

Cowal Transport Forum Briefing Note 17th June 2019

Response from Transport Scotland Regarding Various Questions raised by Councillor Alan Reid:

A83 Task Force

I know the Minister cancelled his attendance at the March A83 Task Force meeting for a good reason. However, Community Councils have asked me why the Task Force could not have gone ahead without the Minister. *The Cabinet Secretary is the Chair of the A83 Taskforce. A written update was issued to all Taskforce members in the absence of a meeting. The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 5th June and invites will be issued shortly.*

At the last Cowal Transport Forum (before the cancelled Task Force meeting) all the Community Council representatives present said they would like to be represented on the Task Force. Could these requests please be considered? *The A83 Taskforce is made up of a variety of stakeholders. Argyll and Bute Council have 4 nominated representatives on the A83 Taskforce as per the attached letter. These representatives gather questions and queries from Community Councils in Argyll and Bute and can raise them at the A83 Taskforce. Community councils can contact the elected members directly.*

Community Councils suggest a regular forum for A83 issues to which all the interested Community Councils are invited. The Minister could attend if he was available, but the Forum could still proceed without him. Could this please be considered? *Community Councils can raise any issues relating to the A83 Trunk Road with Transport Scotland at any time via the Area Manager for the route – Ken Aitken (CC'd). We always aim to reply to questions raised in a timeous manner and already do this with some Community Councils in Argyll and Bute. Please direct any questions to Ken Aitken in the first instance. There should also be a Community Council liaison officer within Argyll and Bute Council. This is another avenue for Community Councils to raise any concerns.*

Easter week-end

Lochgoil Community Council have told me that, on Good Friday 2018, the traffic queue stretched from the lights at the road works all the way back to Ardgartan. Given the late Easter this year, the traffic is likely to be even heavier. What plans do you have to avoid traffic tailbacks like that? The Community Council suggested manual operation of the lights during daylight hours over the Easter weekend so that longer times could be given to the longer queue. *As always, over busy holiday periods, efforts were made to remove as much traffic management from the trunk road network as possible over the long Easter weekend, however the lane closure at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful remained in place for safety reasons. Traffic management operational staff were on site between 0700 and 1900 hours each day. The site staff were mindful to balance queues. No issues have been reported to me regarding delays over Easter.*

Gritting the Bus Turning Circle at the Rest

Lochgoil Community Council have told me that on Sunday 10 March mid-morning the turning circle was covered in untouched snow. The A83 itself had been gritted. I had understood that BEAR were supposed to grit this turning circle so that the bus could use it. The bus service resumes on 1 March

each year. Could you please look into this? *I have raised this with BEAR Scotland. When clearing snow during snow events, the A83 Trunk Road is treated first as a priority. If conditions allow, the bus turning circle is cleared also. The bus turning circle is gritted twice during winter treatments, once by BEAR Scotland and once by Argyll and Bute Council.*

VMS Signs at Kilmun and Strachur

These do not appear to be working. I have been told that there are never any messages on them, even when road closures at the Rest & Be Thankful are planned. Could you please look into this? *These signs have been handed over to Argyll and Bute Council to manage and operate.*

Manual signs at the B839/B828 junction

We were told at the last meeting of the Task Force that these manual signs warning of closures on the A83 were the responsibility of BEAR, but they are never used. Could you please look into this? *This was picked up as part of the debrief for the landslide incident last October. BEAR have been reminded that these signs should be used when there is an incident at the Rest and Be Thankful.*