

**UPDATE ON A83 REST AND BE THANKFUL**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

Members will be aware that there has been a long standing issue regarding the stability of land adjacent to the A83 for many years. There have been numerous 'landslips' and material wash outs which have resulted in the A83 being unavailable whilst material is removed from the carriageway and the road corridor made safe for use by the travelling public.

The A83 is the responsibility of Transport Scotland. Argyll and Bute Council have been working closely with Transport Scotland over recent years to mitigate the impact of 'landslip' events on the travelling public and the economy of Argyll and Bute.

A Taskforce has been established which has resulted in a route study having been completed for the A83. From the route study, Transport Scotland have committed to various works including landslip netting, the improvement and upgrade of the Old Military Road and a number of other safety related improvements along the route.

The latest meeting took place on 7 July 2015 and was attended by the Scottish Minister for Transport and Islands and the Council's Chief Executive Officer, members and council officers. At the time of writing the minutes from the meeting are not available but are expected to be available to table at the meeting on 13 August.

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**2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and reports on the latest Taskforce meeting held on 7 July 2015.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members note the report.

**4.0 DETAILS**

- 4.1 The A83 Taskforce Group most recently met on Tuesday 7 July 2015 and was attended by the Chief Executive Officer, members and council officers to further discuss mitigation measures on the A83. The minutes of the meeting are not available at the time of writing but are expected in advance of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 13 August.

**5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 This report provides an update on the A83 Rest ad Be Thankful and reports on the latest Taskforce meeting held on 7 July 2015.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1	Policy	None
6.2	Financial	Lack of availability of the A83 has an impact on travel cost as well as a general impact on the economy of Argyll and Bute.
6.3	Legal	None
6.4	HR	None
6.5	Equalities	None
6.6	Risk	None
6.7	Customer Services	None

**Policy Lead – Ellen Morton**

**Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure  
July 2015**

**For further information contact:** Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Amenity Services

## Notes of Meeting



**Meeting Title** A83 Taskforce Meeting 9

**Meeting Scope** A83

**Venue:** Three Villages Hall - Arrochar

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 12.30pm

**Present:** Derek MacKay MSP - Minister for Transport and Islands (DMack)  
Michael Russell MSP (MR)  
Jonny Moran – Transport Scotland (JM)  
Keith Murray – Transport Scotland (KM)  
Graeme Low - Transport Scotland (GL)  
Eddie Ross – BEAR Scotland (ER)  
John Wrigley – BEAR Scotland (JW)  
Helen Bradley – Jacobs (HB)  
David Glen – Jacobs (DG)  
Laura Donaldson – BEAR Scotland (LD)  
Mike Story – Chair of A83 Marketing Sub-Group (MS)  
Gordon Ross – Western Ferries (GR)  
Neil MacRae – Hitrans (NMacR)  
Richard Trail – Argyll & Bute Council (RT)  
Robert G MacIntyre – Argyll & Bute Council (RGM)  
Alistair MacDougall – Argyll and Bute Council (AMacD)  
Sally Loudon - Argyll & Bute Council (SL)  
Callum Robertson – Argyll and Bute Council (CR)  
Jane MacLeod – Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce (JMacL)  
Murdo MacLeod – Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce (MMacL)  
Alan Bell – Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park (AB)  
John Hair – Forestry Commission (JH)  
Ian MacInnes – Lochgilphead Community Council (IMacI)  
Martyn McDonald – Private Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Islands (MM)

**Apologies:** Morag Mackay, Gordon Watson, Dick Walsh, Ellen Morton, Peter McKerral , Jackie Baillie MSP, Donald Clark, Alison Hay.

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<b>Welcomes, Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
1	The Minister welcomed participants to the meeting and explained that due to other commitments the meeting had to be delayed until July. He restated the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing the risk of landslides impacting upon the A83 and that the key issue was maintaining continuity of access to	

	Argyll.	
	<b>Review of Minutes of Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>	
2	<p>JM reviewed the actions from the previous minutes.</p> <p>Donald Clark wished to see a copy of the report that states that the critical length is 850m. This was covered by the presentation given in Agenda Item 4.</p> <p>DMacK had asked for a note of the landslide incidents. This was provided directly by Transport Scotland (TS).</p> <p>DMacK had asked for a review of options that will address continuity of access. This was covered in the presentation in Agenda Item 4 and a paper circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>JM advised that Discussions continue with the various parties in relation to the proposed planting scheme. It is hoped to be able commence these works later in 2015/16.</p> <p>JM also advised the group that the debrief of the October 2014 landslide will be published this week on the Transport Scotland website.</p> <p>MR expressed his concern that the meeting planned for June had had to be delayed until July given the urgency of the matters in hand and that Cllr. Douglas Philand (Argyll and Bute Council) had a public petition for a Permanent Solution for A83 currently being considered by The Public Petitions Committee. DMacK said although the meeting had been delayed, for reasons already explained, the work on the A83 had continued and good progress made.</p> <p>JMacL highlighted that the Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce had not been invited to The Public Petitions Committee meeting to be held on 7th September. She will contact the Committee. DMacK confirmed that he and TS will meet the Committee that day.</p> <p>DMacK confirmed that he had instructed Transport Scotland to progress with research to help understand the economic impacts of landslide and flood events that affect the trunk road network. With respect to the October 2014 landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful, a questionnaire will be sent to businesses in the region for them to advise how they felt the incident impacted upon their finances to help provide a better understanding of the impacts of these types of incidents. This will also be sent to Taskforce members.</p>	<p>TS</p> <p>TS</p>
	<b>Review of the works completed/proposed on the A83</b>	
	A copy of the presentation for this and Agenda Items 4 and 5 is available at <a href="http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/project/a83-taskforce">www.transportscotland.gov.uk/project/a83-taskforce</a>	

3	<p>John Wrigley confirmed that the Red Option netting and drainage works are now complete.</p> <p>In 2015/16, an additional £3M has been set aside to further improve the route.</p> <p>Schemes progressing within the next 12 months include:</p> <p>£1.3M Strone Point road realignment programmed to commence Autumn 2015;</p> <p>Erines realignment - site clearance and £250K ground investigation in 2015/16, construction (estimated between £2M-£3M) programmed to start in Autumn 2016;</p> <p>Loch Shira landslide works – designs and land negotiations progressing, Works (£400k) to be completed prior to the start of the realignment works at Strone Point;</p> <p>Glen Kinglas landslide works – Discussions on proposed ‘catch ditches’ to be discussed with landowner in the coming months. Proposal is for the first of these sections to be constructed in Autumn 2015 (estimated value of £125K);</p> <p>£175K has been set aside for the permanent replacement of the fence which suffered an impact last financial year at Rest and be Thankful;</p> <p>A83 Works on newly trunked section - A further £350K package of resurfacing works. This follows the North of Campbeltown work recently completed;</p> <p>The next phase of bend assessment work will see signage and lining improvements to aid driver awareness and improve road safety. This £100K works package is programmed for implementation in Spring 2016;</p> <p>2015/16 will see the start of a programme to rationalise layby provision along the A83 with £100K of improvements envisaged;</p> <p>Works to improve pedestrian crossing facilities within Campbeltown, valued at £25K, are due for construction in winter 2015;</p> <p>Development of a shared depot facility in Machrihanish with Argyll and Bute Council.</p> <p>JMaCL requested a copy of a plan showing the proposed realignment at Strone Point. (copy to be posted on TS website).</p> <p>MR asked for a note on spend relating to the A83 and the Rest and Be Thankful (RaBT), TS to provide. SL said that communication of these types of statistics was essential to show what was being done to keep Argyll open for business.</p> <p><b>Post Meeting Note – Since the Taskforce meeting, the final spend figures for Financial Year 2014/15 have been updated. Spend on the A83 trunk road from 2007/08 to 2014/15 is £48M. This includes a spend of over £10M through the Taskforce, of which over £7M has been spent at the Rest and Be Thankful and the Old Military Road diversion. The further £3M committed in 2015/16 to the programme of works from the Taskforce demonstrates this Government’s commitment to ensuring that Argyll has continuity of access and stays open for business.</b></p>	<p>TS/BEAR</p> <p>TS</p>
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	<p>MR said that he had had some complaints from constituents regarding communications prior to the surfacing works in Kintyre and stated that consultation could be better.</p> <p>MS asked why the works at Glen Kinglas were taking so long. JW said that the main issue related to consultation with the landowner over design issues.</p> <p>IMaCl said that a fuller understanding of access issues during landslide events was required. The message that the “A83 is closed” in the media, for instance during events at Glen Kinglas, did not communicate that access to Lochgoilhead was still possible from the A83. A general discussion took place around this issue. DMack instructed that an exercise should take place to present the various possible scenarios and how these should be communicated.</p> <p>JMaCl thanked Iain Macdonald, who has now left BEAR, for all his good work in the past and asked for the contact details of his successor. ER confirmed that the new Network Manager was Tommy Deans and his details would be passed on.</p>	<p>TS/BEAR</p> <p>BEAR</p>
	<b>A83 Trunk Road Study – Review of Options to Address Continuity of Access</b>	
4	<p>David Glen, Technical Director, Bridges, Jacobs presented the findings of the review to the meeting.</p> <p>He then invited comments/questions from Taskforce members.</p> <p>GR asked if the catch fences on the hillside at RaBT could be made less conspicuous, could they be painted green for instance. General discussion took place with no consensus being reached, there being pros and cons around maintenance, ground conditions at different times of the year and planting around fences. JM confirmed that TS would examine options for planting around fences.</p> <p>IMaCl enquired if the new entrance to the Local Diversion Route (LDR) was the one already constructed, DG suggested that further options could be examined in addition to this entrance.</p> <p>IMaCl asked if the new bus turning circle could be used to stack vehicles during a landslide event at RaBT. JM confirmed that this issue would be examined.</p> <p>IMaCl asked that if both the A83 and LDR were affected during an event will the Forestry Track be used for traffic. After discussion, DMack confirmed that for reasons of public safety this would not be possible.</p> <p>MR thanked DG for his informative presentation and said that he now had a better understanding of the issues. MR asked what the next steps would be towards securing a permanent solution and that this could be advised to the public. JM advised that the chosen Red Option had been delivered and work continues to examine opportunities for further resilience of the LDR and effectiveness of the netting works.</p> <p>DMack advised that the way forward is to focus on examining options to further improve the resilience and operation of the LDR and to continue with the assessment/review of the netting works. TS/BEAR will progress this. MR thanked</p>	<p>TS</p> <p>TS</p> <p>TS/BEAR</p>

	<p>the Minister for this and DMack asked if the group agreed with this recommendation as the option to explore as the long term solution to provide continuity of access to the region. This was agreed.</p> <p>DMack advised that a press release would be issued advising of the meeting and the outcome relating to the group's decision on the long term solution.</p>	TS/BEAR
	<b>Marketing sub-group update</b>	
5	<p>MS said that he was disappointed that there was no mention of Western Ferries in the review presentation as they offered a good alternative for traffic wishing to access the Cowal peninsula following a closure of the A83. He requested that the report be updated to reflect the role played by western Ferries.</p> <p>MS then gave the following update:</p> <p>The Marketing and Communications group is made up of Argyll Businesses, Tourism associations, Chambers of Commerce and local media, supported by Transport Scotland, BEAR Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council.</p> <p>The main role of the group is to add local knowledge and trust to the delivery of information pertaining to the A83 Trunk Road and in particular the works and events around the Rest and Be Thankful. The key message delivered by the group is "Argyll is open for Business".</p> <p>The group meets four times per year, unless significant events occur, or specific items are raised by any of its members.</p> <p>The group uses a network of social media channels, digital press and print media to disseminate accurate and timely news events regarding the A83 and has a reach of around 39,000 people from a total population of 78,000.</p> <p>The group has also encouraged and facilitated representation by BEAR Scotland at key local events and has encouraged the media where possible to promote the positives of the route rather than merely dwell on the negatives.</p> <p>The group can also act as a platform for Local Councillors, MPs and MSPs to meet with key stakeholders, and its individual members act as media contacts, re enforcing the message "Argyll is open for Business".</p> <p>MS suggested that a map location of any incident on the A83 would be helpful for web updating and social media. ER said that BEAR would look at this provision.</p> <p>MS said that he had noted a change of mood following the last landslide event in October 2014. There is a feeling that more action is required.</p> <p>MS suggested the use of "infomercials" to get information out to the public.</p> <p>A discussion ensued on how events are reported by the media. DMack emphasised that clarity of message was key in these situations and that we need to capture how the mitigation measures are helping.</p>	<p>Jacobs</p> <p>BEAR</p>
	<b>AOCB</b>	



6	<p>GR highlighted that Western Ferries had invested £17M in ferry facilities since 2007. He said that the ferries could handle 500 cars per hour and they offered a viable alternative option to access Argyll.</p> <p>IMaCl said that various signs had been promised around the A83 in the Cowal peninsula at Strachur, Dunoon Road End and at Lochgoilhead. He was particularly concerned that he had heard nothing in regard to the latter. TS to investigate the provision of a VMS at Lochgoilhead in conjunction with Argyll and Bute Council.</p> <p>RGM said that if the A82/A85/A819 diversion was in use there was a real concern regarding flooding of the A82 and this should be looked at. DMaCk said he had travelled the A82 in an HGV this morning and was well aware of the issues and that work was ongoing on the A82.</p>	TS/A&BC
	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
7	DMaCk thanked all for attending and suggested that a further meeting be held later in the year to allow for further discussions on the progress of LDR resilience works. Details to be confirmed.	