



Appendix 5: Specific Issues

This section refers to specific proposed felling coupes, which are illustrated with coupe reference numbers in *Map M04 Felling and Thinning*.

Roadside coupe 04044

Adjacent to overhead powerlines and the B839, which is the only access road into the villages of Lochgoilhead and Carrick Castle. This coupe has been expanded since the consultation version of this plan in order to avoid leaving an unstable forest edge next to the road. Felling of this coupe will require liaison and co-ordination with the power company and Argyll & Bute Council, as well as regular communication with the local community and community groups.

Donich Glen coupe 04076

In the southwest area of Donich Glen, this coupe contains Larch spp. and windblow. There is currently no operational access to this coupe for forestry machinery; the existing roads from the west are not suitable and become a footpath on entering the forest. Felling of this coupe relies on the construction of the Planned Forest Road in the south side of Donich Glen which is programmed towards the end of this plan period. Felling of this coupe will take place after road construction has been completed, which is likely to be outwith the period covered by this plan.

Riverside coupes

This area is on the west side of Strath Goil. It is highly visible from the public road when travelling south towards village and is adjacent to The River Walk, an attractive footpath promoted by local community groups (*Map M08 Recreation*). Larch in two of these coupes necessitates felling but there is a conflict with the footpath due to lack of options for operational access and timber extraction. There are three coupes in this area, indicated on *Map M04 Felling and Thinning*:

- Coupe 04087: this is a clearfell coupe with a significant amount of Larch spp.
- Coupe 04194: This is a small clearfell coupe of mainly mature Larch spp.
- Coupe 04658: This is a thinning coupe of mainly broadleaves; likely to be limited to small-scale works to manage and enhance Rainforest habitat.

Access to these coupes with forestry machinery (*operational access*) is extremely limited, since north of the turning point at the end of the forest road section to the south of coupe 04194, the only access is on foot on the Riverside Walk footpath. It is hoped that the timber from coupe 04194 can be extracted the short distance to the forest road end via a forwarder route cut through the standing trees to the west of the path, although this is not without challenges and

risk; and the small scale nature of the proposed work in thinning coupe 04658 means access with large forestry machines should not be required.

The biggest challenge will be accessing coupe 04087. In principal there are three possible routes for operational access into coupe 04087; from the north, west and south (See *Figure 1*, below).

- The route from the north is currently not suitable due to the weight restriction on the bridge, and that the forest road to the north of this has not been constructed or maintained for modern forestry traffic and in recent years has been maintained and used by Drimsyniebeg Farm. The southern section is a footpath forming part of the Riverside Walk. Using this route would require a new section of road, a substantial road upgrade and an new or temporary bridge. It would be expected that the footpath section would be reinstated following the completion of operations.
- The route from the west would have to come from the existing forest road and come around or through thinning coupe 04553 (*Map M04 Felling and Thinning*). There is no existing forest road linking coupe 04087 to the forest road so this would require construction of a new road or substantial temporary extraction track. This is quite a steep slope.
- The route to the south would link up with the existing forest road end to the south of coupe 04194 (*Map M04 Felling and Thinning*). This would require the construction of a new forest road or substantial temporary extraction track along the line of, and/or parallel to, the Riverside Walk footpath. There is limited space for a road or track suitable for forestry machinery on this route and it may require additional tree felling along its length to the south of coupe 04087. This option may also require additional facilities to the north of the War Memorial around thinning coupe 04511. It would be expected that the footpath section would be reinstated following the completion of operations.

All options require some level of infrastructure development, e.g. construction of new access tracks and associated facilities. These have to go through an EIA-SOR planning approval process through Scottish Forestry and the planning authority, as outlined in Appendix 4. Public consultation is built in to this process.

Whichever option is deemed the most appropriate, felling of coupe 04087 in particular will bring a significant change to the experience felt by users of the footpath, since that section of the path will change from having a mature conifer forest on one side to being quite open, until a new woodland starts to establish.

Public access will have to be managed for health & safety reasons during forestry operations, especially during tree felling, but this will be done via PAMPs as described in *Section C 2.13* of the Larch Removal Plan. Remedial work and/or reinstatement of the path would be expected should it be affected by forestry operations. Please also refer to Forestry Commission Practice Note FCPN104 "*Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland*" (2013). This guidance, and/or any relevant guidance and legislation that may update or replace this, will be followed when managing public access and all forestry operations.

During the consultation process, the potential was raised of felling the mature Norway spruce on the east side of the path (Coupe 04095). The benefit would be of making a reduced number of interventions in this area, reducing future impacts; however, there would be implications for the

potential impacts including on landscape, biodiversity and habitat; and there are operational difficulties to consider, such as the soft ground and the proximity to the River Goil. Felling of this coupe is not within the focus of this plan, but it may have to be considered when a detailed operational plan is devised for felling the riverside coupes. If so, it will form part of the EIA-SOR submission and approval for felling would be sought separately from Scottish Forestry.

Figure 1 – Operational access options for riverside coupes, as per text above. Key: Red hatched areas are clearfell coupes; green hatched area is a thinning coupe; purple hatched area is the riverside Norway spruce; yellow arrows show direction of operational access/extraction route options; dashed white lines are existing forest roads; green dashed line here is the River Walk. Background is 2023 aerial photography.

