

**UPDATE ON A82 AND A83**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the preferred route option for the upgrading of the A82 between Tarbet and Invararnan and A83 Rest and Be Thankful.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The A83 is the responsibility of Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council have been working closely with Transport Scotland over recent years to mitigate the impact of 'landslip' events for the travelling public and the economy of Argyll and Bute.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The preferred route option for the upgrading of the A82 between Tarbet and Invararnan has been announced by Scottish Government. There is a further consultation process to be carried out by Transport Scotland. This is summarised in the report.
- 1.6 It is recommended that Members note the report.

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**2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the preferred route option for the upgrading of the A82 between Tarbet and Invararnan and A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members note the report.

**4.0 DETAILS**

**A82 – Tarbet to Invararnan**

- 4.1 Scottish Government has announced the preferred route option for the upgrading of the A82 between Tarbet and Invararnan. Based on the route options assessment process, Route Option 1 – online upgrade – is to be taken forward as the preferred route option (see Appendix 1). Transport Scotland have confirmed that further consideration will be given to the following as part of the design and development of the preferred option (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 3 assessment process):
- Inclusion of 2 short off line sections near Ardvorlich.
  - The alignment will be developed to reduce impact on properties and landowners.
  - The alignment will also be adjusted to assist construction and reduce impact on road users.
  - A carriageway width of 6 metres and 7.3 metres (both with 1 meter hard strips) will be considered.
- 4.2 Transport Scotland has also confirmed that the next steps of the development and assessment of the development and assessment of the preferred route will be:
- Consultation with stakeholders, affected landowners and general public.

- Design development of the preferred route.
- Identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of the draft orders which will define the line of the developed preferred route option.
- Environmental impact assessment of the developed preferred route options and preparation of environmental statement.
- Development of suitable mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environment.

4.3 Whilst any physical works on the ground are some time away, it is considered important that Argyll and Bute continue to work closely with Transport Scotland regarding the proposals. Assuming that contractors will need to take possession (closure) of the carriageway, as per the recent works at Pulpit Rock, similar return to service plans will be required in the event of the A83 becoming unavailable during possessions on the A82. The return to service plan will ensure that access is retained into Argyll and Bute and beyond.

## **A83 – Rest and Be Thankful**

### 5 December Event

- 4.4 A landslide estimated to weigh around 1000 tonnes (approximately 50 lorry loads) was caught on 5 December in specially designed debris protection measures installed to prevent material from the steep slopes of the Rest and Be Thankful reaching the A83 trunk road.
- 4.5 The A83 remained open to motorists at all times despite the extremely heavy rainfall brought in by Storm Desmond.
- 4.6 A small amount of slurry reached the edge of the road as a result of the sheer volume of water coming from the hillside, however a road sweeper was mobilised to help clear the mud. As a precaution, specialist geo-technical engineers were on-site to inspect the netting as well as the wider site.
- 4.7 The slip occurred early morning on Saturday 5 December and was identified by BEAR Scotland's landslide patrols which were on high alert following the heavy rain warnings issued for the weekend.
- 4.8 Five debris protection barriers were found to have caught boulders and sediment as a result of material coming down from the steep slopes of the mountain. Assessments have been carried out by BEAR Scotland's geotechnical team and contractors and arrangements have now been made to remove the debris.
- 4.9 Temporary traffic signals are currently in place and teams are mobilising on site this afternoon with a 15m long reach excavator with a plan to begin removal of the 1000 tonnes of debris on the Thursday following the slip. Teams tackled the 'Phase 1' fencing first where the majority of the landslip debris was caught. This is programmed to be complete by Christmas with the other fences with lesser volumes of material to be cleared after New Year.
- 4.10 The removal the material from the netting will see the team loosen the wires that hold the netting into place to enable them to excavate the debris which will then be

taken to a nearby waste site. The netting will then be assessed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and put back into place.

- 4.11 Temporary traffic signals will remain until the clean-up is complete, with traffic held for short periods to allow the tipper lorries to be loaded safely with material.
- 4.12 In October 2014 the nets were successful in catching over 1,200 tonnes of material during the biggest landslip event to affect the A83 in recent times, which included boulders the size of a car. The slip, estimated at over 2,000 tonnes in total, meant the local diversion route via the Old Military Road was implemented with the A83 closed for three days to enable teams to clean up and to ensure the route was safe to reopen.
- 4.13 The twelve sections of protection works, the first built in 2010, were designed to reduce the risk of landslip impact on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful. Erected after extensive research by geotechnical teams, the barriers have been positioned at the bottom of waterway channels that flow down the slope which historically have shown the most likely course for debris when slides ensue.
- 4.14 BEAR Scotland work to ensure the safest and most efficient mitigations methods are in place along trunk roads in the North of Scotland. Teams work closely with Transport Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council, Police Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland, local businesses, travel providers and residents to ensure everything possible is done to mitigate the risk to trunk road traffic along the Rest and Be Thankful.

#### 30 December Event – Storm Frank

- 4.15 Flooding has affected the A83 one mile north of Ardgartan and the road currently remains closed for safety reasons. An excavator is on site and the clear-up operation is underway to remove debris from the road, clear culverts and flooding with a view to open this section of the A83 as soon as possible.
- 4.16 Approximately 200 to 300 tonnes of material has been washed down the hillside, with further debris continuing to flow. Two cars were caught in the wash-out and the vehicles are awaiting recovery from the carriageway. The slip occurred just south of the B828 junction in the same location as the 5<sup>th</sup> December slip and BEAR emergency teams and specialist contractors are currently on-site assessing the situation. A geotechnical inspection will be undertaken in the next hour or so to assess the safety of opening the Old Military Road local diversion and to commence the clear up operation on the A83.
- 4.17 The A83 was reopened. However, further investigation found a 150 tonne boulder which needed to be reduced by controlled explosion. At the time of updating this report (6 January) a controlled explosions had been carried out. The 150 tonne boulder was successfully broken apart using small explosives inserted into approximately 30 drilled holes in the rock.
- 4.18 Due to the size of some of the larger pieces of boulder debris, the biggest of which is approximately a third of the size of the original boulder, the Old Military Road will be closed

overnight as a precaution. Due to the limited day light teams have been unable to complete a full safety assessment of the slope or the remaining rock fragments.

- 4.19 Weather permitting, a full assessment of the slope will be carried out and further work will be done to remove the larger pieces of rock on 7 January. A verbal update will be provided to the meeting.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 This report provides an update on the A82 between Tarbet and Invararnan and A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1	Policy	The Councils stated position regarding the A83, Rest and Be Thankful to seek a permanent solution for the route.
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

**Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure  
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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Preferred Route Plan

