

## **Argyll and Bute Council, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - Agenda Item 13 – Rest and Be Thankful Update – Motion**

The impact, on all aspects of life in Argyll and Bute, of any kind of disruption on the A83 lifeline route, is such that any progress update from the Scottish Government must be welcomed. The most recent announcement earlier in June this year confirmed that the preferred long-term solution is the construction of a debris flow shelter to address the long-running challenges at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

A step forward like this on the journey to a permanent fix is of course positive. However - it is absolutely vital to maintain momentum and to ensure that there is absolutely no question whatsoever of any element of unnecessary additional delay, given the very serious disruption that Argyll and Bute has had to cope with so often and for so long.

Our communities therefore have many questions and concerns despite this sign of progress. They are asking why it took so long for this preferred option to be identified, given that such a solution has been suggested on a number of occasions over the past several years.

They are asking about timescales and how much longer this will take. They are questioning what will happen while work is ongoing. They are deeply concerned about the prospect of any of the main route in and out of Argyll and Bute being confined to a single lane during construction, which would be crippling for the area given the impact so far and the fact that the process could yet take several more years.

And, crucially, they are asking what can be done to ensure that Argyll and Bute remains open for business and able to move its valuable produce, products and people to and from the rest of the country.

Argyll and Bute Council therefore:

1. Requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the newly appointed Minister for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP, to highlight our communities' concerns and their need for urgency in progressing the permanent solution for the Rest;
2. Seeks reassurance from the Minister and her officials at Transport Scotland on a range of points including clear timescales; measures to mitigate against delay; contingency plans for maintaining access in the event of a major incident during construction; and confirmation that the A82 upgrade will progress as planned.
3. Asks the Minister to convene an urgent meeting of the A83 Taskforce given the commitment made at the last meeting in Arrochar, in the context of this recent announcement and the questions that remain within the community and local industry;
4. Calls upon the Minister to ensure that the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and any other relevant agency will prepare and share a robust communications strategy which will reinforce the vital message at a national level that Argyll and Bute is open for business;
5. Reiterates this Council's longstanding position that urgent completion of the permanent solution is of the utmost importance in order that Argyll and Bute's current and future opportunities for population and economic growth are not compromised, and;

6. Requests officers to respond to the Scottish Government's recent announcement on the basis of paragraphs 1 to 5, above.

Proposer: Cllr Robin Currie

Seconder: Cllr Andrew Kain