transport\\_Strategy](https://hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional_Transport_Strategy)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/144/local\\_transport\\_strategy](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/144/local_transport_strategy)

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22647/fort\\_william\\_active\\_travel\\_masterplan\\_2019](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22647/fort_william_active_travel_masterplan_2019)

consideration to guide developing designs. Below are a list of some of the key documents which should be considered:

- Cycling by Design (2020 Refresh)
- National Roads Development Guide (2014)
- Designing Streets (2010)
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
- Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions
- Traffic Signs Manual
- Lowland Path Construction Guide (2019), Paths for All
- Local Transport Note 1/20, Cycle Infrastructure Design (2020)
- GG142 – Walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment and review (2019)

## 2.5 Local Planning and Development

A review has been undertaken of The Highland Council's Online Planning Portal and Interactive Mapping service<sup>16</sup>. This search confirmed that while there were several smaller applications granted or pending, these tended to relate more to individual private properties, there were no major planning applications outstanding within the corridor. East of Banavie and east of the direct study area there are currently a number of developments underway at the Blar Mhor site including the development of approximately 200-250 residential units, commercial, hospital and community use, habitat changes and landscaping.

Recently, work has been undertaken on Glenfinnan Community Car Park to provide additional parking by the Monument and Viaduct for 100 cars, ten motorhomes and buses<sup>17</sup>. A new path link and footbridge were also created to link the new car park with the viaduct, preventing visitors from having to walk along the constrained A830.

The Highland Council produced the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) setting out the vision for the whole area and how land can be used by

<sup>16</sup> <https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/12757/construction\\_set\\_to\\_begin\\_on\\_glenfinnan\\_car\\_park\\_to\\_enhance\\_the\\_visitor\\_experience\\_for\\_tourists\\_and\\_harry\\_potter\\_fans](https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/12757/construction_set_to_begin_on_glenfinnan_car_park_to_enhance_the_visitor_experience_for_tourists_and_harry_potter_fans)

developers over the next 20 years<sup>18</sup>. The HwLDP also covers a Proposals Map showing areas within the study area to be of:

- International Importance.
- National Importance.
- Local/Regional Importance.
- Wider Countryside; or
- Hinterland.

Policy 57 in the Plan outlines that development proposals will be assessed based upon the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development and any impact on the feature and its setting and further criteria based upon the specific designations outlined in the list above.

The Plan outlines the vision that by 2030, the West Highland and Islands area will:

- Be better connected.
- Have more efficient public service provision.
- Have more affordable housing.
- Have a more diverse economy.
- Have rationalised but protected its lifeline services.
- Be re-connected with its land and natural resources.
- Have a greater and more diverse age profile of population than currently projected.
- Be a place of outstanding natural and cultural heritage; and
- Have re-established and promoted its unique identity.

The HwLDP is to be read alongside the Area Local Development Plans. The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) was developed and

<sup>18</sup>

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/199/highland-wide\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan)

adopted in 2019 to guide future development for the local area<sup>19</sup>. As part of the future delivery of WestPlan, the Highland Council have published the second iteration of the Fort William 2040 (FW2040) project.

The Highland Council undertook the Fort William Strategic Transport Study in 2017 to establish evidence of transport problems and to consider the appropriate approach to the future development of the transport network in Fort William. The study highlighted a number of key challenges and opportunities including many identified by key stakeholders and members of the local community. The study also specifically identified a need for Active Travel Network Improvements along the A830 corridor through Banavie and Corpach forming the easternmost extent of the study area for this project.

## 2.6 SEPA Flooding Mapping

The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) have a free-to-use and easily accessible mapping data service which shows us the locations in Scotland which are most likely to flood<sup>20</sup>. There are several different types of flooding. Coastal flooding occurs adjacent to coastal areas, and locations where there is a large body of water present. In this case, Loch Eil.

There is also River flooding, which occurs when rivers or lochs retain too much water through rainfall and exceed their banking. On this site, there are many small streams and rivers which feed into Loch Eil and also into Loch Shiel. There is also the Callop River which connects directly between Loch Eil and Loch Shiel.

The final type of flooding is Surface Water. This type of flooding occurs away from rivers, streams and large bodies of water and is predominantly found in low lying locations which are likely to pond.

From the mapping shown below, it is shown that the entirety of Loch Eil is classed as Coastal Flooding, that the larger rivers which connect down off the higher ground into both Loch Eil and Loch Shiel and the Callop River are classed as River Flooding, and that there are significant numbers of small locations which are labelled as Surface Water.

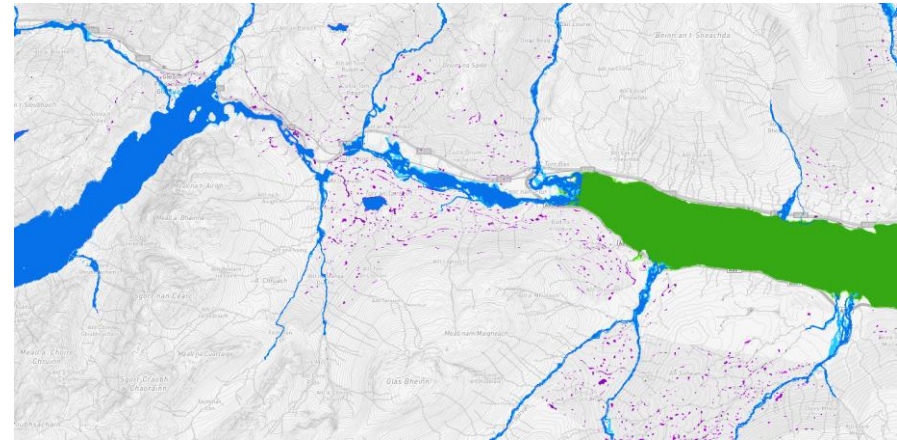


Figure 6 - SEPA Flooding Mapping for Glenfinnan Area

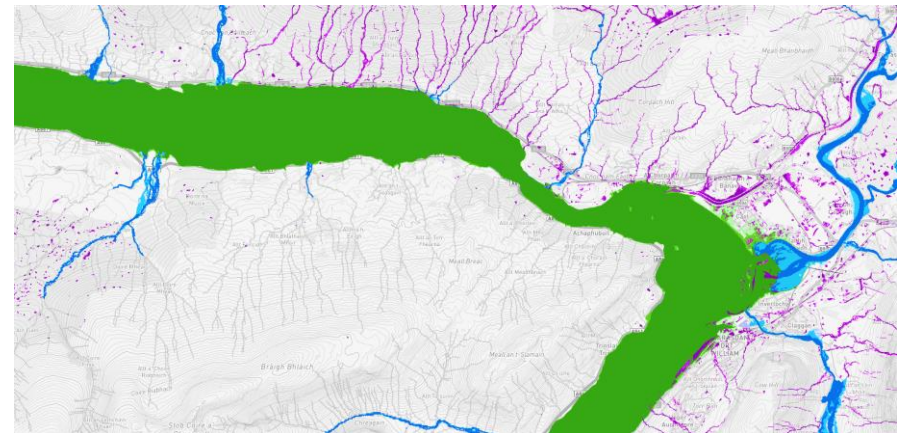


Figure 7 - SEPA Flooding Mapping for Loch Eil to Fort William Area

The level of flooding shown in the mapping above may have significant impact on the route in which the new corridor can take.

<sup>19</sup>

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/582/west\\_highlands\\_and\\_islands\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highlands_and_islands_local_development_plan)

<sup>20</sup> <https://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm>



## 2.7 Forestry Commission Scotland

Forestry Commission Scotland are the government body who are responsible for the management of Scotland's National Forestry Estates which are owned by the Scottish government, rather than privately owned. There are three nationally owned forestry parks which are either nearby to, or connect with the scheme corridor. These three can be seen as points three, four and five on the map below.



**Figure 8 - Forestry Commission Estates near to scheme corridor**

Points three and four are not directly linked into the site corridor but are however seen as key destinations which should be linked to the proposals. Point three is Glen Nevis, which is for walking and hiking. Point four is the North Face Trail, which is for walking, hiking and picnics. Point five is at Glenfinnan and includes both the Dragonfly Trail and the Pinewood Trail, which is for walking.

Maps for each trail can be found in Appendix A.

## 2.8 Accident History

Data from an interrogation of the CrashMap database<sup>21</sup> indicates that between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 there were a total of sixteen injury

accidents recorded within the scheme extents between Lochy Bridge Roundabout and Glenfinnan. Table 3 summarises the accident history.

**Table 3 - Recorded accidents over study area**

Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
2016	0	0	3	3
2017	0	1	4	5
2018	0	0	3	3
2019	2	1	2	5
2020	0	0	0	0
Total	2	2	12	16

Through an interrogation of the data it has been determined that two of the above accidents involved pedal cycles, with one being the fatal collision which took place in 2019 involved a cyclist who came into contact with an HGV in Banavie. One accident involved a pedestrian and one involving a child. All of those involving a cyclist and pedestrians occurred within the Banavie and Corpach areas of the scheme extents.

There were also two injury accidents which involved motorcycles. Both of these occurred between the Craigagl Bridge and Glenfinnan.

It has been noticed that the majority of these accidents have taken place during the peak summer tourist months. No accidents have been recorded over the past five complete years between 27<sup>th</sup> October and 20<sup>th</sup> March. Thirteen of these accidents occurred between May and September.

Other interrogation of the data indicates a high number of multiple-vehicle collisions. Four of the above accidents were single-vehicle accidents, eight were two-vehicle collisions, three were three-vehicle collisions and one involved four or more vehicles.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/>

## 2.9 Traffic Flow

Data from the Department for Transport's Road Traffic Statistics system<sup>22</sup> shows Annual Average Daily Traffic flows (AADT). Table 4 below summarises estimated data from the system for the last five complete years, broken down to vehicle classifications. The estimates are based on a manual count undertaken at Kinlocheil in 2008.

**Table 4 - Estimated recorded traffic flows on A830 by DfT**

Year	Two wheels	Cars	Bus/Coach	LGV	HGV	Total
2016	27	1421	32	525	163	2168
2017	28	1420	33	559	169	2209
2018	29	1415	32	586	172	2233
2019	29	1427	31	584	171	2241
2020	18	959	19	464	144	1602

The data shows that, on average, the traffic flows have remained the same level year on year, though significantly dropped in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The percentage of Heavy-Goods Vehicles (HGV) is approximately 7.5% of all vehicles, and this has remained at the same level for the past five years.

## 2.10 Lochaber Geopark

Lochaber Geopark is one of three designated Geoparks in Scotland designated for having outstanding geological heritage and a strategy to promote that heritage for the benefit of the local community<sup>23</sup>. The presence of the geopark within the study area creates an additional opportunity to embrace and highlight these special features along proposed routes.

<sup>22</sup> <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/#6/55.254/-6.053/basemap-regions-countpoints>

<sup>23</sup> <https://lochabergeopark.org.uk/>

### 3. Preliminary Corridor Identification

The preliminary corridors were identified through the desktop study and site reviews. Project staff reviewed site conditions in May 2021 to identify opportunities, challenges and potential corridors for inclusion.

The two initial key route corridors included utilisation of the A830 trunk road corridor north of Loch Eil, or alternatively the A861 south of Loch Eil including the use of the Camusnagaul Ferry.

The preliminary route corridors have been split into seven sections from west to east, starting and ending at specific landmarks and encompassing several miles at a time, or a settlement.

Each individual section has been laid out in the following pages to advise on the possible positive opportunities which fall within each section boundary and also indicated potential challenges to the introduction of any new facility which could be installed.

The seven sections with their starting and ending points are as follows.

- **Section 1** – The western Gateway for Glenfinnan on the A830 to the NTS Glenfinnan Visitor Centre.
- **Section 2** – From the NTS Glenfinnan Visitor Centre to the Callop Railway Bridge
- **Section 3** – From the Callop Railway Bridge to the A830 junction with the A861.
- **Section 4** – From the A830 junction with the A861 to Locheilside Train Station
- **Section 5** – From Locheilside Train Station to Loch Eil Outward Bound Train Station.
- **Section 6** – From Loch Eil Outward Bound Train Station to The A830 junction with the A82 at Lochy Bridge Roundabout.
- **Section 7** – The A861 Route between its junction with the A830 Trunk Road and the settlement of Camusnagaul.



3.1 Site Review – Section 1

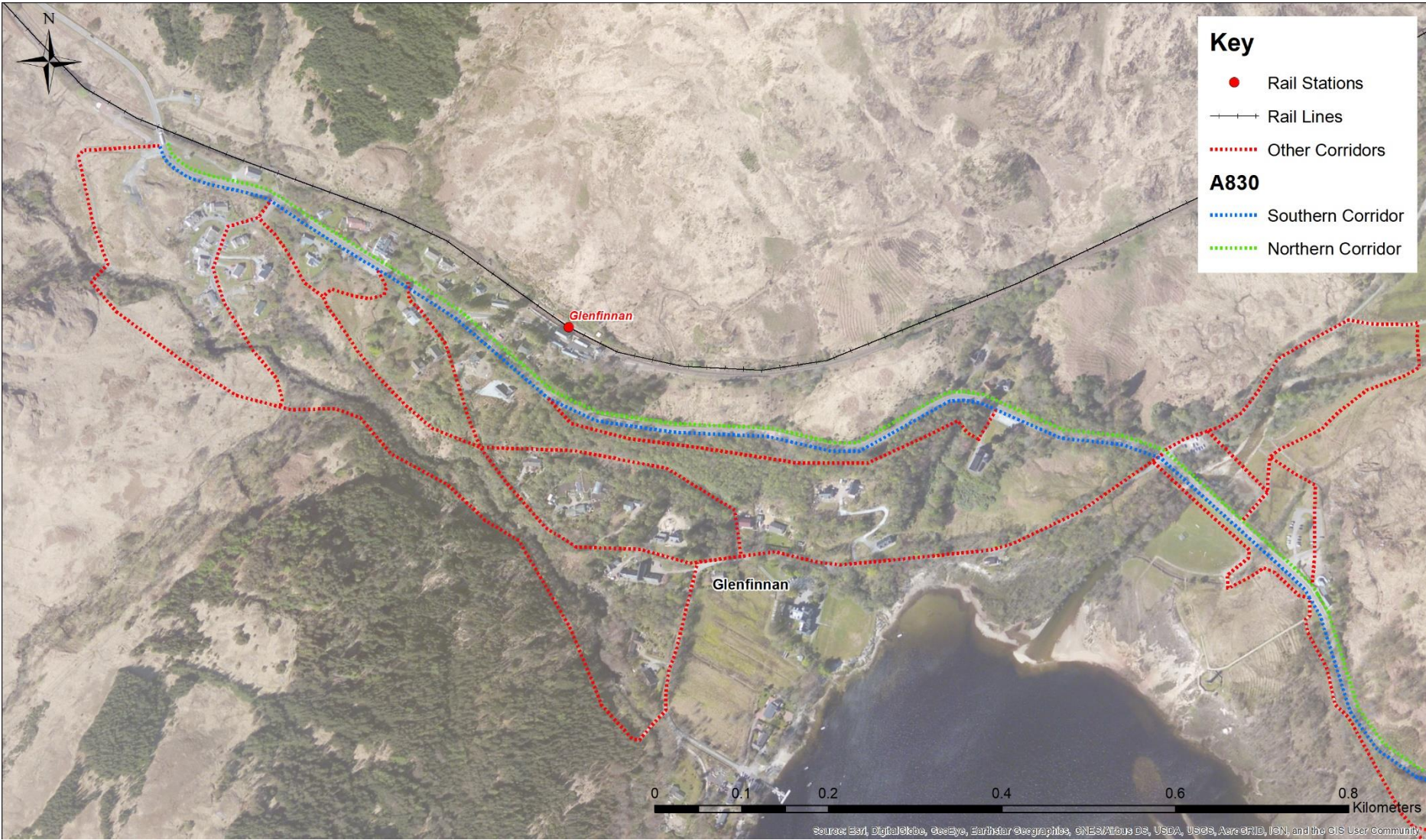


Figure 9 - Site Review - Section 1



**Table 5 - Section 1 Summary**

Section 1	Glenfinnan: Gateway to Monument and Visitor Centre
<b>General Description</b>	The A830 in this section begins at the western gateway of Glenfinnan and runs through the Glenfinnan bypass to the eastern band beyond the Glenfinnan Visitor Centre.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great support for improvements from local communities and key stakeholders</li> <li>Several potential route corridors to the south of the A830 through Glenfinnan Village</li> <li>Former road alignment through woodland south of A830 still available in places</li> <li>New road constructed along Glenaladale Estate to Slatlach River Hydro Scheme to the west.</li> <li>New footbridge over River Finnan by the new Community Car Park</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very busy main road and crossing between the Monument and Visitor Centre</li> <li>Steep gradients and challenging local geography</li> <li>River Finnan major constraint and existing A830 bridge and surrounding embankment currently unsuitable for proposed route</li> <li>Reluctance from local residents to utilise the "Backtrack"</li> <li>Flooding concerns along Lochside and Games Field.</li> </ul>

**Table 5 Section 1 Photographs**

A830 by NTS Visitor Centre



Glenfinnan Rail Station



A830 looking north west from St. Mary and St. Finnan Church



Slatlach Road and temporary parking restrictions from A830



A830 Glenfinnan looking east from Slatlach Road



A830 looking east towards Glenfinnan from the west gateway to the village



3.2 Site Review – Section 2

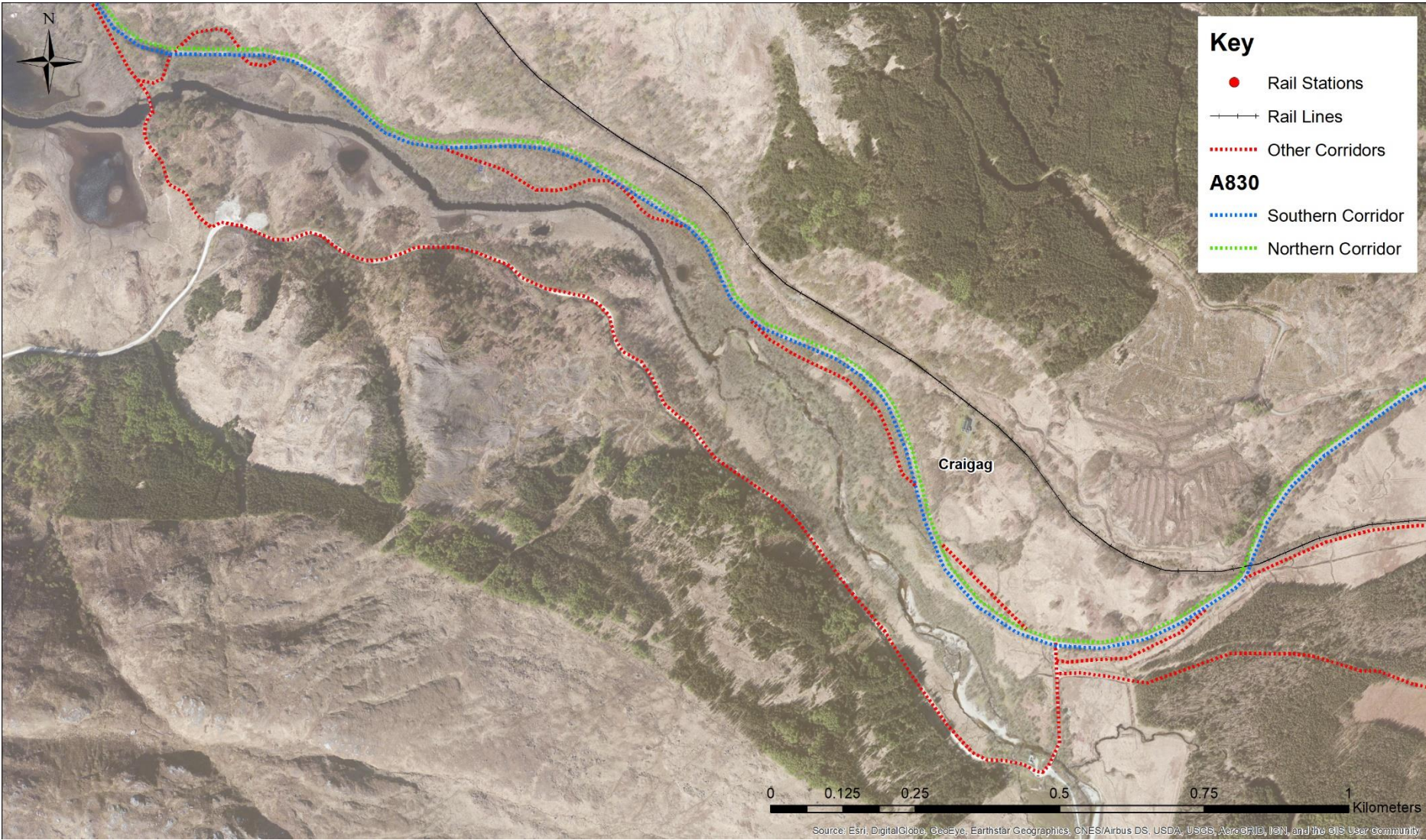


Figure 10 - Site Review - Section 2



**Table 6 - Section 2 Summary**

Section 2	Callop: Visitor Centre to Callop Rail Bridge
<b>General Description</b>	The A830 in this section comprises of a number of long wide bends with several laybys, culminating in the narrow pass underneath Callop Railway Bridge.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several locations of old A830 road which could be utilised, mostly on south of carriageway.</li> <li>Connection through old quarry road.</li> <li>Connect into existing infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A830 is blasted through rock in sections, therefore area would require rock cutting or to be bypassed.</li> <li>Callop River runs offset, but adjacent to Trunk Road.</li> <li>Pinch point at Callop Railway Bridge.</li> <li>Marshland between River Callop walkway and the forestry track to Polloch.</li> </ul>

**Table 6 Section 2 Photographs**

River Callop walkway and footbridge



Old A830 road connecting into the River Callop Walkway, leading towards Glenfinnan Visitor Centre



A830 looking west through area cut through rock



Old road surface to south of Trunk Road.



Eastern Loch Shiel Road



A830 Callop (Craigag) Rail Bridge



3.3 Site Review – Section 3

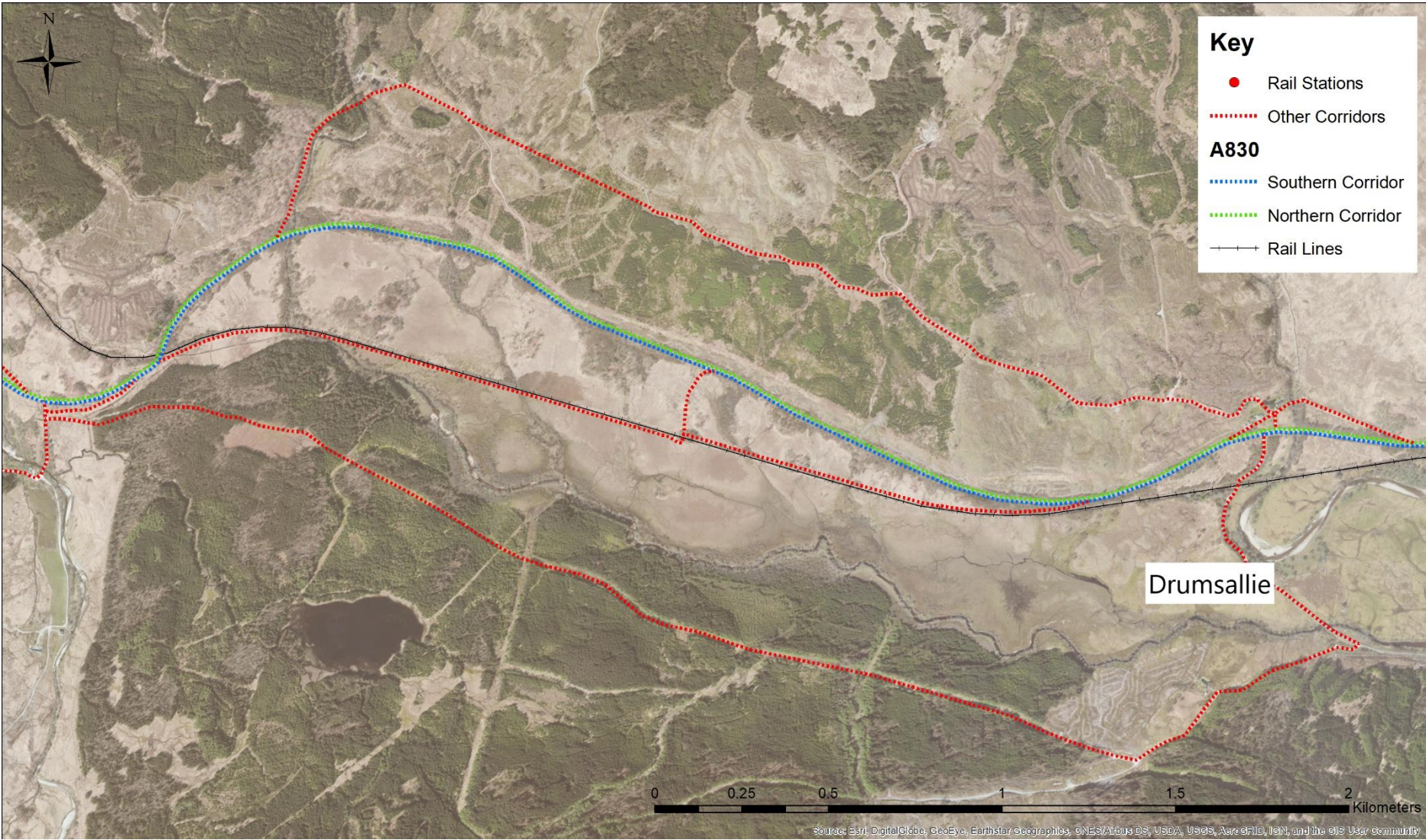


Figure 11 - Site Review - Section 3



Table 7 - Section 3 Summary

Section 3	Drumsaille: Callop Rail Bridge to A861
General Description	The A830 in this section connects between the Callop Railway Bridge pinch point and the A830 junction with the A861.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unsealed surface from Callop Railway Bridge adjacent to the railway, connecting into A861.</li><li>• Old carriageway with bridge over Dubh Lighe and connection into Fassfern Estate &amp; Bothy.</li><li>• Unsealed surface over north of A830.</li></ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dubh Lighe bridge would require inspection and probable stabilisation works to be made safe.</li><li>• Marshland between A830 and over railway line.</li><li>• Callop Railway Bridge pinch point.</li><li>• Steepness of unsealed surface to the north of A830.</li></ul>

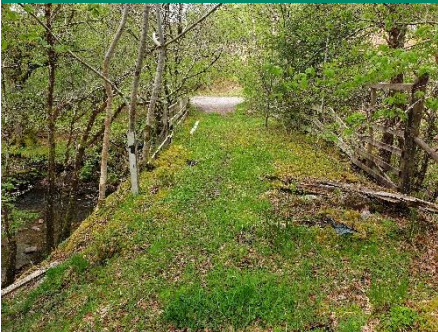
Table 7 Section 3 Photographs



A830 looking westwards to Callop (Craigag) Rail Bridge pinch point



A830 road bridge over Dubh Lighe



Dubh Lighe bridge structure around 40m north of A830



Looking westwards over marshland south of railway line



Looking south from A830 to old bridge over railway line.



Coille Druim na Saille hill track and locked gate (by Dubh Lighe)



3.4 Site Review – Section 4



Figure 12 - Site Review - Section 4



**Table 8 - Section 4 Summary**

Section 4	Locheilside West: A861 to Locheilside Station
<b>General Description</b>	The A830 in this section covers from its junction with the A861 in a generally straight fashion to Locheilside Train Station.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old road with bridge on the north side of A830, opposite A861 junction and connection into path to Strathan. Sealed surface for majority of length.</li> <li>• Unused sections of old carriageway to north of Trunk Road, can connect into Kinlocheil Outdoor Centre.</li> <li>• Old carriageway sections to south of Trunk Road could be used between Kinlocheil and Locheilside Train Station.</li> <li>• Connect rural dwellings with Kinlocheil and Locheilside train station.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dwellings to the north of old carriageway and bridge with connection to path to Strathan.</li> <li>• Connecting into Kinlocheil and Locheilside station.</li> <li>• Upgrading of old road on south side of Trunk road.</li> <li>• Possible safe crossing point over Trunk Road.</li> </ul>

**Table 1 Section 4 Photographs**

Old road and bridge opposite A861 junction, looking westwards.

Old road to north, looking east, with link on left to Strathan.



Unused section of old road which could be utilised.

A830 at Kinlocheil, looking eastwards.



Old road between Kinlocheil and Locheilside station.

A830 at Locheilside station, looking westwards.



3.5 Site Review – Section 5

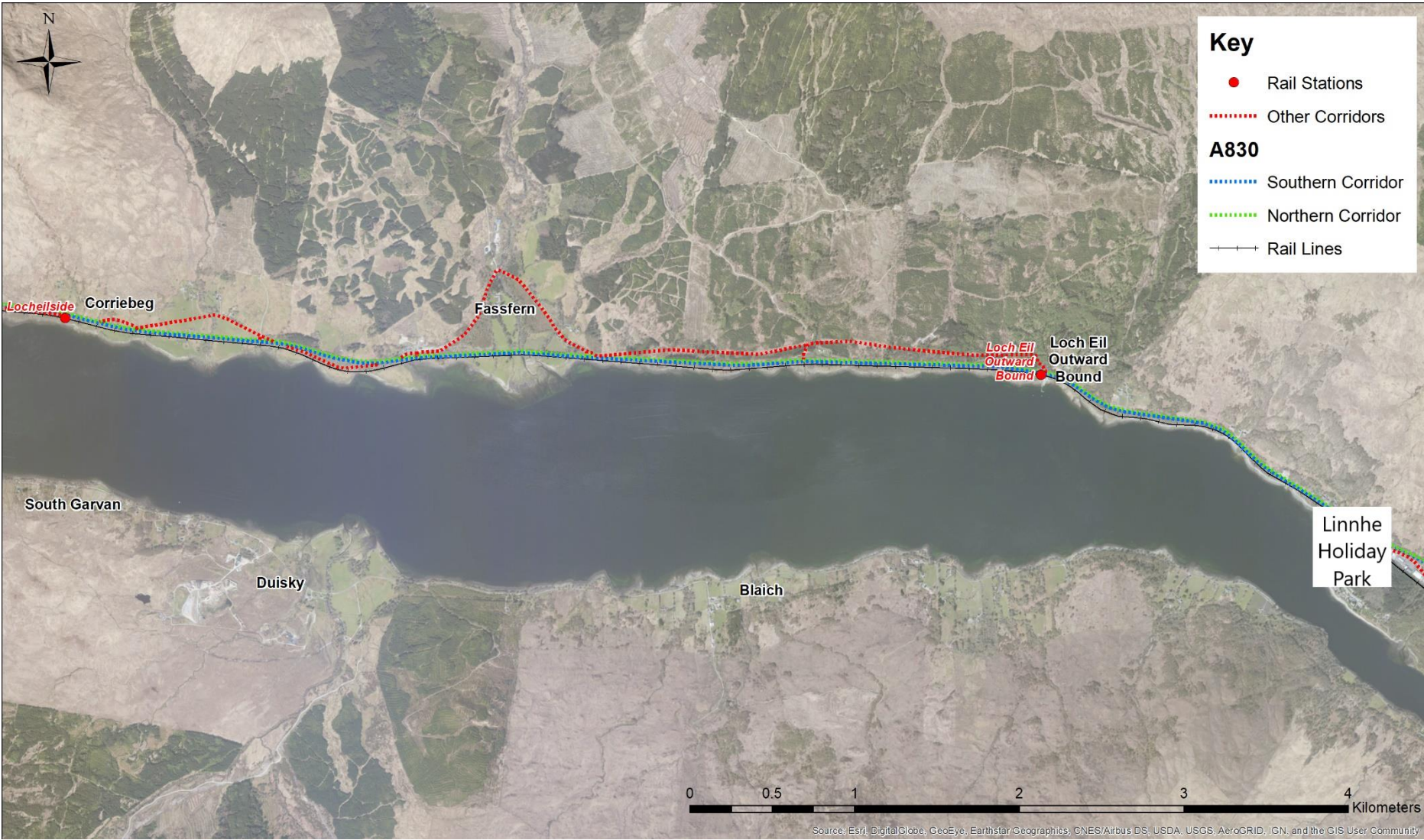


Figure 13 - Site Review - Section 5



Table 9 - Section 5 Summary

Section 5	Locheilside East: Locheilside Station to Linnhe Holiday Park via Fassfern
General Description	The A830 in this section covers between both Locheilside train station and Linnhe Holiday Park, including Loch Eil Outward Bound train station, and also comprises the settlements of Corriebeg, Drumbeg, Fassfern and Braeside.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide Non-motorised access to both rural train stations.</li><li>• Provide Non-Motorised access to Fassfern Core Paths.</li><li>• Connect rural settlements of Corriebeg, Drumbeg and Fassfern.</li><li>• Significant sections of old carriageway construction and bridges to the north of the Trunk Road at all three settlements. Also present between Loch Eil Outward Bound station and Braeside on south side of the carriageway.</li></ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cottages adjacent to A830 carriageway on both north and south.</li><li>• Providing safe crossing points over the A830 Trunk Road.</li><li>• Sections adjacent to A830 are cut through rock on both sides, therefore much-reduced width available over these sections unless new facility is offset from the Trunk Road.</li><li>• Existing laybys are present on both eastbound and westbound lanes.</li><li>• Connecting into both train stations as they are lower than the Trunk Road Carriageway.</li></ul>

Table 9 Section 5 Photographs



Locheilside Station, showing difference in level to Trunk Road



Junction to Fassfern, showing minimal verge width



Old road and bridge at Drumbeg, looking westwards.



Old road and bridge at Fassfern, looking eastwards.



Old road between Loch Eil Outward Bound Train station and Braeside.



A830 at Braeside, looking westwards.



3.6 Site Review – Section 6



Figure 14 - Site Review - Section 6



Table 10 - Section 6 Summary

Section 6	Corpach: Linnhe Holiday Park to Banavie
General Description	The A830 for the majority of this section is an urban single carriageway, passing through the settlements of Corpach and Banavie before linking into Fort William at Lochy Bridge Roundabout.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Completing footway link between Linnhe Holiday Park and Annat Point Industrial Estate.</li><li>Existing footway infrastructure along both sides of the carriageway.</li><li>Connect into NCN78 and Great Glen Way.</li></ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Regulation order required to change existing infrastructure into shared-use facilities.</li><li>Existing infrastructure requiring upgrading.</li><li>Permanent reduced-width space at Banavie Swing Bridge.</li></ul>

Table 10 Section 6 Photographs



A830 junction into Linnhe Holiday Park

A830 looking eastwards, outside BSW Timber Mill



A830 looking westwards through Corpach, showing existing footway

A830 looking westwards, showing existing infrastructure.



A830 Banavie Swing Bridge and footways

A830 junction with B8006 Kilmallie Road

### 3.7 Site Review – A861

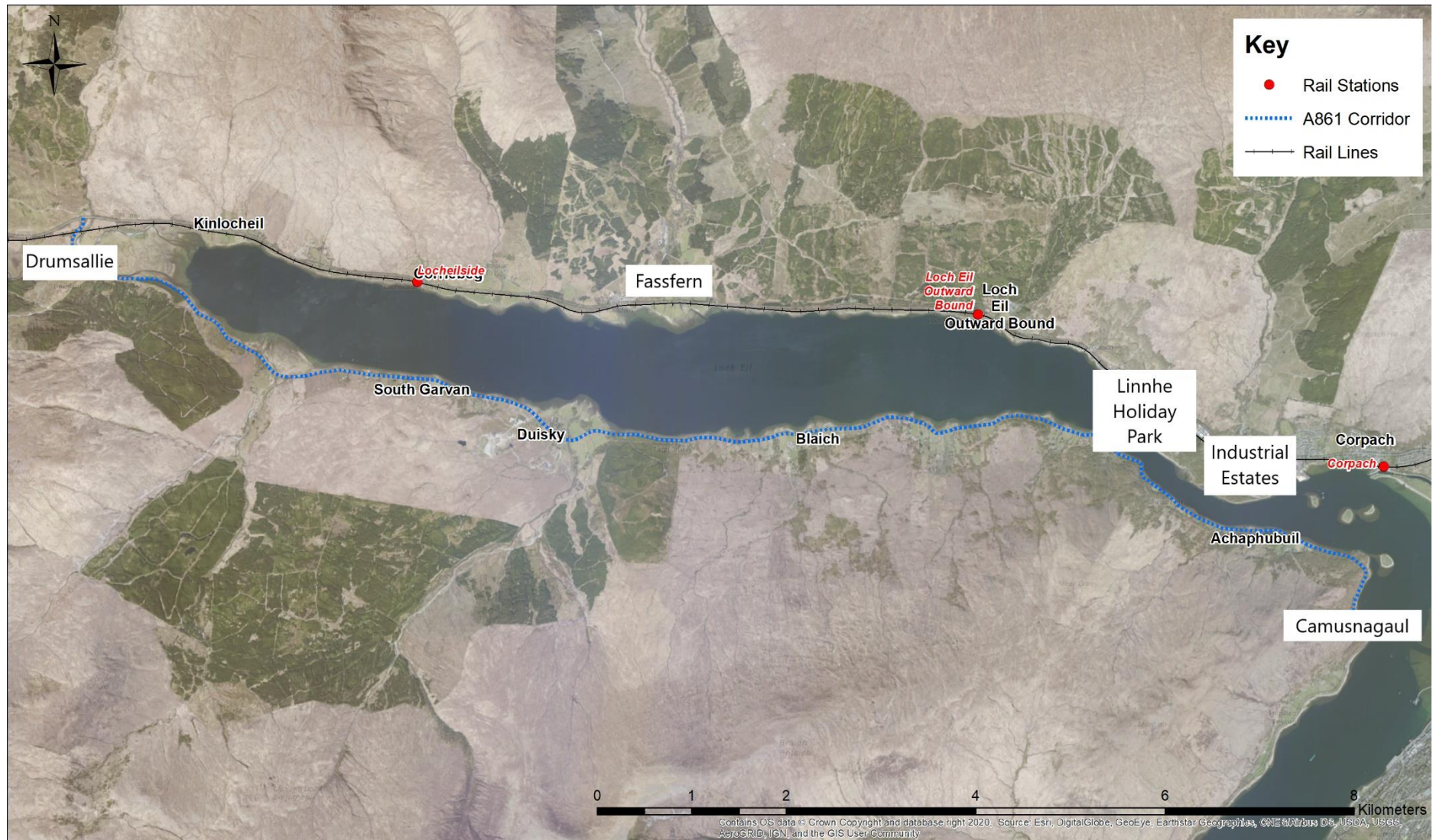


Figure 15 - Site Review - A861



**Table 11 - A861 Summary**

Section 7	A861/A830 Junction to Camusnagaul
<b>General Description</b>	The A861 is a mainly rural single-track road with passing places which connects between its junction with the A830 to Camusnagaul, where there is a ferry to Fort William.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Off Trunk Road location on south side of Loch Eil.</li> <li>Very minimal existing traffic.</li> <li>No new infrastructure required</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not connect any of the rural communities on the north side of Loch Eil.</li> <li>Existing quarry and recycling centre indicated majority of traffic would be goods vehicles.</li> <li>Depending on usage of route, the Camusnagaul-Fort William ferry service may require to be increased.</li> <li>Pinch point passing underneath railway bridge near to A861/A830 junction.</li> </ul>

**Table 11 A861 Photographs**

A861 (on right) junction with A830 Trunk Road



Pinch point underneath railway bridge by Drumsaille



A861 looking westwards at entrance to recycling centre.



A861 looking eastwards at Achaphubuil settlement



Existing National Cycle Network signage at Camusnagaul Ferry.



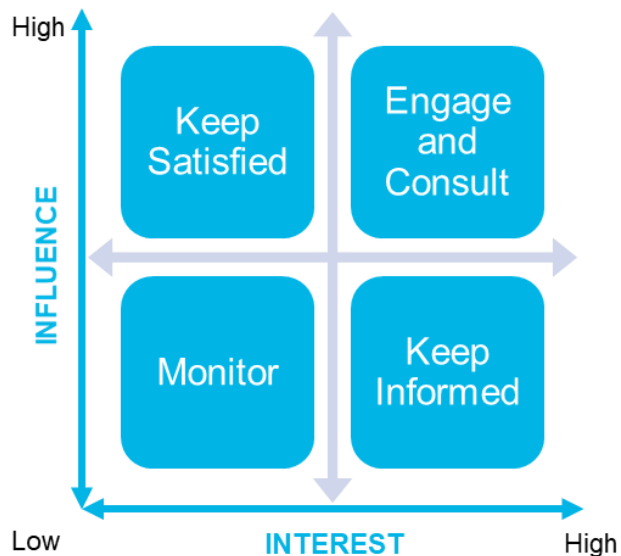
A861 looking westwards from Camusnagaul.

## 4. Engagement and Consultation

There have been long held aspirations for an Active Travel “Route to the Isles” from local communities, visitors and key stakeholders. Feedback has been received from various consultation and engagement activities and studies in recent years.

Project staff held a meeting with Sustrans Network Team Officers on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 who indicated that such a route had been on the agenda in previous years and high-level alignments had been considered prior to changes in Sustrans organisational structure and funding frameworks. The proposed alignment from Fort William to Glenfinnan formed part of these considerations but were not continued further due to other commitments at the time.

### 4.1 Stakeholder Mapping



**Figure 16 - Engagement Flowchart (extract from Sustrans Stakeholder Mapping Template)**

A detailed stakeholder mapping exercise was undertaken utilising Sustrans Stakeholder Mapping Template. This template was used to record a wide range of key stakeholders to the project, how much interest and influence specific stakeholders may have and how best to engage those stakeholders going forward (Figure 16 - Engagement Flowchart (extract from Sustrans Stakeholder Mapping Template)).

A stakeholder register was developed including key stakeholders and groups such as:

- HITRANS and Key Delivery Partners.
- Sustrans.
- Local Community Groups.
- Local Businesses.
- Local Residents, Landowners and Land Managers.
- Community Councils.
- Local Councillors.
- Local Council Officers and other Key Service Providers.
- Local Transport Providers and Operators; and
- National Transport Providers and Operators.

### 4.2 Engagement to Date

Communications were sent to all key stakeholders throughout May and June 2021 informing them about the project, seeking early feedback and inviting them to upcoming engagement events. Weekly meetings were undertaken during the project lifespan with the project steering team providing great insights from local communities and local community groups.

AECOM also hosted virtual workshop presentation sessions summarising the project, work done to date and the next steps with:

- Glenfinnan Community Council – Wednesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June; and
- Kilmallie Community Council – Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of June.

4.3 Political Support

In October 2020, the project steering group identified a number of key stakeholders who provided letters of support for the proposed Active Travel Route and an associated Places for Everyone Application. Letters of support were received from:

- The Highland Council.
- Lochaber Chamber of Commerce.
- Glenfinnan Community Council.
- Kilmallie Community Council.
- Fort William Inverlochy and Torlundy Community Council.
- National Trust for Scotland (Glenfinnan Monument and Visitor Centre); and
- Scotrail.

The various letters of support highlighted many of the difficulties and the current lack of safe active travel access throughout the study area and how dedicated active travel links would be of great value to people who live, work or visit the area. Greater details and the full letters of can be found in Appendix B of this report.

4.4 Proposed Community Engagement Strategy

Engagement with local communities and key stakeholders will be an instrumental aspect of this project as it continues to progress and develop through the Places for Everyone Design Stages. This will ensure that local issues and desires are understood and that proposals are developed which meet the needs of local communities.

This collaborative process should continue through each individual design stage and throughout the entire project lifecycle as shown in Figure 17. As the project continues to develop through the subsequent design stages a comprehensive consultation and engagement strategy will be developed with key partners. Figure 17 - Ongoing Collaborative Design Process,Error! Reference source not found. shows the proposed Community Engagement Strategy which will be further developed during the start of the next project stage.

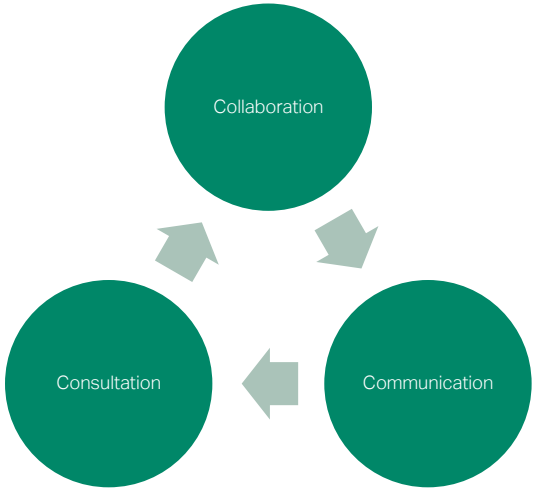


Figure 17 - Ongoing Collaborative Design Process

Table 12 - Proposed Engagement Strategy

Local Communities and Community Groups	Key Stakeholders, Service Providers and Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online Engagement and Information Hub / Dedicated Website</li><li>• Local Drop-In Sessions and Consultation Events</li><li>• Online and Paper Surveys</li><li>• Place Standard Tool Workshop</li><li>• Digital and Print Promotion of Engagement Activities</li><li>• “Street Trial” of relevant interventions</li><li>• Schools Workshops</li><li>• Identification of Local Community Groups who can take ownership of project elements.</li><li>• Continued engagement throughout design stages and implementation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local Drop-In Sessions and Consultation Events</li><li>• Key Stakeholder Workshops / Briefing Sessions</li><li>• Focus Group Sessions</li><li>• Online and Paper Surveys</li><li>• Elected Member Workshops</li><li>• Creation of Project Steering Group</li><li>• Consultation with Statutory Bodies and Service Providers</li><li>• Securing Required Permissions and Obligations</li><li>• Continued engagement throughout design stages and implementation</li></ul>

## 5. Preliminary Corridor Options Appraisal

Route corridor options were discussed with the project steering group at regular meetings to identify potential corridors for further investigation. During this stage of the design development, high-level appraisals have been undertaken on the proposed options based upon Cycling by Design Core Design Principles.

A comprehensive corridor options appraisal and identification of the preferred design is to be completed during the further detailed design stages of this project and incorporating feedback from key stakeholder and local community consultation. This would include feedback from local access panels and local transport providers. This appraisal would also consider further developed designs and the assessment of potential impacts from topographical and ecological surveys, landownership and utilities investigations and an assessment of potential impacts on all route users.

Cycling by Design (Revision 2, July 2020) lists five Core Design Principles<sup>24</sup> which summarise desirable requirements for cycling infrastructure. All designers of cycle infrastructure should aim to satisfy the following principles.

- **Safety:** Design should minimise the potential for actual and perceived accident risk. Perceived risk is a key barrier to cycle use and users should feel safe as well as be safe. It is important to provide consistency of design and avoid ambiguity.
- **Coherence:** Cycling infrastructure should form a coherent network which links origins and destinations. Coherence is about giving people the opportunity to access places by bicycle and to integrate cycling with other modes of travel. Routes should be continuous from an origin to a destination, easy to navigate and of a consistently high quality.
- **Directness:** Cyclists should be offered as direct a route as possible based on existing and latent trip desire lines, minimising detours and delays. It should be recognised that directness has both geographical and time elements, and delays at junctions and crossings as well as physical detours will affect use.
- **Comfort:** Non-sports cyclists prefer sheltered, smooth, uninterrupted, well-maintained surfaces with gentle gradients. Routes should minimise the mental

and physical stress required. Routes should meet surface width, quality and gradient standards and be convenient, avoiding complex manoeuvres.

- **Attractiveness:** The perception of a route is important, particularly in attracting new users. Infrastructure should be designed in harmony with its surroundings in such a way that the whole experience makes cycling an attractive option. A route should complement and where possible, enhance the area through which it passes. The treatment of sensitive issues including lighting, personal security, aesthetics, environmental quality and noise are important considerations.

In addition to the above Core Design Principles, the design team have assessed:

- **Socio-Economic Impact:** Whether there is considered to be a net benefit or detriment to local businesses.
- **Adaptability / Future Proofing:** Whether proposals could be adapted to meet the future demands of the network and potential future growth in walking and cycling demand and wider networks.
- **Accessibility:** Whether the proposals cater for the needs of all users, particularly any users with any disabilities.

The criteria above is then ranked between +3 and -3, where +3 is considered to have the greatest potential benefits and -3 the greatest potential detriment.

This Preliminary Route Corridor Options Appraisal has been undertaken for a number of locations to help identify general route corridors which will be taken forward for further development.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/48026/cycling-by-design-july-2020.pdf>



## 5.1 Preliminary Corridor Appraisal – Loch Eil

An appraisal has been undertaken of key route options and infrastructure types utilising the following:

1. **A830** - New traffic-free links alongside the A830 and to the north of Loch Eil; and
2. **A861** - Utilising the existing A861 road on the southern shore of Loch Eil and the Fort William - Camusnagaul Ferry similar to the existing NCN Route 78.

The two different route corridors and provision types shown within the preliminary corridor options appraisal were agreed with the project steering group.



**Figure 18 - Preliminary Route Corridor Options Appraisal**

The two different route corridors and provision types shown within the preliminary corridor options appraisal were agreed with the project steering group.

Figure 18 above shows the preliminary corridor appraisal based upon the criteria outlined in the previous pages. The Figure clearly shows that based upon the Core Design Criteria, the A830 corridor scores much higher in all categories. This is not only just due to the route corridors themselves, but the different types of

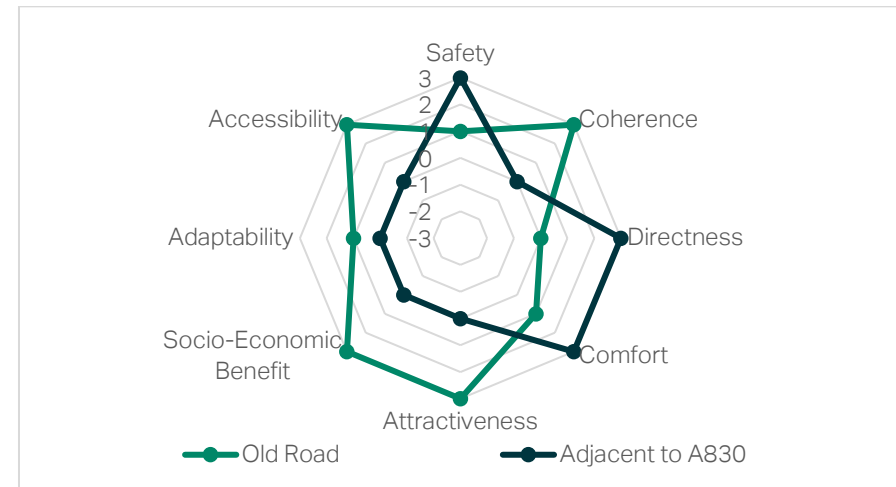
infrastructure provision proposed following agreement with the project steering group.

It is therefore recommended that the wider A830 corridor is taken forward as the preferred corridor option within the further corridor option development.

## 5.2 Preliminary Corridor Appraisal – Fassfern

At the settlement of Fassfern, which is off the Trunk Road network, there are two options which have been appraised:

1. Connecting into Fassfern, utilising the old single-track road; and
2. Bypassing Fassfern and remaining adjacent to the A830 Trunk Road.



**Figure 19 - Preliminary Corridor Appraisal - Fassfern**

Figure 19 above shows that there are both pros and cons to connecting into Fassfern. Based on the criteria, staying on the mainline adjacent to the A830 Trunk Road would be safer due to the need to cross the carriageway near to both junctions, it is also more direct and better for comfort as taking the non-motorised users (NMU's) off the mainline creates a diversion and is also an uphill in both directions, which is less comfortable for all users.

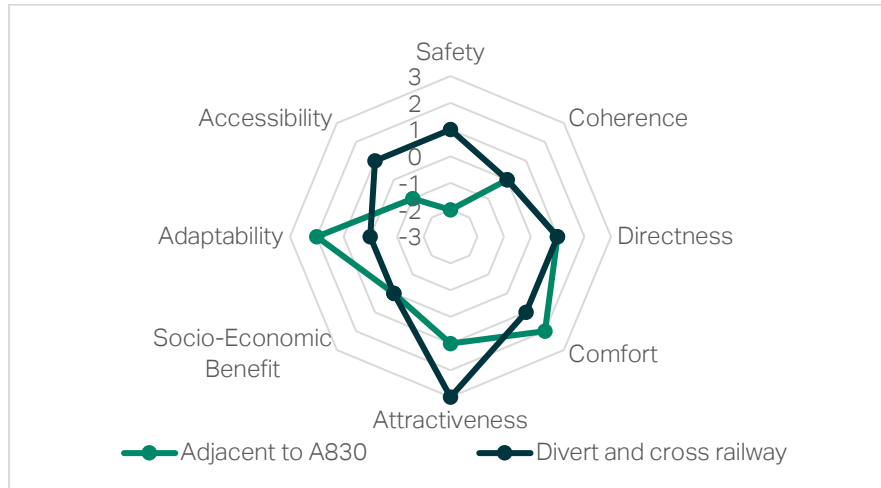
However, connecting into Fassfern is more attractive and has a high socio-economic rating as this would connect into the largest settlement between

Corpach and Glenfinnan and can provide a welcome boost to the local area as it would provide a direct link to Locheilside Station.

### 5.3 Preliminary Corridor Appraisal – Drumsaille South

At the Drumsaille South area, two options were appraised to find a suitable solution:

1. Remaining adjacent to the A830 Trunk Road and passing underneath Callop Railway Bridge.
2. Diverting off the mainline, crossing the railway line and connecting back into the Trunk Road on the south side of Callop Railway Bridge.



**Figure 20 - Preliminary Corridor Appraisal - Drumsaille South**

Figure 20 above shows both pros and cons for both options. The main obstacle in both options is the Safety aspect. This is due to the Callop Railway Bridge, which Option 1 would be required to pass underneath is a known accident blackspot, and is also a narrow feature. The main safety issue for Option 2 however, is the existing flood issues as the area in which it is expected to traverse is designated as a floodplain.

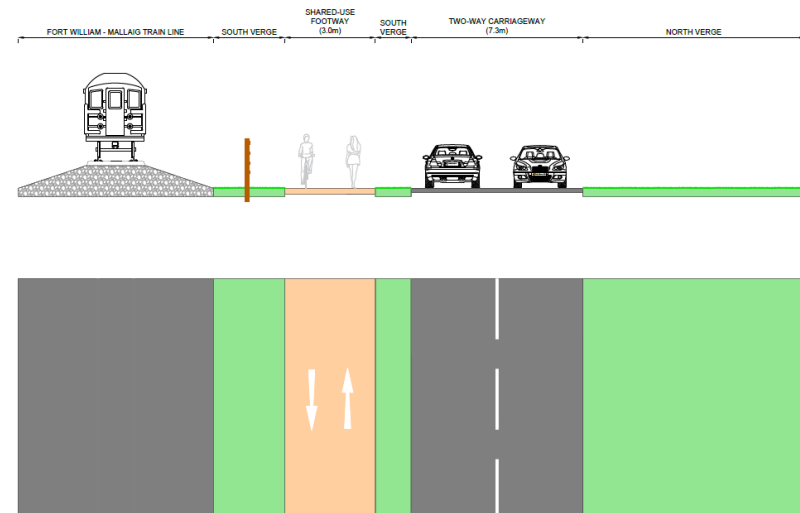
## 6. Option Development

### 6.1 Proposed Options

There are three plans which are proposed.

3. Option 1 – Install a new corridor which is purely to the north of the A830 Trunk Road, with connections into the settlements to the north of the Trunk Road.
4. Option 2 – Install a new corridor which is purely to the South of the A830 Trunk Road, this will bypass and not connect into any of the settlements situated to the north of the Trunk Road, but will diverge from the A830 at Drumsaille South
5. Option 3 – Install a new corridor which is primarily on the south side of the A830 Trunk Road, but will cross the Trunk Road to connect into the settlements situated to the north, utilising the existing single-track road through each settlement.

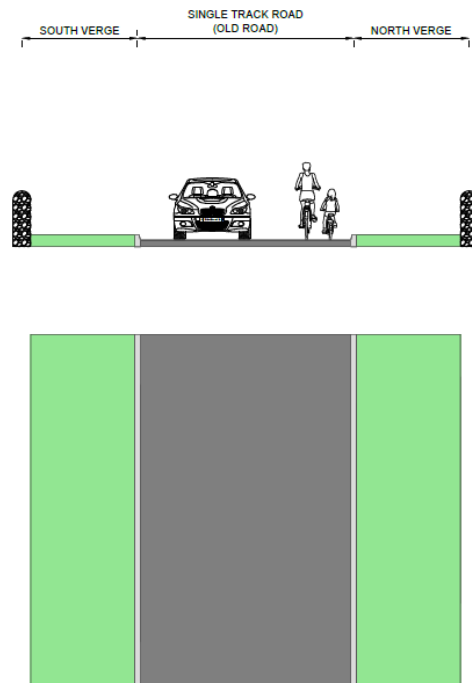
#### 6.1.1 Proposed Typical Cross Sections



**Figure 21 - Typical Cross-section of Shared-use footway between carriageway and rail track**

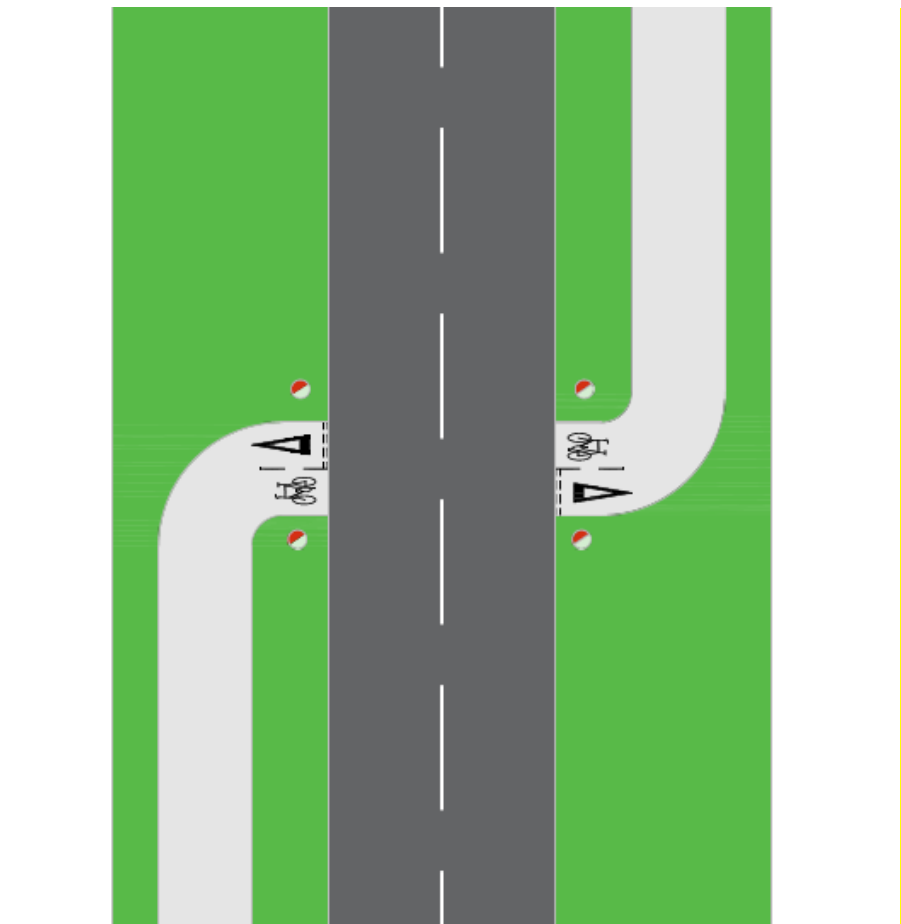
The cross-section shown opposite indicates a typical view of the proposed corridor, located between the existing two-way rural single carriageway A830 Trunk Road, and the Fort William – Mallaig railway line. The shared-use path will be approximately 1.0 lateral metres away from the trunk road edge, and will be separated from the railway line by a fenceline.





**Figure 22 - Typical Cross-section of Shared-use single-track road**

The cross-section shown above indicates a typical view of the existing old road which is proposed to be used in options 1 and 3. This arrangement of non-motorised users and traffic being permitted side by side is allowable due to the relatively small flows which are expected on this road, primarily locals to the settlements and others wishing to access core paths.



**Figure 23 - Plan view of typical uncontrolled cycle crossing over rural road**

The plan view shown above shows a typical uncontrolled crossing over a major road. This is taken from Cycling by Design guidance<sup>25</sup>. Each crossing point will be spaced away from a junction mouth, have adequate signage advising motorists that there are non-motorised users crossing ahead, and that the crossing point be delineated by admiral bollards to make clear to motorists where the crossing point is located. There should be signage on the shared-use facility advising cyclists to

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/48026/cycling-by-design-july-2020.pdf>

dismount for the crossing, and that all users crossing should look both ways before crossing.

6.1.2 Option 1 Plan

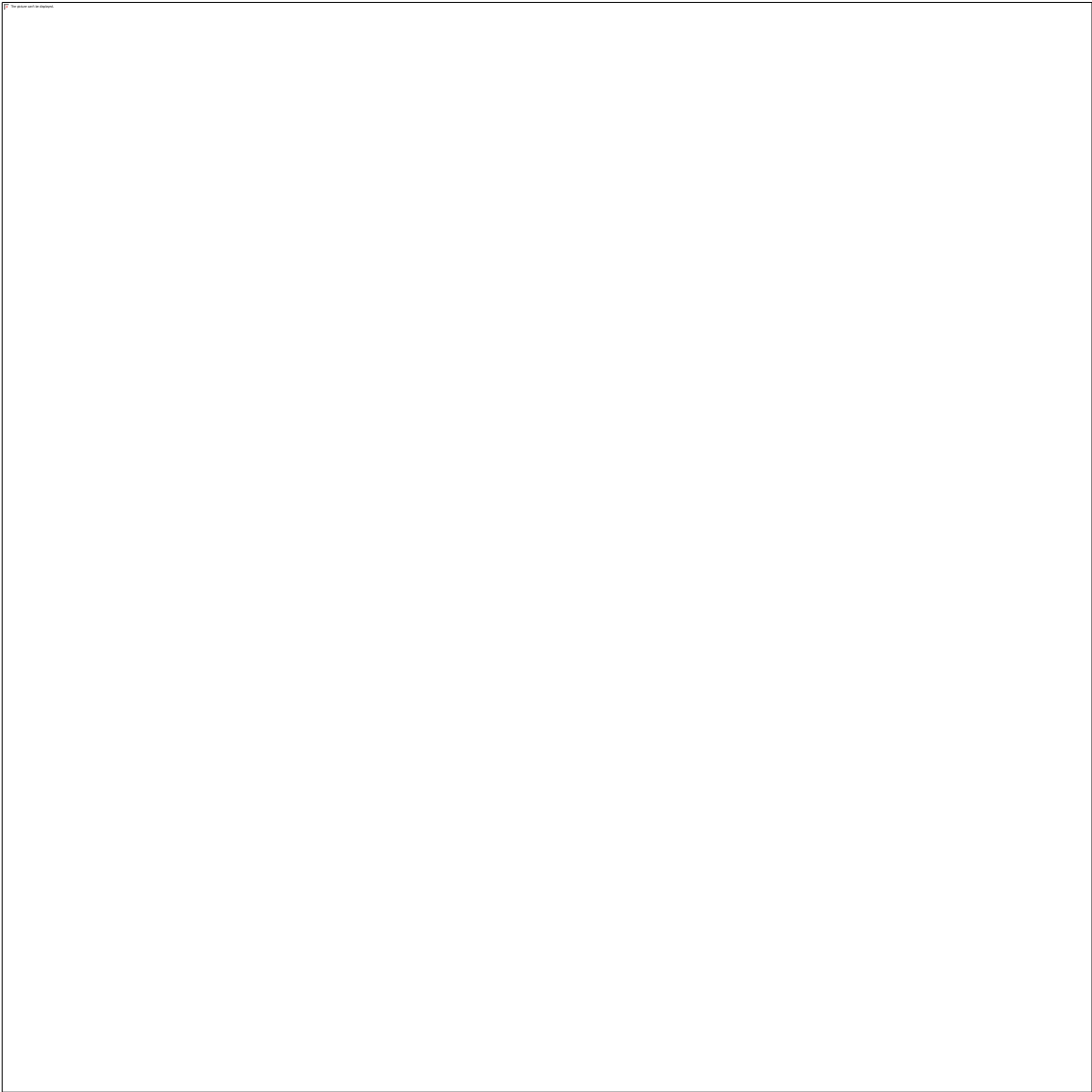


Figure 24 - Option 1 Plan



6.1.3 Option 2 Plan

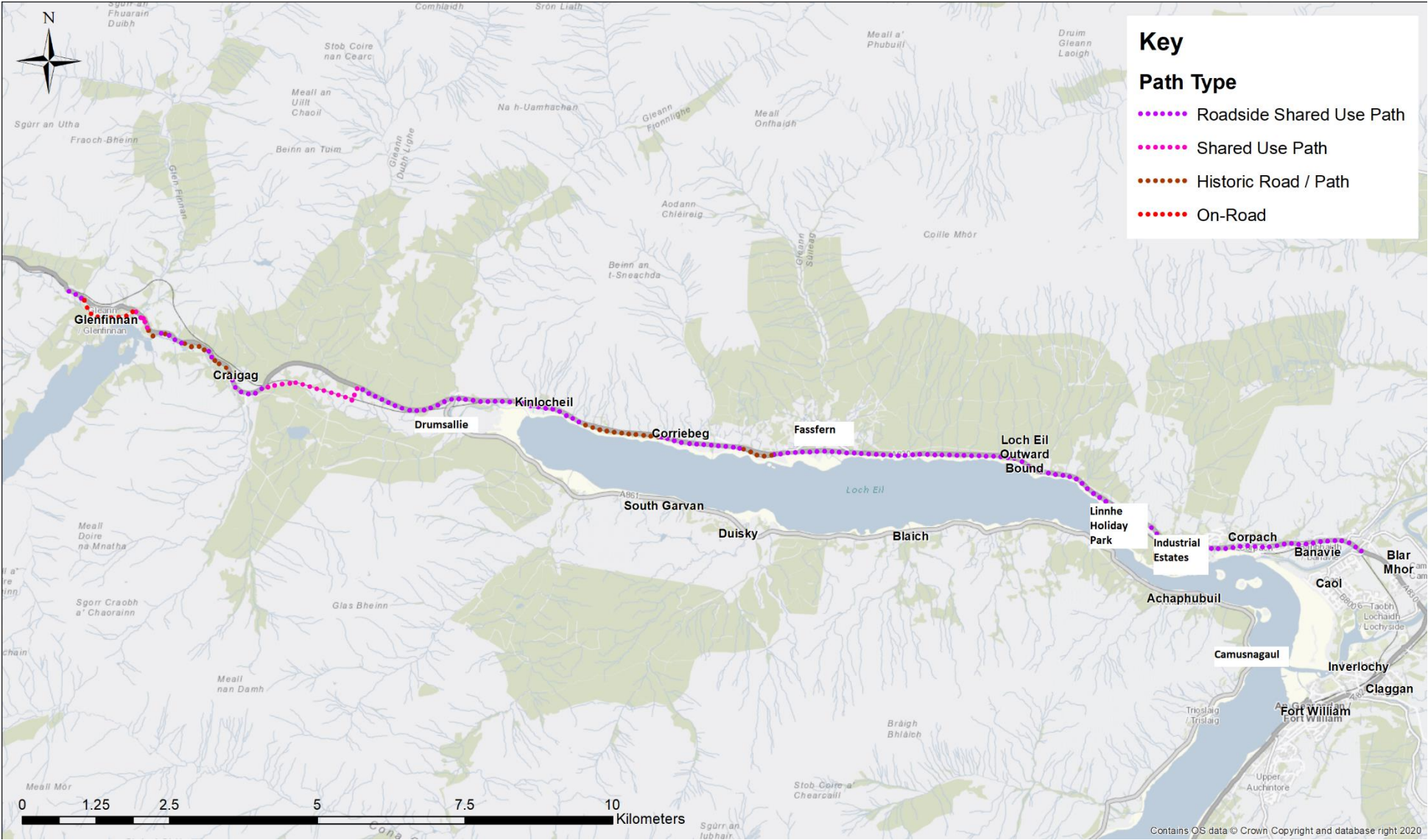


Figure 25 - Option 2 Plan

6.1.4 Option 3 Plan

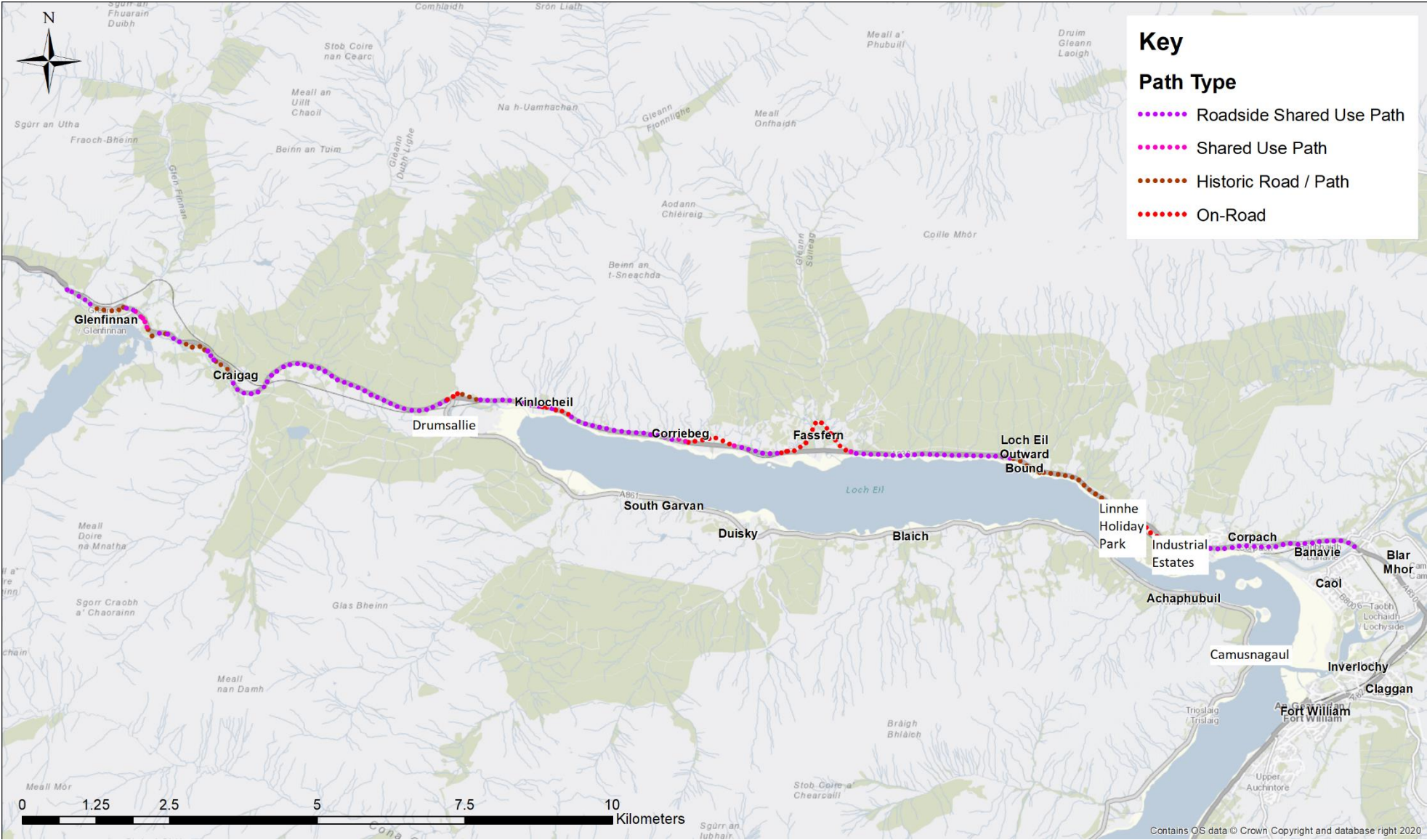


Figure 26 - Option 3 Plan



### 6.1.5 Path Bridges, Culverts and Boardwalks

There are numerous areas where proposed paths will require bridges of varying spans for rivers, valleys and other features. These will include a wide range of smaller span bridges which can very often be pre-fabricated off-site and lifted into place, to major spans such as the River Finnan which could require a bridge span of over 50m in length.

Where possible it is proposed that existing bridges are utilised either using edge of carriageway spaces alongside existing road bridges. There may be locations where these bridges are not wide enough to accommodate additional path infrastructure or that bridge parapets are below the 1.4m heights recommended for cyclists.

In addition to a number of existing and utilised road bridges there are also a number of bridge structures from the former historic road alignment including the Category B Listed Drum na Saille Bridge over Fionn Lighe River by Kinlocheil (Reference LB7072) described earlier within this report and shown in Figure 27 - Drum na Saille Bridge over Fionn Lighe. Additional former bridge structures which could be utilised are shown in Figure 28 - Bridge at Achdaliu Cottage by Braeside, Loch Eil and Figure 29 - Drochaid Sgannir Bridge by Gleann Dubh Lighe.

Where new bridges are proposed, it is recommended that the latest guidance is considered including Sustrans guidance and Paths for All, Path Bridges Guidance<sup>26</sup>. The Paths for All guidance sets out a guide to help designers and those constructing path bridges negotiate the complex factors involved in planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining bridges. Cycling by Design also highlights additional guidance which should be considered when designing bridges. Any sites where bridges, culverts or walkways are to be considered should be assessed and developed by a qualified bridge engineer.

There may also be areas where bridge or raised walkway structures are considered appropriate for reasons of flooding or to minimise the impact on protected or environmentally sensitive areas. These areas will be reviewed within the preliminary and continued ecological appraisals undertaken throughout the development of this project.



Figure 27 - Drum na Saille Bridge over Fionn Lighe



Figure 28 - Bridge at Achdaliu Cottage by Braeside, Loch Eil



Figure 29 - Drochaid Sgannir Bridge by Gleann Dubh Lighe

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/resource/path-bridges>



## 6.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken for the project and has been provided alongside this report.

## 6.3 Topographical Survey

Once preferred routes have been agreed upon by the Project Team and Project Steering Group, a topographical survey should be undertaken in order to gain an accurate record of site conditions, features, constraints and levels.

## 6.4 Utilities Investigation

Once preferred routes have been agreed upon by the Project Team and Project Steering Group, a review of Public Utilities should be undertaken to help identify any potential constraints and where any potential utilities relocations may be required going forward. Engagement with Service Providers should be undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity as this could have potential to add additional costs and timescales to the project construction.

## 6.5 Development of Green Infrastructure Proposals

In addition to infrastructure and transport interventions proposed as part of this study, it is also important that opportunities to improve green infrastructure, access to nature and green corridors and to ensure climate adapted infrastructure is integrated into planning and the development of proposals.

Proposals must not only consider how to mitigate negative impacts on the natural environment, but where there are opportunities to enhance, protect or to create environmental benefits on projects. Detailed discussions should be undertaken with key partners, landowners and managers, and organisations such as NatureScot to ensure that proposals maximise the potential environmental benefits, whilst protecting the high-value natural environment. Particular care must be given to infrastructure proposals, drainage and SUDS measures and protecting green corridors. The preliminary and subsequent ecological appraisals will help guide these proposals.

### 6.5.1 Case Study: Maryhill Claypits, Glasgow, Scottish Canals.



**Figure 30 - New Forth and Clyde Canal Walkway developed for the Claypits Green Infrastructure Project**

Scottish Canals is currently developing paths and an inner-city Local Nature Reserve alongside the Forth and Clyde Canal, just one mile to the north of Glasgow City Centre. This once industrial and forgotten area of the city now offers an important greenspace within the city centre and a haven for wildlife. New paths and links to the wider National Cycle Network have been implemented including the new bridge / boardwalk shown above in Figure 30 - New Forth and Clyde Canal Walkway developed for the Claypits Green Infrastructure Project, which provides new active travel links whilst protecting local wildlife and the natural environment.

## 6.6 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening exercise has been undertaken for the project and the proposals. Undertaking an EqIA and EqIA screening exercise helps ensure that policies, services or proposals do not discriminate against anyone and that, where possible, we promote equality of opportunity. The EqIA is a systematic and evidence-based tool, which enables us to consider the likely impact of work on different groups of people.

An EqIA screening has been undertaken utilising a template from the Highland Council. This indicated that proposals were not anticipated to discriminate against, or have a negative impact on, groups with protected characteristics. The proposals were considered to have net positive impacts for certain groups as a result of improving accessibility and active travel networks.

A full copy of the EqIA screening document can be found in Appendix D of this report.

As this project continues to develop throughout subsequent design stages, the EqIA and EqIA screening document should continue to be re-visited and a workshop should be undertaken. Keeping this as a “live” document will ensure that as the project continues to develop that the proposals will not be likely to unintentionally discriminate against groups with protected characteristics.

## 6.7 Designer's Risk Register

A Designer's Risk Register has been created for the project, identifying, assessing and monitoring where there are potential project risks throughout the design process. This Register also proposes actions to help reduce, control or eliminate those residual risks.

The Designer's Risk Register should be a live document that continues to be updated and revisited throughout the full project lifecycle.

A full copy of the Designer's Risk Register for this stage of the project can be found in Appendix E of this report.

## 6.8 Land Ownership and Management

An initial review of land ownership within the study area was undertaken showing that a large amount of the study area falls under a small number of large estates.

Each of these estates were contacted during this stage of the project and comments were invited. Discussions should be hosted at the earliest possible opportunity during the next stage of this project to identify key issues, opportunities and constraints to the project.

Where proposed route corridors run alongside or close to the trunk road network, Transport Scotland and the trunk road maintenance provider BEAR Scotland Ltd. will have to be consulted. Where proposed routes utilise the locally adopted road or path network, the Highland Council will need to be consulted. Similarly, if proposals utilise routes close to the rail line, Network Rail and Scotrail will need to be consulted.

Once proposed route corridors have been identified and agreed upon by the client project steering group, a full landownership investigation should be undertaken and dedicated consultation with each of these landowners conducted.

Through the study area, there have been six separate estates which have been contacted, either by email or by post. The estates which have been contacted are;

- **Glenfinnan Estate** – representatives from AECOM and the local community met with the Estate Factor on-site to discuss the proposals during May site visits.
- **Lochiel (Achnacarry) Estate** – contacted by phone call and email, response indicated a willingness to engage and positivity that the project was being looked into.
- **Conaglen Estate** – contacted by email, response by the Estate Factor was neither positive nor negative, though indicated a desire for a full consultation with initial proposal plans at the earliest possibility.
- **Drumsaille South Estate** – contacted by post, no response has been received as yet.
- **Fassfern and Drumsaille Wood Estate** – this estate is currently being run by Scottish Woodlands who were contacted by email, though no response has been received as yet.
- **Glenaladale Estate** – contacted by email, though no response has been received as yet.

## 6.9 Permissions and Obligations

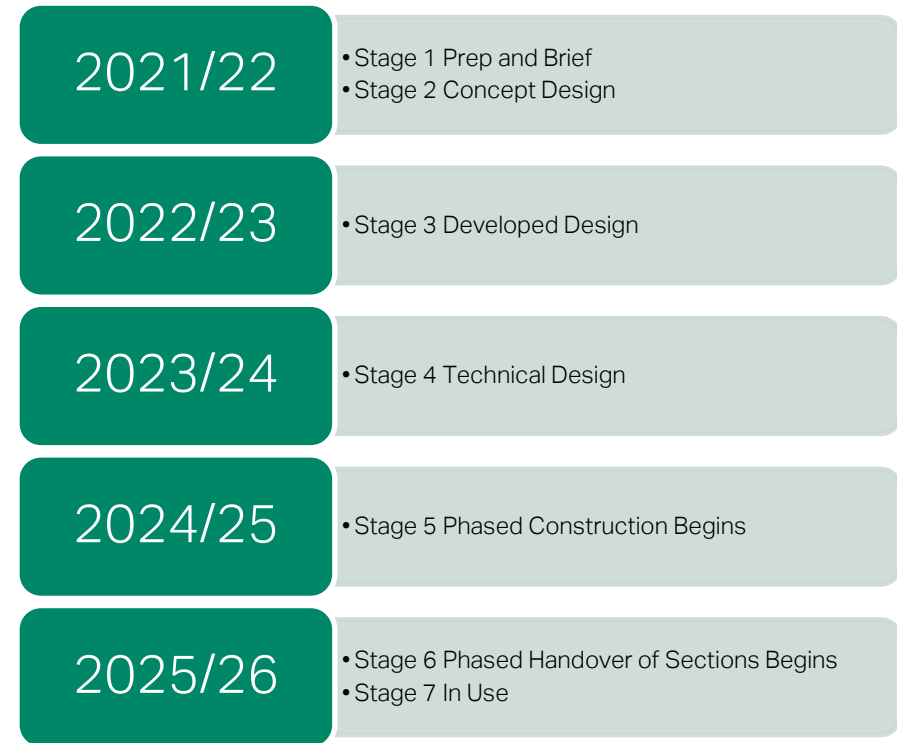
As the project progresses the project team will need to secure a number of permissions and obligations from various parties and statutory permissions. A more detailed list will be generated during subsequent design stages of this project, but these could include:

- Land ownership or land use agreements with local landowners and managers;
- Approval for works by the trunk road or rail network;
- Traffic Regulation Orders and associated Statutory Consultation Processes;
- Planning permissions and consents;
- Consent for works from other key partners such as SEPA, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland for works in areas protected for nature or heritage conservation;
- Environmental Impact Assessments; and
- Listed Building Consent.

The list above outlines some of the key permissions and obligations that could be required to progress the proposals. It is recommended that a full planning scoping exercise is undertaken during the next project stage to ensure that these implications are fully understood and accounted for within the project planning stages.

## 6.10 Proposed Project Programme

A high-level project programme has been developed based upon the Sustrans Places for Everyone Designs Stages. At this early stage of project development, assumptions have to be made about certain areas including design proposals, consultation and engagement, utilities diversions and statutory processes. The following outline project programme should therefore be revisited at each design stage and throughout the wider design process to ensure that it is kept up to date and takes into consideration further details as the project develops.



**Figure 31 - Outline Project Programme**

It should be noted that there is a requirement within the Sustrans Places for Everyone Guidance to continue to consult, collaborate and communicate with key stakeholders and local communities throughout each stage of the design process. This collaborative approach will help inform designs and ensure proposals meet the needs of local communities and stakeholders.

An Engagement and Communications Strategy should be developed during the subsequent stages of this project to help guide activities and ensure communities continue to be engaged appropriately.



## 6.11 Proposed Project Budget

Outline costings have been prepared for the proposed options. A summary table of the outline predicted costs are provided below in Table 13 - Outline Project Costings Summary. These outline costings have been taken from SPONS Engineering Price Book, Paths for All Path Estimating Guide, Transport for Greater Manchester and from recent experience of similar projects undertaken by AECOM.

It should be noted that the outline costs do not include the price of further investigations, surveys, land purchase or negotiation, relocation of utilities, enhanced drainage, or path lighting. Furthermore, in the absence of topographical survey data and 3D designs, assumptions for 3D design makeups and construction methods have been included at this time.

A 44% Optimism Bias has been used in the development of these cost estimates in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance Technical Database Section 13 Table 13.4: Recommended Optimism Bias Uplifts<sup>27</sup>

**Table 13 - Outline Project Costings Summary**

Option	Cost Range	
	(Low)	(High)
1	£6,863,573.65	£9,883,546.06
2	£7,683,557.65	£11,064,323.02
3	£6,726,073.65	£9,685,546.06

Full details of the Outline Cost Estimates can be found in Appendix F of this Report.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/stag-technical-database/section-13/#s133>

## 7. Behaviour Change

In addition to physical infrastructure changes, it is important that projects such as this seek to identify key areas where behaviour change interventions can be undertaken in support of proposals. These can include measures such as cycle training, school travel planning, healthy streets interventions, promotional activities or the development of community and cycle hubs.

### 7.1 Behaviour Change Partners

Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) are a non-profit organisation working to reduce carbon emissions and foster a sustainable future for the environment and communities of Lochaber; focusing on energy efficiency, renewable energy, active travel, local food production and waste reduction. LEG are currently undertaking proposals for the rollout of an electric bike share scheme for Fort William through the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund and Highland Council<sup>28</sup>. The ebike share scheme aims to deliver up to 60 ebikes at eight charging hub locations launching in spring 2022. LEG also manage a local Bike Library, Bike Tool Library, Bike Kitchen and have a YouTube Channel with project updates and basic bike maintenance tips.

It is anticipated that local groups such as LEG are ideally placed to assist in the promotion of certain Behaviour Change and Smarter Choices activities and projects in support of this project.

In addition to LEG, the following groups / organisations are expected to become key partners in the delivery of behaviour change interventions:

- The Highland Council;
- HITRANS;
- Sustrans;
- Transport Scotland;
- Local Schools and Higher Education providers;
- Local Community Groups;

- Local Transport Providers;
- Cycling Scotland;
- Living Streets;
- Local Cycle Shops and Community Hubs; and
- Community Councils.

It is recommended that an exercise should be undertaken to identify specific groups and where these groups can feed into specific behaviour change opportunities.

### 7.2 Barriers to Active Travel

One of the most important elements of increasing the uptake of active travel locally is to identify and target local barriers to active travel and, where possible, to remove those barriers. Physical barriers such as rail lines, rivers or busy roads can form physical barriers, whilst other issues such as perceptions of safety can form psychological barriers. Similarly, lack of awareness of routes and accessibility of local destinations on foot or by bike can be a major barrier to active travel as local communities are simply unaware of the opportunities to access these destinations actively.

Feedback from key stakeholders and local communities to date and at meetings identified a number of key barriers including:

- Lack of footways, paths or dedicated infrastructure along a vast majority of the route;
- High traffic volumes and speeds on the A830;
- Local geography and steep gradients;
- Footway and path accessibility, particularly for those with mobility or visual impairments;
- User confidence on or busy main roads;
- Conflict between different user groups on existing footways;
- Lack of active travel signage and wayfinding;

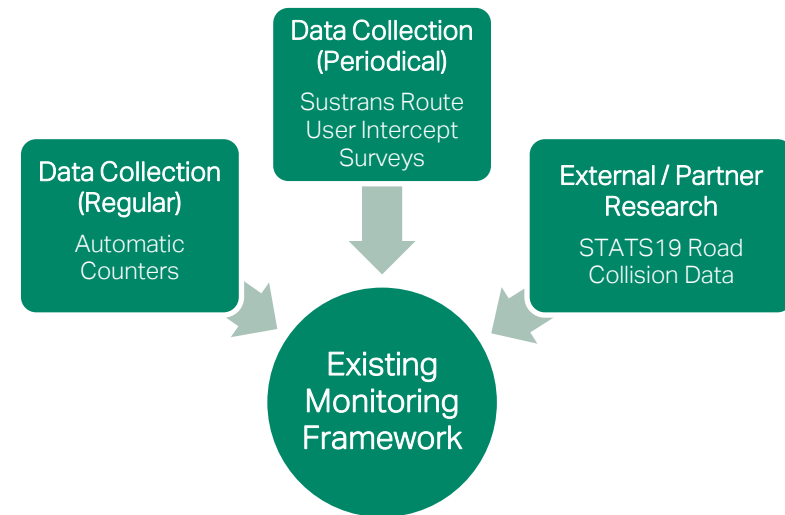
<sup>28</sup> <https://lochaberenviro.org.uk/what-we-do/fort-william-electric-bike-hire-scheme/>

- Weather and appropriate facilities;
- Secure bike parking;
- Connections to other transport modes and multi-modal journeys; and
- Dominance of car and private vehicles.

There are a number of actions that can be incorporated into proposals in order to target some of these barriers to active travel. As the project continues through further development and design stages, key stakeholders and local communities will be asked to help identify further barriers to active travel which will help inform future proposals going forward and reduce the impact of these barriers where possible. This can be done by carrying out a dedicated workshop with members of local communities and key stakeholders to identify these barriers and potential interventions to mitigate these barriers.

It is recommended that identification of these barriers becomes a key area of early community engagement to ensure that proposals meet the needs of the local community and help increase the uptake of active travel locally.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan



**Figure 32 - Existing Monitoring Framework Plan**

There are several sets of different cycle and pedestrian counters stationed around the populated area around Fort William to Corpach. There are counters placed both north and south of the A830 Trunk Road on the Great Glen Way which are maintained by Scottish Canals. There are also three cycle counters located between Lochy Bridge Roundabout and Inverlochy, these counters are maintained by Cycling Scotland.

The Route User Intercept Surveys (RUIS) are already biennially undertaken by Sustrans. These provide baseline user views on the trip type, frequency and perceptions of route conditions and issues. The RUIS will be undertaken at a key intersection of the site before implementation, and after the scheme is complete. Each survey will be at the same location and done at regular intervals to ensure they are comparable and consistent. It is expected that there will be irregularities during delivery, and this will be considered.

STATS19 Road Collision Data provides detailed information on reported personal road collisions; the data identifies a wide range of information relevant to a collision, including age of casualties, mode of transportation, contributory factors and road



conditions. As road safety is a critical element of an individual's mode choice it is imperative to understand the actual collision statistics within the project area.

A review of STATS19 data, which the Council has access to, will be undertaken on an annual basis, unless it has been noted that there are significant concerns. This will monitor whether the project is contributing to meeting the objectives set out in the respective Road Safety Plans.

## **9. Summary of Recommendations and Next Steps**

This report has shown that there are several opportunities to develop the area to connect Fort William to Glenfinnan, and the surrounding settlements, via an active travel route. A new active travel route would have a large impact on the area, connecting communities and allowing for non-motorised access.

It is recommended that HITRANS continue to develop these proposals by taking them through the Sustrans Places for Everyone Stage 2 Concept Design stage. It is noted however, that Sustrans are not accepting any new Places for Everyone applications until the 2022/23 funding year due to a backlog of applications submitted.

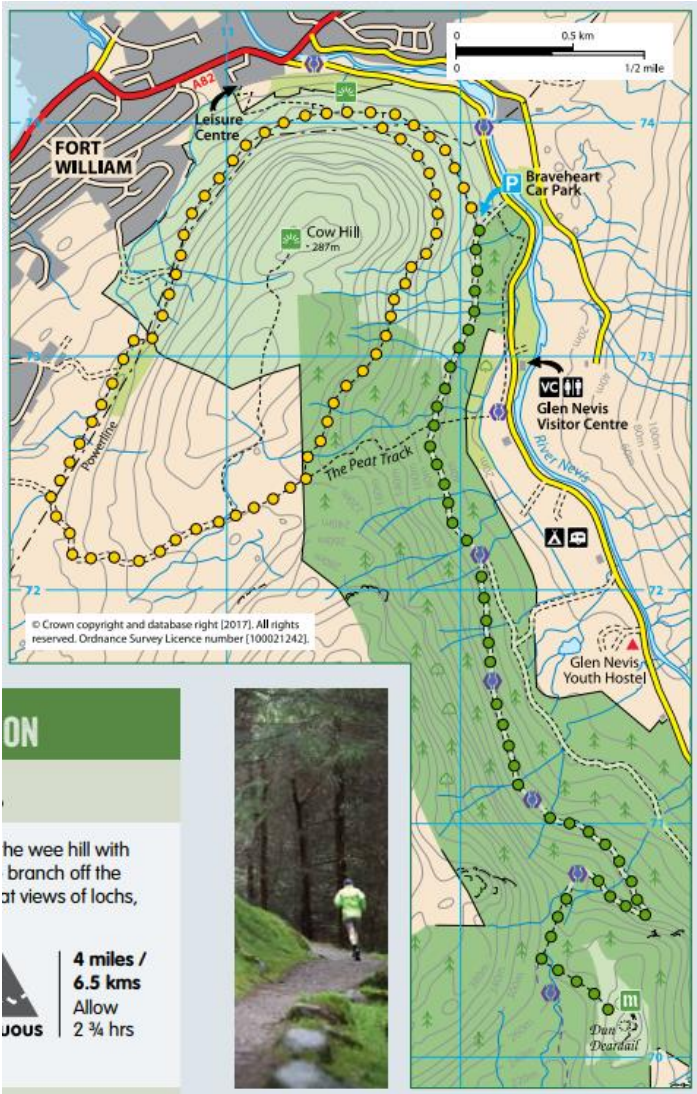
It is estimated the fee for undertaking the concept design for the link would be between £30,000 and £50,000. The main risk to the estimated fee is the undertaking of the landownership discussions but the concept design and required deliverables should be delivered for the estimated fee.

It is also recommended that, following the results of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, a more detailed appraisal be undertaken to determine the full constraints to the route options.

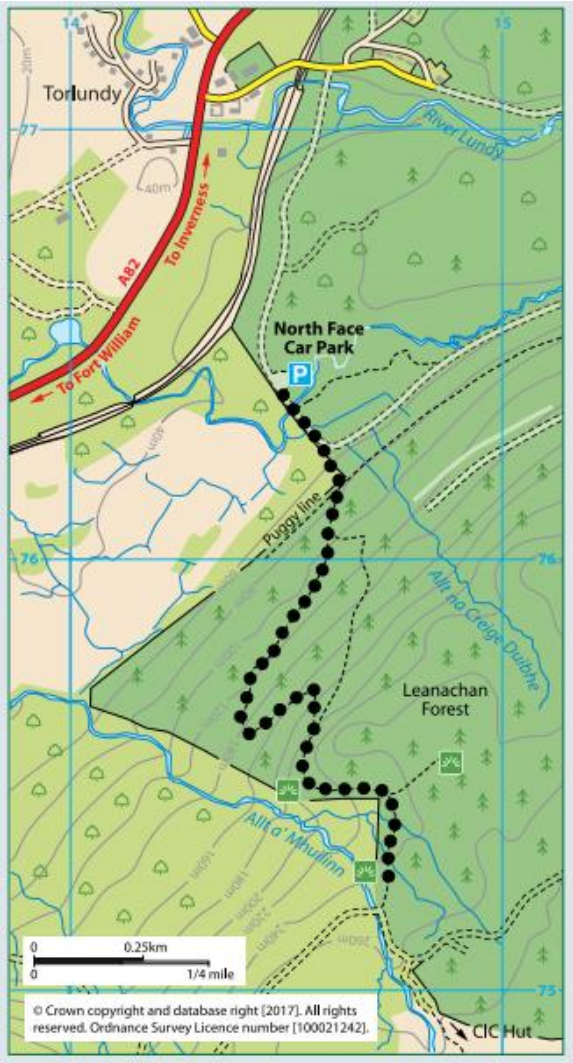
A more detailed consultation with both affected landowners and stakeholders is recommended to be undertaken, with a detailed Consultation and Engagement Plan be prepared to determine how to address locations which will have a large impact on the project, or which may be locally sensitive.

It is recommended that background data be determined, with a topographical survey and statutory undertaker plant investigations be undertaken to fully determine the best option to proceed with.

## **Appendix A – Forestry Commission Trails**

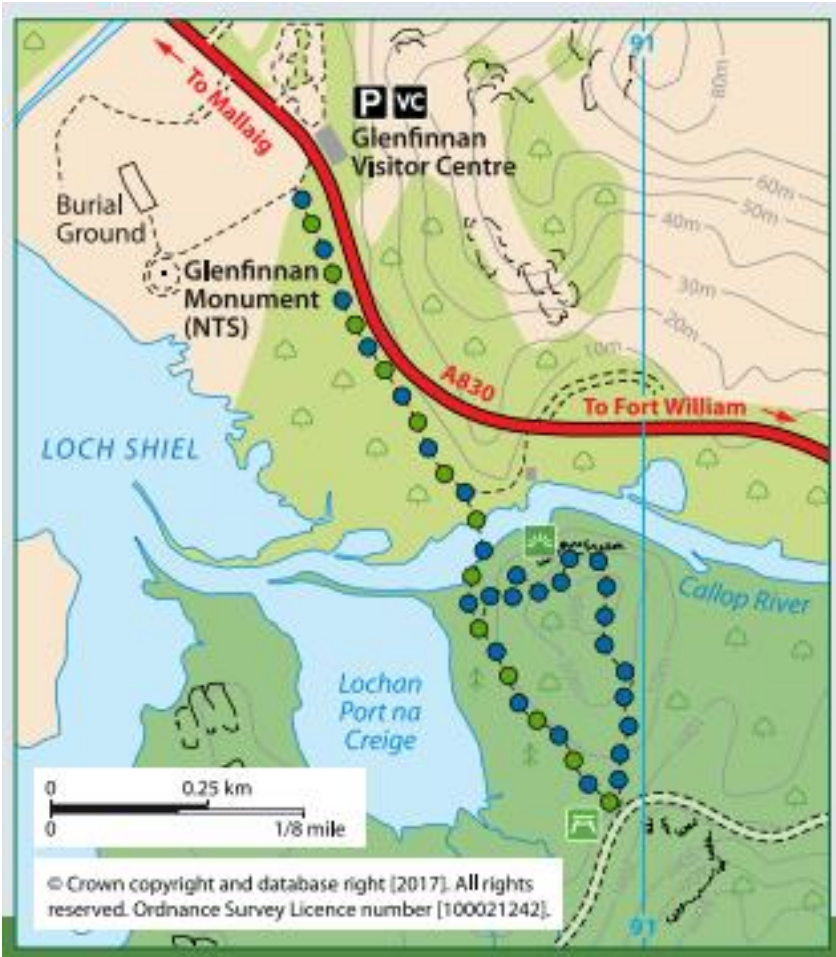


Cow Hill Circuit and Dun Deardail Trail at Glen Nevis



North Face Trail from Torlundy just north of Fort William.





Glenfinnan historical Dragonfly and Pinewood Trails.



## **Appendix B – Letters & Emails of Support**





04/11/2020

**Comments on development of a cycle route from Fort William to Glenfinnan.**

Kilmallie Community Council represents the community along the A830 from Corpach to Kinlochell.

We have been working to improve road safety for many years, and particularly for cyclists and pedestrians using or crossing the A830. There is currently no other option for cyclists other than the A830 from the Co-op westwards through Corpach. This limits the safe options for cycling to work for all the industries on the Annat Industrial Estate which together employ several hundred people. There is also no safe cycle route from the west of Corpach to link up with routes to Banavie Primary School and Lochaber High School.

A cycle route from Fort William to Glenfinnan would greatly reduce the risks to cyclists passing through Corpach and further west along the A830 to Glenfinnan. The section of A830 from Corpach to Drumsallie is very fast and frightening to cycle. Although the national speed limit of 60mph applies we are aware of prosecutions of up to around 90mph. A new route would contribute to safety and encourage higher levels of active travel for both commuters and school pupils.

A route that linked with the railway stations at Corpach, Lochell Outward Bound, Lochellside and Glenfinnan would also allow visitors to the area to mix use of the train and cycling. The A830 at Glenfinnan, through Corpach, and at the junction with the A82 at Lochybridge, becomes highly congested in summer and there are often long delays, particularly at the Lochybridge roundabout. Some of this congestion could be alleviated by more journeys being made by bicycle. Analysis of local traffic on the A830 suggests that only a small proportion of car journeys would need to be avoided to keep traffic levels on the A830 below the critical point at which delays occur.

Kilmallie Community Council welcomes the proposals for a feasibility study for the cycle route. The development of this will require careful attention to the detail of the route and we would be happy to help with consultation with the community to achieve this.

Best wishes,

Russell Leaper  
(KCC Secretary)

Acting Chair - John Hutchison jch@abrach.com  
Secretary - Russell Leaper secretary@kilmallie.org.uk  
Treasurer - Gwyn Moses gwynmoses@gmail.com  
www.kilmallie.org.uk

caring, engaging, listening, representing, making a difference locally

**FORT WILLIAM INVERLOCHY & TORLUNDY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

FAO Kate Willis & Hege Hernaes  
West Highland Community Rail Partnership  
PO Box 7061  
Fort William  
PH33 9AS

29-October- 2020

To whom it may concern,

Feasibility study for a cycle path between Fort William and Glenfinnan.

On behalf of the Chairman and FITCC members we wish to advise you of our support for the application to Sustrans 'Places for Everyone fund' toward the feasibility study for a cycle pathway between Fort William and Glenfinnan.

This is a route which was cycled by many locals in the distant past but very few now due to the ever increasing number of vehicles - Heavy Goods vehicles, more local people commuting to and from the town and increasing tourist traffic. The speed of the traffic makes a cycle ride on the A830 prohibitive to family groups as this is no longer an enjoyable experience and certainly not a safe one. Commuters living beyond Annat do not have an alternative other than to use their cars.

I am a cyclist, myself and me and my family regularly use the cycle/pathways in and out of town. An extension to the present route to Corpach giving access to Lochellside and beyond to Glenfinnan which at the moment has no pavement past Annat is an exciting prospect for both locals and tourists, extending the present route and enhancing the experience for all.

FITCC wish Lochaber Environmental Group every success in their application.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Jordan - Secretary  
Fort William Inverlochy & Torlundy Community Council

Mark Linfield – Chairman. [chairman@fitcc.org](mailto:chairman@fitcc.org)  
Patricia Jordan – Secretary. Tel: 07753529450 Email: [secretary@fitcc.org](mailto:secretary@fitcc.org)



Lochaber Chamber of Commerce  
15 High Street  
Fort William  
PH33 6DH

T: 01397 705765

W: [www.lochaberchamber.co.uk](http://www.lochaberchamber.co.uk)

% Hege Hernes  
West Highland CRP  
Station Cottage  
Glenfinnan  
PH37 4LT

Monday 26 October 2020

**Re: Active Travel Trail between Fort William and Glenfinnan**

Dear Hege,

The news of your planned application for a feasibility study to explore the possibility of putting in a safe active travel trail between Fort William and Glenfinnan is a very welcome update indeed.

The implementation of this infrastructure, that would complement ScotRail's introduction of Active Travel carriages on the West Highland Line, would also bring many safety, economic and tourism advantages as well as providing the local population with a new way to explore the Road to the Isles geography, surrounding areas of stunning beauty and natural assets.

Please consider this letter a confirmation of our support of your application and we look forward to hearing more about this project in the future.

With thanks,

Mark Gibbings  
Marketing & Projects Manager  
On behalf of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce  
(custodians of The Outdoor Capital of the UK, Lochaber destination organisation)

National Trust for Scotland  
Hermiston Quay  
5 Cultins Road  
Edinburgh EH11 4DF  
Tel: 0131 458 0200  
Fax: 0131 458 0201  
Email: [information@nts.org.uk](mailto:information@nts.org.uk)  
Web: [nts.org.uk](http://nts.org.uk)



Glenfinnan Monument  
& Visitor Centre  
Glenfinnan  
PH37 4LT

27 October 2020

To whom it may concern,

**Letter of support for a Fort William to Glenfinnan cycle path**

As Operations Manager for the National Trust for Scotland at Glenfinnan Monument and Visitor Centre, I would like to offer my enthusiastic support to the proposal of developing a traffic-free cycle route to connect Fort William and Glenfinnan.

We welcomed over 500,000 visitors to our visitor centre in 2019 – our busiest year ever – and the trend is for Glenfinnan's popularity to continue, post-Covid 19 pandemic. While additional parking capacity is being created with the construction of a community car park in the village, this may not alleviate all the challenges we have with managing vehicles and we do not think it is sustainable to expand parking further without destroying the spirit of place people come to enjoy here.

As an environmental conservation charity, we are passionate that Scotland needs to move towards a low carbon visitor economy and providing safe, attractive car-free travel alternatives for tourists, and, those working at visitor attractions, is a central part of this transition.

15 miles from Fort William and with a train station offering onward journey options, Glenfinnan is very well placed as a cycle destination and this would benefit the village's attractions, like our visitor centre and Monument, without the added pressure of accommodating more vehicles.

We regularly welcome cyclists to our visitor centre right now, but they are generally hard-core road bikers. They often complain how unpleasant the stretch of roadside route is and how vulnerable they feel when riding alongside 60mph traffic. The distance could make a perfect family bike ride, however certainly not with the current road safety issues.

As Glenfinnan is a small community, all our visitor centre's core staff team currently live in Fort William and commute. Of six full-time permanent staff, four would be keen to use the option of regularly cycling to work – reducing travel costs and providing exercise and wellbeing benefits. Our core team rises to around 20 people at the height of the season, with extra seasonal roles that earn the Scottish living wage. We can struggle to recruit to these roles as the transport costs for the 30-mile commute can be prohibitively

The National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC007410  
Patron – HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCB OM, President – Neil Oliver, Chairman – Sir Moir Lockhead OBE, Chief Executive – Simon Skinner MBA

National Trust for Scotland  
Hermiston Quay  
5 Cultins Road  
Edinburgh EH11 4DF

Tel: 0131 458 0200  
Fax: 0131 458 0201  
Email: [information@nts.org.uk](mailto:information@nts.org.uk)  
Web: [nts.org.uk](http://nts.org.uk)



expensive and the public transport options are not always flexible enough to meet the needs of our rota scheduling. We are positive that the option of cycling to work, particularly during the height of summer, would be beneficial to our seasonal staff recruitment prospects.

We can also commit to encouraging our visitors (and our 400,000 National Trust for Scotland members) to use any future cycle path facilities, by promoting them through our social media and membership communication channels, as well as offering incentives/rewards for those who arrive without a car, like 2-for-1 admission to the Monument or complimentary treats in the café.

I am happy to provide further information or discuss our endorsement of this project further if required.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Bryce  
Operations Manager – Glencoe & Glenfinnan

Email: [ebryce@nts.org.uk](mailto:ebryce@nts.org.uk)  
Tel: 07716 371350

To whom it may concern

13<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Fort William and Glenfinnan Cycle Path Places for Everyone Feasibility Study Application

I am writing further to our correspondence about the West Highland Community Rail Partnership currently working with Lochaber Environmental Group, on an application to Sustrans under their Places for Everyone programme. This application is for funding for a feasibility study for a cycle path between Fort William and Glenfinnan.

ScotRail is pleased to be involved in the discussions with yourselves with a view to:

- Keeping active travellers at a safe distance from the A830, to ensure safe access to the railway stations between Glenfinnan and Fort William.
- Opening up access to those who wish to travel other than by car such as by bicycle
- encouraging active travel and connect this to the future Active Travel carriage that will be trialled on the West Highland Line

ScotRail is pleased to offer this letter of support to the feasibility study in order to establish the improvements that can be made and into encouraging and developing active travel.

We look forward to working with the local groups.

Yours Sincerely

Expired certificate

X Andrew

Andrew Marshall-Roberts  
Manager, Economic Development & Communities  
Signed by: [andrew.marshall-roberts@scotrail.co.uk](mailto:andrew.marshall-roberts@scotrail.co.uk)

Andrew Marshall-Roberts  
Manager, Economic Development & Communities

Abellio ScotRail Ltd  
Atrium Court, 50 Waterloo Street  
Glasgow, G2 6HQ

Abellio ScotRail Ltd, Registered in Scotland number SC450732  
Company Secretary, Culzean Building, 36 Renfield Street, Glasgow, G2 1LU



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Patron – HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCS OM, President – Neil Oliver, Chairman – Sir Moir Lockhead OBE, Chief Executive – Simon Skinner MBA



2 Erracht  
Banavie  
Fort William  
PH33 7PD

[ben.thompson.cllr@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ben.thompson.cllr@highland.gov.uk)  
07833687278

To whom it may concern,

**Glenfinnan - Fort William Active Travel Link**

Glenfinnan is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Scotland and a short cycle ride from Fort William, where nearly all of its visitors are travelling from. Unfortunately there currently exists no active travel link between the two despite hundreds of thousands of short visitor trips being made between the two locations every summer. This has led to significant tourism pressure in the Glenfinnan area in recent years as visitors are forced to use cars.

The absence of any active travel link is not only a barrier for tourists getting to and from Glenfinnan but also impacts the many small communities dotted along the A830 which form a commuter belt for Fort William.

From canvassing door-to-door along the A830 corridor I can comfortably state that road safety and the complete lack of any active travel option was the number one priority of the community. This is reflected in the road safety and active travel campaigning done over many years by the two Community Councils covering the area: Kilmallie CC and Glenfinnan CC.

Linking Fort William to Glenfinnan not only serves the communities on the route but opens up access to the main Core Path routes leading into south Lochaber down Loch Shiel. Perhaps more importantly, it leaves only a relatively short section of path to complete to create an active travel link between Fort William and the west coast. Such an east-west route could be a huge impact for local businesses, communities and travelling public.

For these reasons I would strongly support all steps towards the creation of a Glenfinnan - Fort William active travel link.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Ben Thompson, Highland Council.  
Chair of Housing & Property.  
Convener of the Fort William Active Travel Action Group



Please ask for: Neil Young

Your ref:

Our ref: NY

Date: 29 October 2020

Dear Kate

**Glenfinnan Cycle Path**

I am pleased to confirm, on behalf of The Highland Council, that we welcome and fully support the funding application for the creation of a cycle path from Fort William to Glenfinnan through the Sustrans Scotland Places for Everyone Programme.

The Highland Council are keen to continue to work in partnership with The West Highland CRP and The Lochaber Environmental Group to encourage active travel, link with development plans and policies and promote sustainable transport choices, building upon the success of previous work in the area.

I hope that your application for Places for Everyone funding is viewed favourably by Sustrans which will undoubtedly help make this area of Lochaber a healthier, happier place to live, work and play, whilst also confirming the area as a sustainable and beautiful tourist destination.

Yours sincerely

Neil Young  
Transport Planning Officer

Glenfinnan Community Council  
C/O Patricia Grieve, Secretary  
Bothan Glas  
Glenfinnan  
PH37 4LS  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2020

To whom it may concern,

At the October Glenfinnan Community Council Ordinary Meeting, Hege Hernes, the Secretary of the West Highland Community Rail Partnership, brought to our attention the opportunity for Glenfinnan to become part of Sustrans' National Cycle Network. Hege explained Sustrans' concepts and policies and asked if GCC would be supportive if West Highland Community Rail Partnership applied for a full feasibility study.

Glenfinnan is a small village of 125 residents, however, we receive approximately 400,000 visitors a year. The trunk road through the village has recently had the speed limit reduced from 60 to 40mph, but it is still a dangerous road, especially for cyclists. Motorists and novice camper van drivers tend to be looking out for parking spaces and a glimpse of the steam train rather than concentrating on the road and other road users.

Visitor parking is a huge issue for the village and despite a new car park currently being built, parking will probably still be an issue in the future.

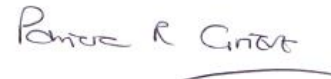
The prospect of a cycle path through the area would bring so many advantages for tourists and for the residents. If Glenfinnan could encourage cyclists to visit the area to enjoy safe cycling, access to the area's railway station and other community hubs, leaving their cars behind, everyone benefits. The parking issues are resolved, cyclists are safer, fewer motorists and pollution, consequently happier residents!

A cycle path could potentially change the pattern of tourism Glenfinnan experiences. If cyclists are drawn to Glenfinnan because it is part of an extensive cycle way, they will have the time to experience Glenfinnan fully; the walks, the beautiful scenery and the small businesses. A more leisurely pace of tourism would benefit local businesses and local people. Currently it is rather a 'grab a parking space, take a photo of the steam train on the viaduct and go' type of experience. Local businesses rarely benefit and residents are inconvenienced.

The villagers of Glenfinnan would also enjoy the benefits of using a cycle path. During the Covid 19 lock down, road traffic was minimal and the residents, especially the village's children, were able to walk and cycle safely along the road. Once lock down restrictions were lifted, the tourists returned in droves, looking for their Covid free, staycation. The villagers no longer were safe to walk and cycle. A cycle path, especially one avoiding the trunk road, would be such a benefit for the residents, improving physical and mental health through safe exercise.

Glenfinnan Community Council fully supports Hege Hernes, acting on behalf of the West Highland Community Rail Partnership, applying for a full feasibility study for Glenfinnan to be part of Sustrans' National Cycle Network. GCC looks forward to liaising with the consultants chosen to undertake the study.

Yours faithfully,



Patricia Grieve  
Secretary  
Glenfinnan Community Council  
Tel 01397 722447  
Mobile 07806559348  
[glenfinnancommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:glenfinnancommunitycouncil@gmail.com)

## **Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment**



## Equality Impact Assessment:

### Purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment:

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requiring public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Consideration must be given to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act. Assessments should 'consider relevant evidence relating to persons with protected characteristics in relation to assessments of impact'.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is to ensure that policies, functions, plans or decisions (hereafter referred to as 'project') do not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Act. Where negative impacts are identified these should be eliminated or minimised, and opportunities for positive impact should be maximised.

Screening is a short exercise to determine if a policy is relevant to equality and whether a full EQIA should be carried out.

Title/description of the project	Fort William to Glenfinnan Walking and Cycling Route
Name of the person(s) carrying out the assessment?	Christopher Ferrier
Service and Department	AECOM – Roads - Streets
Date of assessment	24/06/2021
What are the aims and objectives of the project?	
To investigate route options for a safe active travel path between Fort William and Glenfinnan as an alternative to the existing A830 Trunk Road.	
Who may be affected by the project?	Vehicles travelling on the A830 Trunk Road Residents in settlements between Fort William and Glenfinnan (Corpach, Fassfern, Drumbeg, Kinlocheil)
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of the project?	An email was sent out to local landowners and local stakeholders who may be affected by the proposals. AECOM attended the Glenfinnan Community Council meeting on 02/06/2021 and gave a presentation advising on the progress of the report and undertook a Q&A session. AECOM will be attending a similar meeting on 28/06/2021 with Kilmallie Community Council.

Which parts of the public sector duty is the policy relevant to?		
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination	X	The route currently maintains good sightlines and is open and inviting. Railside locations can sometimes attract antisocial behaviour, however improving the area as a destination as well as a through-route could encourage an increase in footfall.  Repairing the surface and addressing drainage issues will make the route accessible for wheeled and less able bodied users.
2. Advance equality	X	The introduction of the new facility will advance equality to allow for all ages and all abilities to be able to travel along the route.
3. Promote good relations	X	The project steering group has brought together two community councils, landowners, and councillors in a positive environment.  A new off-road walking and cycling route creates a very good opportunity to connect existing cut off rural communities such as Braeside, Fassfern and Kinlocheil together and to also provide safe non-motorised user access to both Loch Eil Outward Bound and Locheilside rural train stations which are both currently only accessible by vehicle.  A new route will facilitate the choice of active travel for short local journeys, including rail travel.

**Screening: Which of the protected characteristics is the project relevant to?**  
*Tick and briefly describe any likely equalities impact (positive/negative/neutral).*

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	comments
Gender			X	Not aware of any possible impact at this stage.
Age	X			Traffic-free route will have a positive impact for all ages, providing a safe, off-road route between rural settlements and rural train stations which are currently inaccessible without a vehicle.
Disability	X			Positive impact for those who are less mobile due to the provision of a traffic-free route linking rural settlements together and to existing rural train stations, which are currently inaccessible without a vehicle.
Religion or Belief			X	Not aware of any possible impact at this stage.
Race			X	Not aware of any possible impact at this stage.
Sexual Orientation			X	Not aware of any possible impact at this stage.
Gender reassignment			X	Not aware of any possible impact at this stage.
Pregnancy/maternity	X			Positive impact for those who are pregnant or pushing buggies of seating areas and traffic-free path providing a safe, off-road route between rural settlements and rural train stations which are currently inaccessible without a vehicle.
Marriage and Civil Partnership*			X	Not aware of any possible impact at this stage.

\*applies only to Employment and the duty to give regard to the elimination of discrimination

**Recommend this policy for full Equality Impact Assessment?**

**Yes/No**

If the answer is "Yes", continue to the next section. If the answer is "No", please give brief reasons here.





**Appendix D – Designer’s Risk Register**



## Designers Risk Register

Project Number and Name: 60656321 Fort William to Glenfinnan Walking and Cycling Report

No.	Risk Title	Risk Description (actual or potential)	Date Created	Before Mitigation			Mitigation	Actionee	Action Update	Date of Update	After Mitigation			Date Closed
				Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level					Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level	
1	Minor Structures e.g. culverts	Design of structures has not been undertaken reflecting the current stage of the design process. This may result in a requirement to alter the route design at a later stage	30-Jun-2021	Possible	Major	High	Design of minor structures to be undertaken at the detailed design stage following selection of the preferred route	Project Team						
2	Major Structures e.g. bridges	Major structures have not been designed and therefore amendments to the route will need to be required to accommodate them. Historic Bridges and Carriageway present. Potential to be used as part of scheme	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Major	High	Detailed design of major structures to be undertaken at the detailed design stage following selection of the preferred route	Project Team						
3	Cost	High level costings have been undertaken at this stage, excluding some costs such as land purchase and making high level assumptions of others. The detailed design may affect the overall cost of construction.	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Major	High	Detailed costing to be carried out at detailed design stage. Recommend that land purchase costs are determined at this stage	Project Team						
4	Ground Investigation	No ground investigation undertaken at this stage. Risk of poor quality ground for construction, which may require additional works or alteration to the route.	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Major	High	Undertake ground investigation following selection of preferred route and prior to starting detailed design	Project Team						
5	Lighting Design	Lighting design has not been undertaken at this stage. Impact on the landscape has not been considered, along with requirements and costs for installation	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Minor	Medium	Undertake lighting design following completion of detailed design	Project Team						
6	Drainage	Drainage design has not been undertaken due to the feasibility stage of the project, which may affect detailed design stages	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Major	High	Drainage design to be undertaken as part of the detailed design following selection of a preferred route	Project Team						
7	Utilities	C2 enquiry not undertaken until selection of the preferred route. Risk that protective measures or diversions will be required for services which could lead to additional costs and disruption to service delivery during construction	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Moderate	Medium	Undertake C2 enquiry following selection of preferred route	Project Team						
8	Traffic modelling	Traffic modelling not undertaken at this stage - there is potential that modifications to the road network may impact vehicular traffic flow	30-Jun-2021	Likely	Major	High	Carry out traffic modelling of amendments to the road layout to determine the impact of proposals	Project Team						
9	Environment	High level environmental assessment has been carried out, detailed assessment has not been carried out for this stage. It is possible that a detailed assessment may result in additional issues	30-Jun-2021	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Perform detailed environmental investigation at the detailed design stage	Project Team						
10	Topo Survey	Topo survey has not been undertaken. Preliminary view estimated design has been completed using OS Base which may contain inaccuracies	30-Jun-2021	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Commission a topo survey of the preferred route prior to detailed design	Project Team						
11	Road Safety Audit	A Road Safety Audit may find safety issues with the design	30-Jun-2021	Possible	Moderate	Medium	An RSA should be carried out on each route option as part of the appraisal process to determine if there are any major issues. Address minor issues at the appropriate design stage	Project Team						
12	Signage and Lining	Signage and Lining design required at the detailed design stage, and has not been carried out at this stage	30-Jun-2021	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Carry out signing and lining design at the detailed design stage	Project Team						

## **Appendix E – Preliminary Cost Estimates**



### Fort William to Glenfinnan Option 1 Cost Estimate

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost
Preliminaries	5%	m	-	£343,884.01
General Site Clearance	10	ha	£1,410.65	£14,106.50
Construction of new shared footway/cycleway (segregated)	20000	m	£250.00	£5,000,000.00
Greenspace	1	ha	£240,000.00	£240,000.00
Tactile Paving	150	m <sup>2</sup>	£115.00	£17,250.00
Dropped Kerbs	150	no.	£6,500.00	£975,000.00
Road Markings	4000	m	£1.52	£6,080.00
Traffic Signs	10%	%	-	£625,243.65
<b>Construction Sub-Total</b>				<b>£6,863,573.65</b>
Optimism Bias	44%	%	-	£3,019,972.41
<b>Construction Sub-Total (Inclusive of Optimism Bias)</b>				<b>£9,883,546.06</b>
Design	8%	%	-	£790,683.68
Site Supervision and Project Management	5%	%	-	£494,177.30
Traffic Management	5%	%	-	£494,177.30
Monitoring and Evaluation	2.5%	%	-	£247,088.65
<b>Total</b>				<b>£11,909,673.00</b>

Costs do not include price of further investigation / survey, land purchase, relocation of utilities, enhanced drainage or path lighting etc.

### Fort William to Glenfinnan Option 2 Cost Estimate

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost
Preliminaries	5%	m	-	£384,883.21
General Site Clearance	10	ha	£1,410.65	£14,106.50
Construction of new shared footway/cycleway (segregated)	23000	m	£250.00	£5,750,000.00
Greenspace	1	ha	£240,000.00	£240,000.00
Tactile Paving	150	m <sup>2</sup>	£115.00	£17,250.00
Dropped Kerbs	150	no.	£6,500.00	£975,000.00
Road Markings	1000	m	£1.52	£1,520.00
Traffic Signs	10%	%	-	£699,787.65
<b>Construction Sub-Total</b>				<b>£7,683,557.65</b>
Optimism Bias	44%	%	-	£3,380,765.37
<b>Construction Sub-Total (Inclusive of Optimism Bias)</b>				<b>£11,064,323.02</b>
Design	8%	%	-	£885,145.84
Site Supervision and Project Management	5%	%	-	£553,216.15
Traffic Management	5%	%	-	£553,216.15
Monitoring and Evaluation	2.5%	%	-	£276,608.08
<b>Total</b>				<b>£13,332,509.23</b>

Costs do not include price of further investigation / survey, land purchase, relocation of utilities, enhanced drainage or path lighting etc.

### Fort William to Glenfinnan Option 3 Cost Estimate

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost
Preliminaries	5%	m	-	£337,009.01
General Site Clearance	10	ha	£1,410.65	£14,106.50
Construction of new shared footway/cycleway (segregated)	19500	m	£250.00	£4,875,000.00
Greenspace	1	ha	£240,000.00	£240,000.00
Tactile Paving	150	m <sup>2</sup>	£115.00	£17,250.00
Dropped Kerbs	150	no.	£6,500.00	£975,000.00
Road Markings	4000	m	£1.52	£6,080.00
Traffic Signs	10%	%	-	£612,743.65
<b>Construction Sub-Total</b>				<b>£6,726,073.65</b>
Optimism Bias	44%	%	-	£2,959,472.41
<b>Construction Sub-Total (Inclusive of Optimism Bias)</b>				<b>£9,685,546.06</b>
Design	8%	%	-	£774,843.68
Site Supervision and Project Management	5%	%	-	£484,277.30
Traffic Management	5%	%	-	£484,277.30
Monitoring and Evaluation	2.5%	%	-	£242,138.65
<b>Total</b>				<b>£11,671,083.00</b>

Costs do not include price of further investigation / survey, land purchase, relocation of utilities, enhanced drainage or path lighting etc.

