

## **Glen Orchy/ Glen Lochy: Assessment of potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed road network 2016 - 2025**

### **1. Introduction**

The proposed forest road network planned to be built between 2016 – 2025 within the combined forests of Glen Lochy and Glen Orchy total 25.5 km. This includes access routes to felling coupes proposed in both glens and an 'off road' haul route in Glen Orchy to limit impacts on the existing narrow public road and its bridges.

The potential impacts on landscape character ('landscape') and visual amenity ('visual') have been assessed on site and recorded as notes relative to each section of proposed road on the attached maps.

Note that the one stretch of road in Glen Lochy which was identified as having potentially medium-high impacts on landscape character and visual amenity has been subject to a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment that has been submitted separately.

### **2. Method**

The purpose of the assessment was to identify the degree of potential impacts on landscape character or visual amenity. The assessment took into account the following key good practice considerations:

#### **2.1 Landscape Character**

- A road should first and foremost link as strongly as possible to the existing landscape character, by fitting in with the pattern of existing infrastructure and having a spatial relationship to topographical features.
- A well designed road should minimise impacts on the landform. For example, where there is a choice, a well located road should aim to minimise cut and fill, by crossing side slopes which are gentle in gradient (thereby minimising the cut and fill) wherever this is practicable.

#### **2.2 Visual Amenity**

- If a road is well located in terms of landscape character, its potential visual impact is much reduced, as even if it is visible, it will 'fit in' to the landscape character. Degree, or amount, of visibility is therefore less important than what is actually visible.
- The degree of potential visual impact is related to the relative sensitivity of the viewpoint, potential number of viewers, and the type of view that is experienced. A glimpse side view of a hillside from the relatively fast A85, for example, is far significant than a sustained view of a ridgeline that is the focal point of a view from the West Highland Way.

## 2.3 Landscape Designations

- None of the proposed roads lie within a National Scenic Area, a Special Landscape Area, or an area of Wild Land, therefore an assessment against attributes which contribute to any designation was not required.

## 2.4 Site Assessment Considerations

The site assessment that follows has therefore taken into account:

### 2.4.1 Degree of naturalness/ relationship with existing infrastructure

Neither Glen Lochy nor Glen Orchy can be considered 'untrammelled'. Both are dominated by planted forest, and already include infrastructure such as roads, the railway in Glen Lochy, small farms, and other settlements including nearby villages, as well as overhead lines and bridges across the rivers.

The infrastructure is largely located in the floor and lower sides of the glens. There may be a need to access woodland by establishing roads that are higher up the slopes, but where this is not necessary for operational reasons, roads should aim to be located as close to the glen floor as possible.

### 2.4.2 Topography

The most significant issue in relation to accommodating a new road into the landscape is its relationship with landform. Ideally, where it is possible, the road should be located where there is a natural linear feature that in addition reduces the need for cut and fill. Examples include:

- Flat or nearly level terrain, which requires very little cut and fill
- Natural terraces, which form level or nearly level platforms
- Breaks in slope – i.e. where there is a marked change of gradient from more gentle to more steeply climbing slopes, which are often long linear 'break points' in the topography. Here, the road is located on the more gentle gradient, but hugs the rising ground, so that it is back-dropped by the steeper ground, and follows a natural linear feature

Topography is also assessed in terms of:

- The gentleness of gradient – the cross-fall on less steep slopes require less cut and fill to accommodate the level platform of the road;
- Spurs/ ridges and side valleys/ hollows – in particular the convex slopes of spurs, when viewed side on, can be interrupted by the 'cut' created by the level platform of a road curving around the spur. Ideally, the road should cross the contours of a spur at a very gentle angle.

- Side slopes – roads should, wherever possible, rise and fall at a gentle gradient across side slopes, minimising the amount of ‘zig-zag’ required to reach the required elevation
- Smaller scale topography – where ever possible, the road should curve around small knolls, rather than cut through them. This is especially important where there are small scale glacial deposit features along the lower hillside slopes in these glens

### **2.4.3 Viewpoint**

- The A85, the railway, and the West Highland Way are the most potentially sensitive viewpoints. Sustained visibility from the railway and the A85 is limited by the speed of travel
- The Glen Orchy B8074 is a much smaller public road, therefore views can be more sustained as speed of travel is slower. The carpark and River Orchy walk in Glen Orchy was also identified as a more sustained viewpoint.
- Nearly all the main public views from within the glens are from viewpoints lower than the road, limiting views of the plane of the road and of the batter of the more distant, hillside ‘cut’. The main exceptions to this are two access points from the public road network, at the Glen Orchy carpark (road length 13) and Glen Lochy (road length 6) where there is higher visibility of the road plane.
- The roads are likely to be visible from higher viewpoints, including hilltops, but are not likely to be a significant change in the landscape from these distances and within the wider panoramic setting.
- No views from settlements

### **2.4.4 Type of view**

Views are assessed in terms of:

- Sustained – a view that is within sight for a length of time, for example from a promoted viewpoint, or in line of sight for a long length of roadline, thereby increasing visual sensitivity
- Focal point – when the object in view lies ahead, or is the focus of the view, or is the purpose of a viewpoint, thereby increasing visual sensitivity
- Revealed view – when a view is suddenly revealed, for example after climbing a hill, often after a period of expectation, thereby increasing visual sensitivity
- Side view – a view that is seen in passing, and is secondary to the main focus of the view, and is therefore less visually sensitive
- Glimpse view – a view that is seen very briefly in passing from a road or path, and is therefore less visually sensitive
- Panoramic view – when there is a great expanse of view, and the object is small or large relative to this visual context

### **2.4.5 Degree of visibility**

The visibility of the proposed road is also assessed relative to the amount of visual screening available or likely to become available:

- Smaller scale topography, such as drumlins, glacial deposits, etc... can visually break up the regular line of the road
- Small scale topographical features near to the viewpoint, can provide permanent visual screening
- Permanent tree cover, close to the viewpoint (such as roadside broadleaves along the public road or riparian woodland) that obscures or limits visibility
- Tree cover near to the proposed forest road, which also limits visibility either as permanent cover or temporarily between felling periods

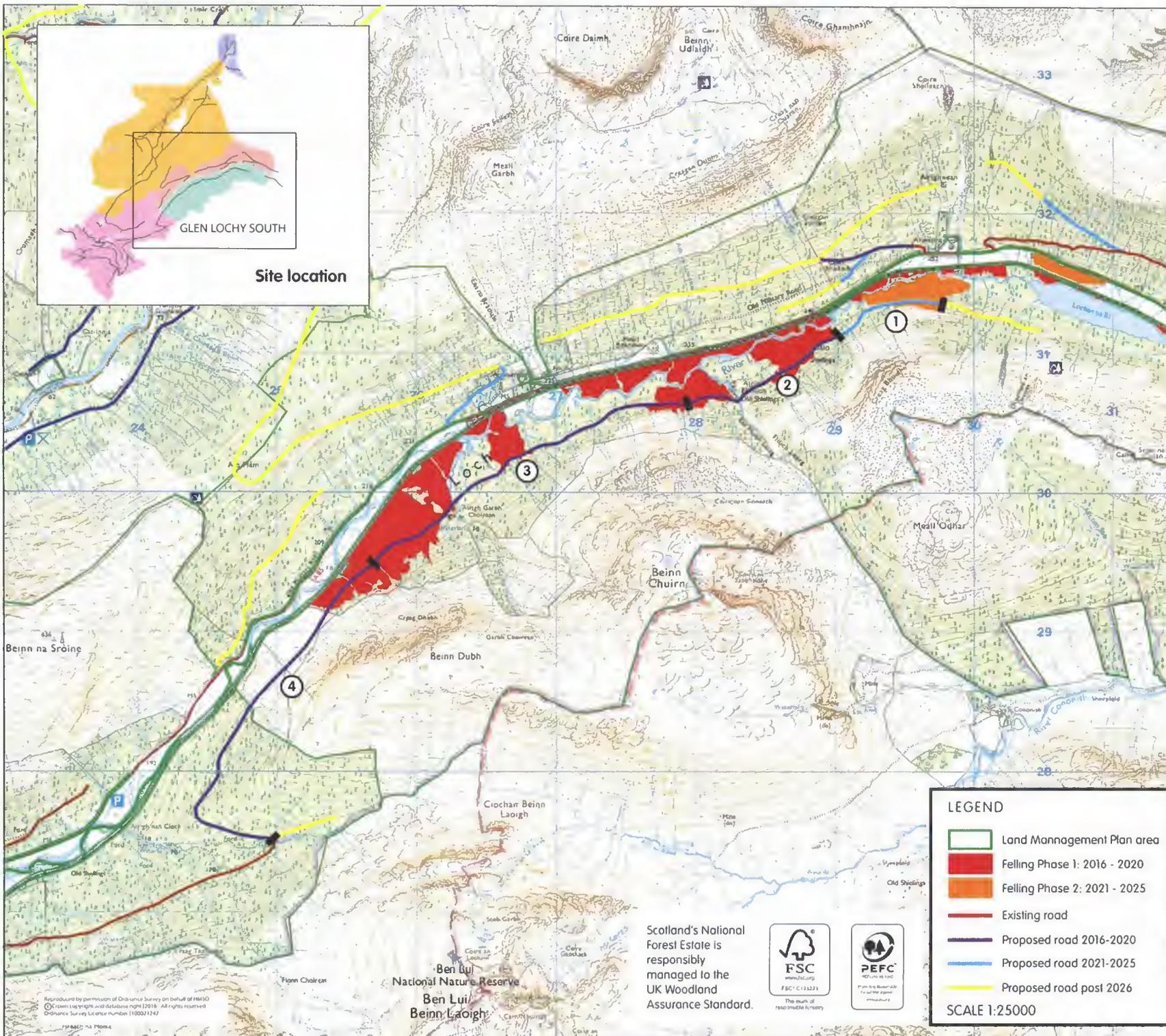
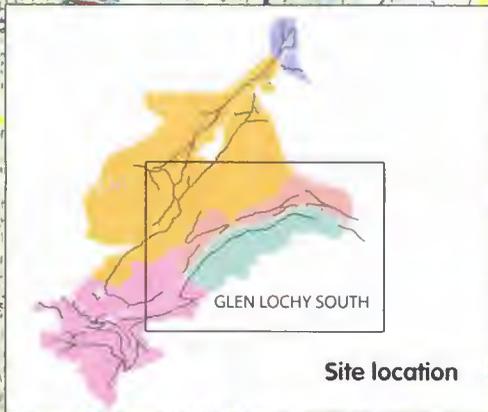
### **3. Presentation**

The assessment is recorded as annotations, related to specified stretches of road, on the attached maps.

Alison Grant  
Landscape Architect  
Forest Enterprise Scotland  
29<sup>th</sup> July 2016

# West Argyll Forest District Glen Orchy/Glen Lochy Land Management Plan

Analysis of potential  
landscape and visual  
impacts of the proposed  
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### Glen Lochy South

- 1: Short stretch of proposed road extends around convex spur
- The cut through the convex slope will be visible as a 'level platform' the width of the road in the slope profile
  - The 'level platform' will be visible from a very short stretch of the A85 (travelling east) and is not the focal point of the view
  - The gentle gradient across the side slope minimises cut and fill
  - The road is partially in open ground, so glimpse view will be visible from the outset
  - Proposed second phase felling will reveal more of the road
  - Side view glimpsed in passing
- Low-medium landscape and visual impact**
- 2: Proposed road extends along break in slope, but winds into side valley to avoid sheelings
- Road follows a natural break in slope and is well located relative to landform
  - Road is low down the hillside at the edge of the glen
  - Road avoids sheeling sites
  - The gentle gradient across the side slope minimises cut and fill
  - Proposed first phase felling will partially reveal road
  - Intermittent side view seen in passing
- Low landscape and visual impact**
- 3: Proposed road extends along break in slope
- Road follows the natural break in slope and is well located relative to landform
  - Road is low down the hillside at the edge of the glen
  - The gentle gradient across the side slope minimises cut and fill
  - Proposed first phase felling will partially reveal road
  - Intermittent side view seen in passing
- Low landscape and visual impact**
- 4: Proposed road extends across unplanted land and around spur
- Proposal assessed in more detailed landscape and visual assessment.**

**LEGEND**

- Land Management Plan area
- Felling Phase 1: 2016 - 2020
- Felling Phase 2: 2021 - 2025
- Existing road
- Proposed road 2016-2020
- Proposed road 2021-2025
- Proposed road post 2026

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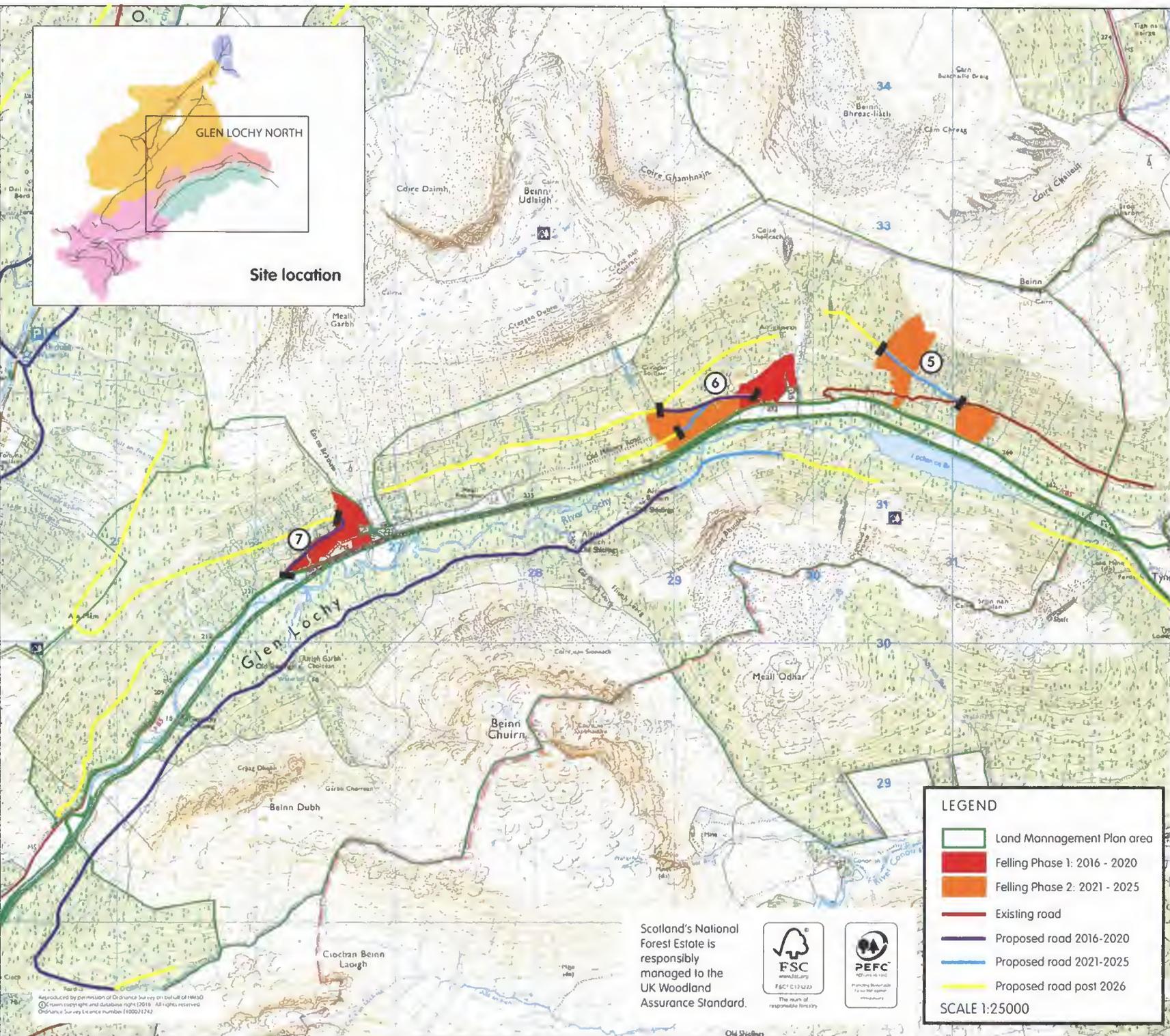
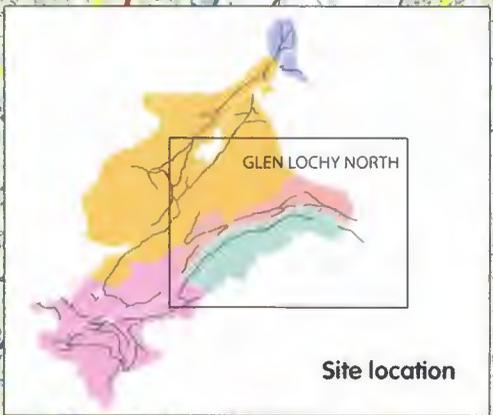
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## Analysis of potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed road network 2016 - 2026



### Glen Lochy North

- 5:** Proposed road along a relatively even slope
- Road very gently crosses contours to rise up the side slope
  - The gentle gradient across the side slope minimises cut and fill
  - Proposed second phase felling will partially reveal road, although visibility is very limited
  - Distant side view

### Low landscape and visual impact

- 6:** Proposed road located on lower slopes, clearly visible from A85
- Road is located on lower slopes and is well located relative to landform
  - Road located on relatively level and gentle gradients with minimal cut and fill
  - Road entrance curves quickly away from A85, so limiting visibility along road length
  - Existing felling and proposed second phase felling will reveal road
  - Side view seen in passing
  - Establishment of woodland on recent felled site will assist immediate screening

### Low-medium visual impact. Low landscape impact

- 7:** Proposed road located on lower slopes, clearly visible from A85
- Road is located on lower slopes and is well located relative to landform
  - Road located on relatively level and gentle gradients with minimal cut and fill
  - Road entrance curves quickly away from A85, so limiting visibility along road length
  - Proposed first phase felling will reveal road
  - Side view seen in passing
- Low-medium visual impact. Low landscape impact**

**LEGEND**

- Land Management Plan area
- Felling Phase 1: 2016 - 2020
- Felling Phase 2: 2021 - 2025
- Existing road
- Proposed road 2016-2020
- Proposed road 2021-2025
- Proposed road post 2026

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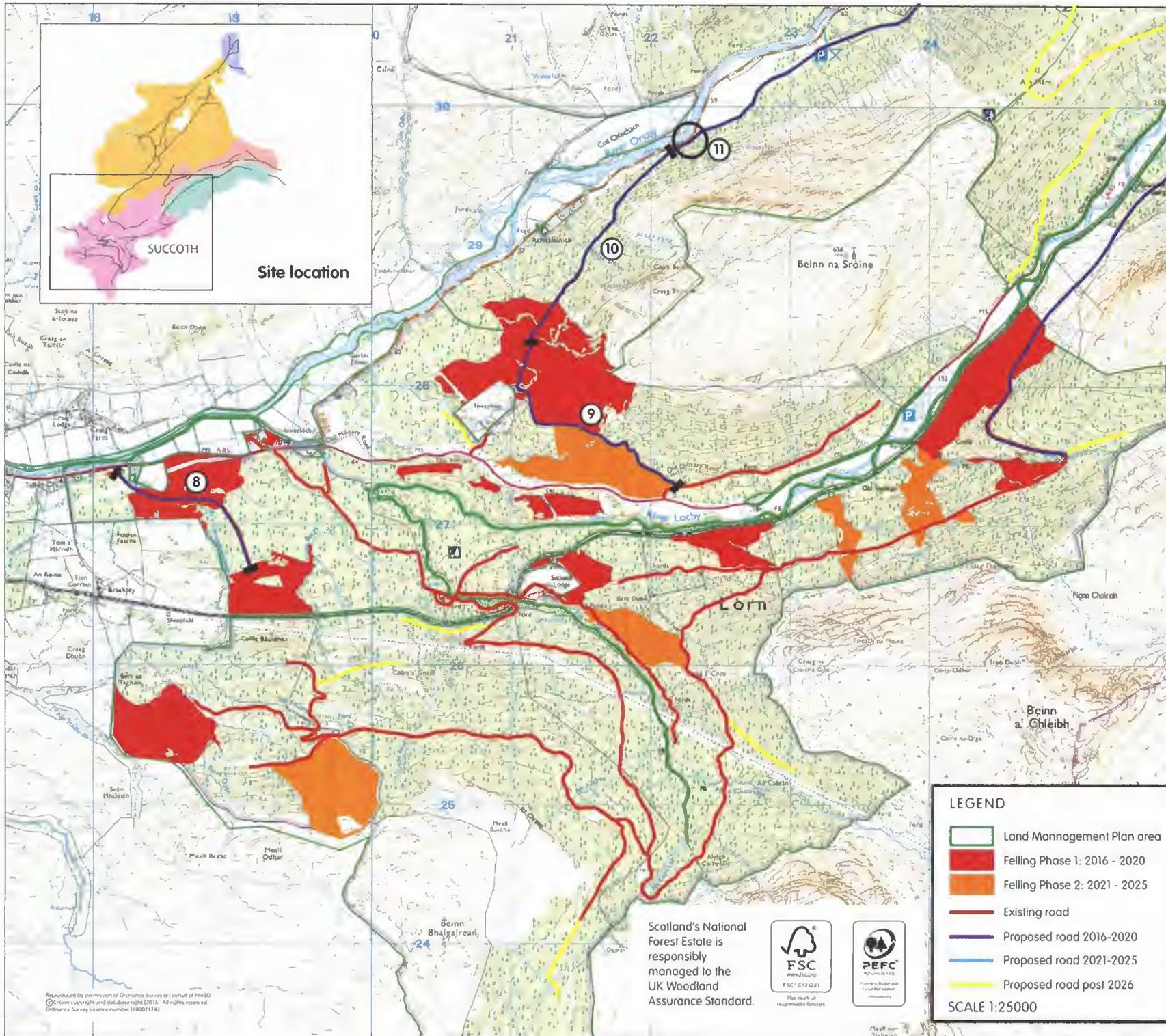
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# West Argyll Forest District Glen Orchy/Glen Lochy Land Management Plan

## Analysis of potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed road network 2016 - 2026



### Succoth

- 8:** Proposed road across glen floor
- Road extends across almost level terrain, avoiding low hummocks, and is well located relative to landform
  - Level terrain limits cut and fill
  - Road entrance curves quickly away from A85, so limiting visibility along road length
  - Proposed first phase felling will partially reveal road, although woodland at entrance is retained
  - Side view glimpsed in passing

### Low landscape and visual impact

- 9:** Proposed road extends around west facing spur
- Road occupies natural terraces, gentle slopes, or sits on break in slope between steeper and less steep ground and is well located relative to landform
  - Road gently crosses contours
  - The gentle gradient across the side slope minimises cut and fill
  - Road aligned to work around the small scale terrain to minimise visual intrusion
  - Proposed first and second phases felling will reveal road
  - From Dalmailly, potential sustained focal view, but intermittent as largely screened by broadleaves close to viewpoints and foreshortened landform
  - From Glen Lochy, side view glimpsed in passing, hidden by retained roadside trees

### Low-medium landscape and medium visual impact

- 10:** Proposed road crosses irregular slope
- Road located at the base of the steeper slopes and is well located relative to landform
  - Road located on side slope with minimal cut and fill
  - Road crosses slope at gentle gradient
  - No proposed felling first two phases

### Low landscape and visual impact

- 11:** Proposed road extends very close to B8074
- Road transitions from level valley floor to gently rising up the hill slope
  - Road located on relatively level and gently gradients with minimal cut and fill
  - No proposed felling first two phases
  - Potential glimpse view along short length of the road

**Low landscape impact. Low-medium visual impact.**

### LEGEND

- Land Management Plan area
- Felling Phase 1: 2016 - 2020
- Felling Phase 2: 2021 - 2025
- Existing road
- Proposed road 2016-2020
- Proposed road 2021-2025
- Proposed road post 2026

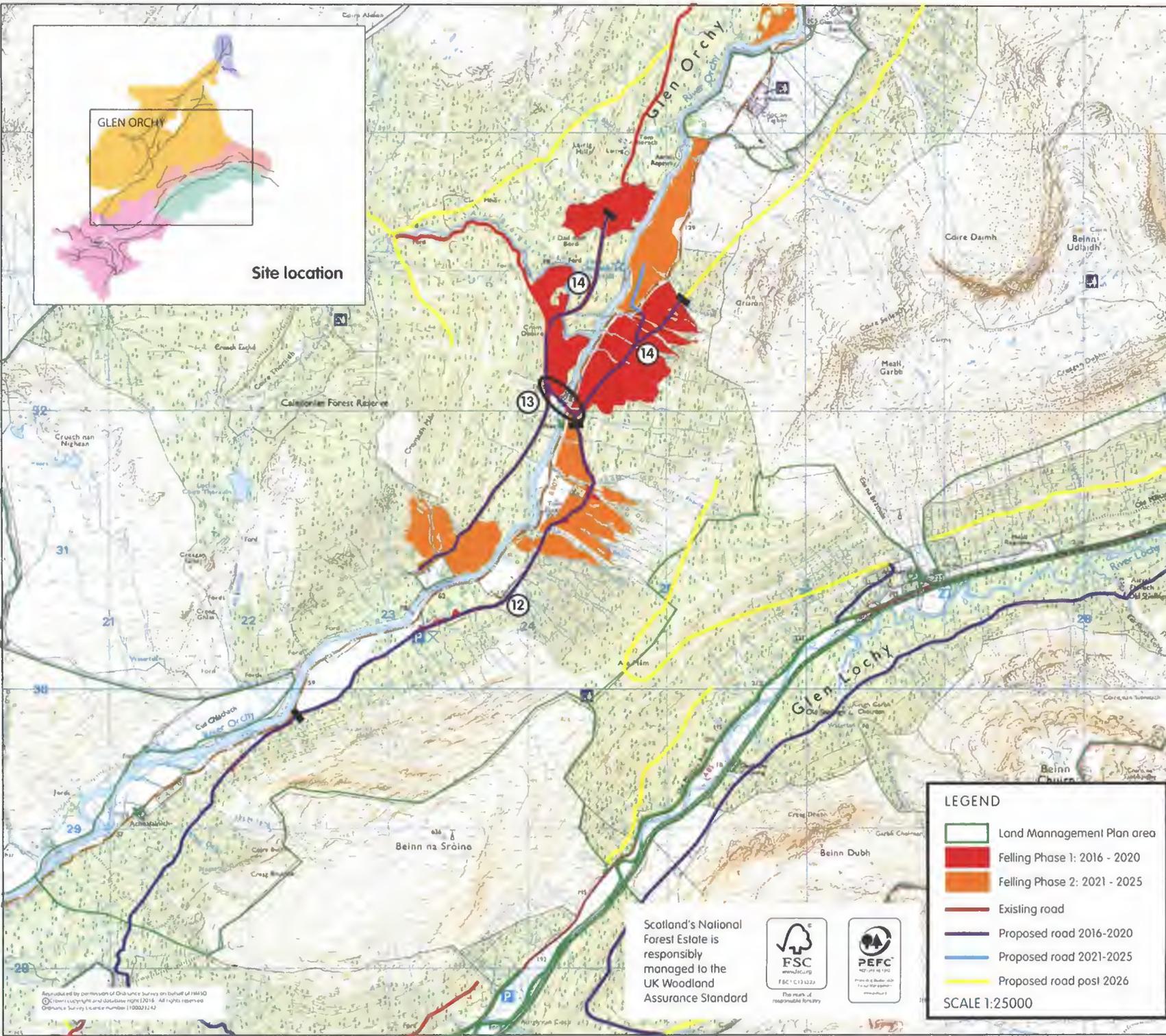
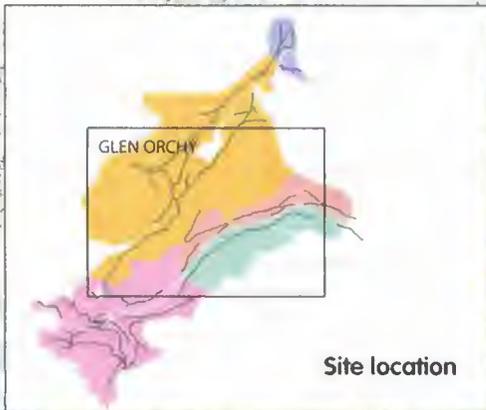
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# West Argyll Forest District Glen Orchy/Glen Lochy Land Management Plan

## Analysis of potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed road network 2016 - 2026



### Glen Orchy

- 12:** Proposed road extends along edge of flat glen floor
- Road located at the natural break in slope between the valley floor and the hillside, well located relative to landform
  - Level terrain minimises cut and fill
  - Road visible along the field and forest edge
  - Proposed second phase felling will also partially reveal road
  - Side view in passing

### Low landscape and visual impact

- 13:** Proposed location of access from the public B8074/crossing point
- High but localised visibility from the B8074 and the visitor car park
  - Bridge crossing already built, along with line of road to the north of the river
  - Road crosses level terrain then is located at break in slope at the base of the slope, and is well located relative to landform
  - Level terrain limits cut and fill
  - Road curves away from B 8074 to limit visibility along the length of the road from public viewpoint
  - Proposed first and second phase felling will reveal road
  - Sustained view from car park, cumulative visual impact where roads converge, but visual impact localised

### Medium visual impact. Low landscape impact

- 14:** Proposed roads extend both sides of the River Orchy and the B8074
- Road is located on natural terraces to the north of the river, well located to landform
  - Road is located at break in slope south of the river, well located to landform
  - Road crosses contours at a gentle gradient limiting cut and fill
  - Forest road crosses B8074, but road curves quickly away from A85, so limiting visibility along road length
  - Proposed first and second phase felling will intermittently reveal some stretches of road
  - Views from public road, car park and path along the River Orchy very limited by riverside trees, low level hummocky landform and localised ridges near to the B8074

**Low visual impact. Low landscape impact.**

**LEGEND**

- Land Management Plan area
- Felling Phase 1: 2016 - 2020
- Felling Phase 2: 2021 - 2025
- Existing road
- Proposed road 2016-2020
- Proposed road 2021-2025
- Proposed road post 2026

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## Auch

- 15:** Proposed road extends across very gentle terrain
- Road extends across very gentle and level terrain, limiting cut and fill
  - No proposed felling first two phases
  - Views very limited

### Low landscape and visual impact

- 16:** Proposed road extends across irregular slope
- Road located at break in slope, well located relative to landform
  - Road located behind low hummocks on irregular terrain, limiting visibility
  - Proposed second phase felling will intermittently reveal some stretches of road
  - Intermittent views from A82, West Highland Way and railway will be partially screened by standing trees and landform

### Low landscape and visual impact

## LEGEND

-  Land Management Plan area
-  Felling Phase 1: 2016 - 2020
-  Felling Phase 2: 2021 - 2025
-  Existing road
-  Proposed road 2016-2020
-  Proposed road 2021-2025
-  Proposed road post 2026

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