

Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	29 October 2020
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources	Report No:	ENV/032/20/GMcF
Contact Officer:	Gail MacFarlane	Contact No:	01475 714800
Subject:	Transport Scotland – Project Corridor Options – Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the Transport Scotland Project Corridor Options 2020 Consultation and to seek Committee approval to submit the feedback form attached in Appendix 1.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Transport Scotland has commenced a consultation exercise to receive comments on a number of proposed corridor options to access Argyll and Bute. The feedback will inform the progression of Stage 1 data collection and the assessment and appraisal of the proposed corridor options.

The Consultation closes on 30 October 2020 and it is anticipated that a recommendation will be made in Spring 2021 on the preferred route corridor and alignment.

- 2.2 The consultation requests feedback on a number of proposed options. These are as follows:

1. Glen Croe (A83 online) adjacent to existing road corridor
2. Glen Kinglas corridor
3. Glen Fyne corridor
4. A82 Cowal - Cairndow
5. A82 Cowal - Lochgilphead
6. Inverclyde Cowal - Cairndow
7. Inverclyde Cowal - Lochgilphead
8. A) North Ayrshire Cairndow via Colintrave
B) North Ayrshire Cairndow via Dunoon
9. North Ayrshire Cowal - Lochgilphead
10. Helensburgh - Cowal – Cairndow
11. Helensburgh – Cowal - Lochgilphead

The 2 Inverclyde options (options 6 and 7) require the construction of a fixed link crossing over the Firth of Clyde. Further detail on these 2 options are noted in Appendix 2.

- 2.3 The Council's proposed response is noted in Appendix 1.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

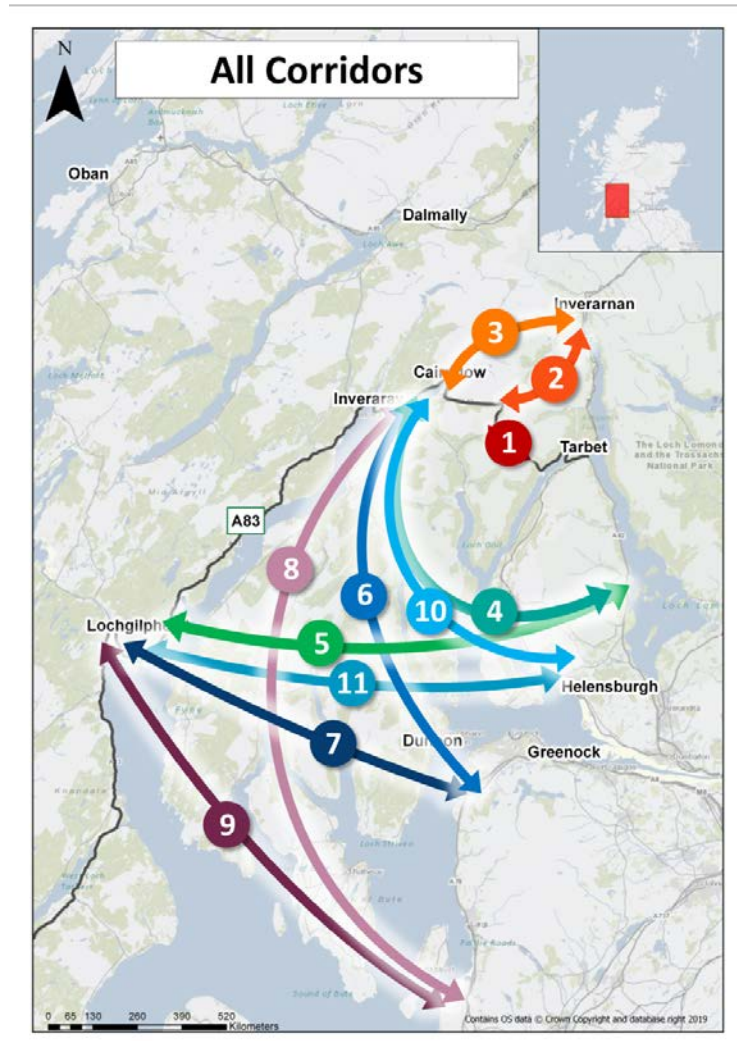
- 3.1 It is recommended that the Environment & Regeneration Committee:
- Gives approval to Officers to submit the feedback contained within Appendix 1.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The A83 is the primary route to Argyll and Bute. The Rest and Be Thankful is the highest point on the A83, separating Glen Kinglas from Glen Croe, and has a high risk of landslides. These have increased in recent years due to the frequency of heavy, intense and prolonged periods of rainfall. As a result the road has been closed on a number of occasions causing disruption to road users.

Transport Scotland has commenced a consultation exercise to request feedback on 11 project corridor options to provide a long term solution to address the issues experienced.

The following overview map sets out the eleven options:



This map indicates schematically the eleven options that are under consideration during the first stage of the development work. More detailed maps of each individual option can be found in Appendix 2.

- 4.2 The Council's proposed response is noted in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 Whilst Inverclyde is remote from the A83 a viable alternative route for road traffic to parts of Argyll and Bute during periods of closure is via the ferry from McInroy's point to Hunters Quay. For much of western Argyll this route avoids a lengthy diversion to the north via the A82. It is clear that traffic volumes on the existing ferry service increase during periods of closure although this has not been quantified.

The extent of options presented, which includes a potential fixed link proposal from Inverclyde to Cowal, gives an indication of the extent of investment which will be required to find a long term solution to the 'Rest and be thankful' issue. Whilst there are no indicative costs presented at this stage it must be assumed that all of the options will involve tens of millions of pounds, require land acquisition currently out with public ownership and take many years to progress. The proposed

response to the Consultation captures our technical views on the options which directly affect Inverclyde. In view of the lengthy timescale we anticipate in respect of agreeing and progressing a solution we have proposed that the Scottish government considers restoring ferries at Gourrock that can accommodate vehicles. This would provide enhanced road capacity at least during the period before a permanent solution is found for the A83. The cost of this would be significantly less than a fixed link option and would support economic activity in the west of Scotland as tourism begins to recover post Covid. Whilst this is not in the Scottish Government's proposed plans we would seek that discussions on this issue be revisited.

5.0 IMPLICATION

5.1 Finance:

There are no financial implications arising from the submission of the Council's response to the Consultation

One off costs:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed spend this report (£000s)	Virement from	Other comments
N/A					

Annually recurring costs:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect From	Annual Net Impact (£000s)	Virement from	Other comments
N/A					

5.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the submission of the Council's response.

5.3 Human Resource

There are no specific HR implications arising from the submission of the Council's response.

5.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
✓	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
✓	NO

(c) **Data Protection**

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES –
✓	NO - This report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

5.5 Repopulation

There are no repopulation implications arising from the submission of the Council’s response.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted on this report.

6.2 The Head of Legal and Property Services has been consulted on this report.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-corridor-options-access-to-argyll-and-bute-a83/

Bute (A83) September 2020

Feedback form

Thank you for taking the time to visit the website showing our plans for this project.

Transport Scotland will use the content of your feedback form to help inform our work on this project. Personal information will only be retained for the period of this project. All completed feedback forms will be shared with our consultants as required.

1. Of the eleven route corridors on display, we are particularly interested in any local issues or constraints you feel should be taken into consideration in design and assessment work. We would be grateful for any such feedback in the box below - either in general terms or specific to certain options.

Corridor Routes 6 and 7 directly link to Inverclyde on the A770 and then the A78 trunk road network, the A770 is a generally busy local route especially at peak times which will provide logistical challenges and may also require infrastructure upgrades to support the increased traffic flows expected with this new corridor. Although the trunk road network will be affected by these proposals, this will also impact on the local roads network as vehicles are displaced onto minor roads to void queues.

The Council do feel however that if the local network access issues are taken into account and upgraded to support proposed traffic flows then this project would bring added benefits to the local economy and would assist with ongoing travel arrangements throughout the area.

The A78 and A8 trunk road network are also busy routes at peak times with traffic congestion and journey times an ongoing daily issue. There is the added disruption that when the A8 is closed for accidents, flooding or works that at two location travelling East to West there is only one alternative local route and during these closures the local roads network comes to a standstill. The proposed design should consider alternative diversion routes along the A78 and A8 to maintain a reliable and resilient transport infrastructure.

The Council would also request that consideration is given to revisiting plans for the Gourock to Dunoon ferry to accommodate road going vehicles as well as foot passengers. There is clear evidence of traffic diversion during periods of closure of the A83 via the ferry service between McInroy's point and Hunters Quay. This is a viable route for much of western Argyll and avoids a length diversion to the north via the A82. We consider that there is merit in considering this, potentially as an interim measure until a final solution is delivered to address the A83 issue. It is clear from the range and magnitude of options that delivery of a permanent solution will take many years. It would also support tourism as we begin the recovery process from Covid. Whilst this is not in the Scottish Government's proposed plans we would seek that discussions on this issue be revisited.

2. Community group Are you a member of any community group that you feel should form part of our engagement plans?

If so which one?

NO

3. Do you think the format for the virtual sharing of information on this project and the opportunity to contact the team via email or telephone is suitable? Can you suggest any alternatives?

Yes, we do think this visual sharing of information and the opportunity to contact the team is beneficial.

4. Please tell us if there are any other options we should be considering or any other general comments.

N/A

Corridor Option 6 - Inverclyde - Cowal - Cairndow

This corridor was initially identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

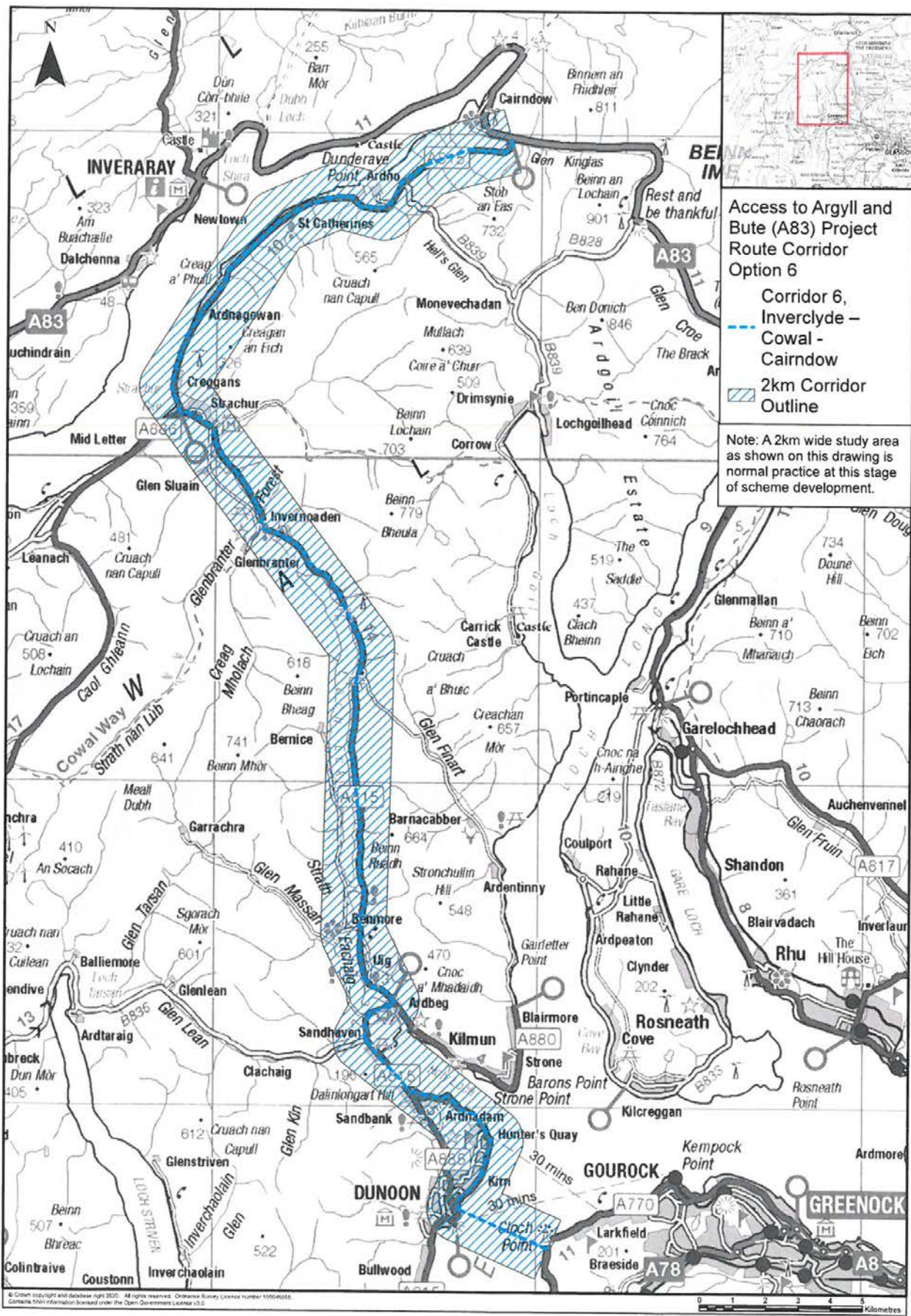
This corridor would be generally online linking the A78 Trunk Road at Inverclyde to Cowal, with the provision of a fixed link crossing of the Firth of Clyde.

From south to north, the corridor includes a connection from the A78 Trunk Road to Cowal via an approximate 3.9km fixed link crossing of the Firth of Clyde and upgrades along the A815 corridor, to its connection with the A83 Trunk Road at Cairndow. The approximate overall length of the full corridor is 50.7km in length. The fixed link crossing over the Firth of Clyde will present considerable challenges. This area is used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport. The structure will require to span a deep section of the Firth of Clyde as well as have adequate clearance for large marine vessels.

Corridor Option 7 - Inverclyde - Cowal - Lochgilphead

This corridor was initially identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be generally online linking the A78 Trunk Road at Inverclyde to Cowal, with the provision of fixed link crossings of the Firth of Clyde and Loch Fyne.

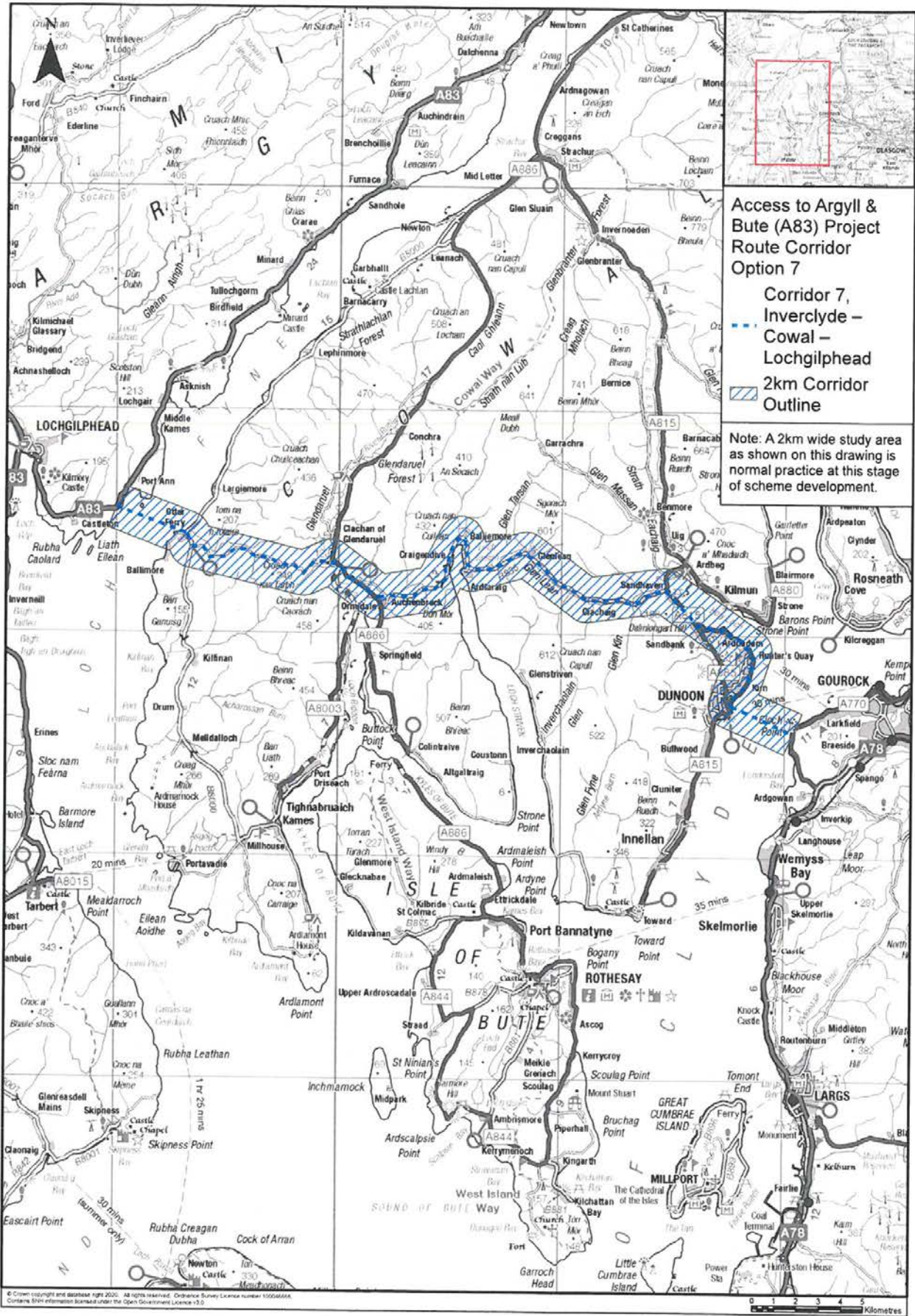


Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) Project Route Corridor Option 6

- Corridor 6, Inverclyde – Cowal – Cairndow
- 2km Corridor Outline

Note: A 2km wide study area as shown on this drawing is normal practice at this stage of scheme development.

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Access to Argyll & Bute (A83) Project Route Corridor Option 7

- Corridor 7, Inverclyde – Cowal – Lochgilphead
- 2km Corridor Outline

Note: A 2km wide study area as shown on this drawing is normal practice at this stage of scheme development.

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