
REST AND BE THANKFUL UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following further landslips in August 2020 on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity committed to looking at options which provide an alternative solution.
- 1.2 In September 2020 Transport Scotland published 11 options, inviting public feedback by 30 October. The Council's responded to the consultation following a report in October 2020.
- 1.3 In March this year, the Cabinet Secretary announced that Route Corridor 1 – Glen Croe will be taken forward as the preferred corridor. This corridor consists of 5 main options with sub options and there is a public consultation on these options which runs until 28 May.
- 1.4 This report confirms that a preferred set of options contained in corridor 1 has been announced by the Cabinet Secretary and that 5 individual options within this corridor are currently out for consultation. The report also recommends that the Council agrees at a political level to lobby the Scottish Government that other infrastructure is upgraded.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:
- (i) Note the Scottish Government's commitment progress a permanent solution within Corridor 1, Glen Croe at the Rest and Be Thankful.
 - (ii) Lobby Scottish Government for contributions towards improvements to local infrastructure detailed in paragraph 3.5 of this report.
 - (iii) Delegate to the Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services in consultation with the Leader and Policy Lead final wording for the consultation response.

3.0 DETAIL

Background

- 3.1 A timeline of key events can be found at Appendix 1. This time line sets out the recent history at the Rest and Be Thankful. This report summarises the options that Transport Scotland on behalf of Scottish Government are currently progressing in terms of both a permanent solution and an interim solution.

Route Corridor Options Analysis

- 3.2 Following 11 Route Options being announced in September last year, the Cabinet Secretary announced in March this year that Route Corridor 1 – Glen Croe will be taken forward as the preferred corridor. This corridor consists of 5 main options with further sub options. These 5 options are summarised in the table below and detailed by illustrations in Appendix 2. There is a consultation on these options which runs until 28 May.

Route Option	Brief Description	Buildability/Approximate Timescale – high level initial estimates from Transport Scotland. Overall estimates are 7 – 10 years for a new road to be completed.
Brown	Largely follows the existing A83 alignment with debris flow shelter being installed from roughly Croe Water with the upper section of the road carried on a viaduct towards the Rest and Be Thankful car park.	Considered to be medium term for construction
Yellow	Largely follows the existing A83 alignment but with a much longer viaduct which replaces the debris flow shelter.	Considered to be medium term for construction
Purple	New alignment built at a lower level within the glen on a combination of open road and possibly viaduct with a short section of tunnel which emerges north of Loch Restil.	Approximately one year longer than the green route
Green	Completely new alignment on the opposite side of the glen which may have sections of open road, geotechnical measures, debris flow shelters or viaduct. This new section of road will end near to the Rest and Be Thankful car park.	Considered to be the quickest option to construct
Pink	New alignment built at a lower level within the glen utilising open road and a longer section of tunnel which again,	Approximately two years longer than the green route

emerges north of Loch Restil.

- 3.3 Without the benefit of detailed ground investigation data, detailed costs estimates, detailed build times, route resilience and journey times which are expected to be similar given similar route lengths (all of which will be part of the ongoing assessment and design process), it is very difficult to recommend any preferred route out of the 5 options listed. Each option has its individual merits, however, it is important to note that this infrastructure provides a once in a generation opportunity to improve connectivity into and out of Argyll and Bute and on this basis it is not necessarily the route which is quickest to construct that would be the most beneficial long term.

Interim Option

- 3.4 Transport Scotland are considering alternative interim routes to be used rather than the Old Military Road. The purpose of these routes is to provide resilience and divert traffic during the construction of the permanent solution. The routes being considered are within land in the ownership of Scottish Ministers. It is understood that this would effectively replace the Old Military Road and would be constructed to eliminate the steep gradients and hairpin bends that exist on the upper section of the OMR. It is also understood that this route is being designed to provide more resilience reducing the reliance of the diversion route. Whilst the timescale is yet to be finalised, Transport Scotland are anticipating an interim route could be designed within approx. 18 months and constructed within 3 - 4 years depending on the extent of work involved. Due to this being a temporary interim solution, normal trunk road design standards will not necessarily apply.

Additional Ask to Scottish Government

- 3.5 Alternative routes currently in place when the Rest and Be Thankful is not accessible are primarily via the A819, A85 and A82. In addition the A815 to access the ferry from Hunters Quay is receiving traffic unable to use the A83 when this route is closed and the OMR is not available. Due to the additional traffic being diverted on these roads, this report recommends that Council formally request that Scottish Government:
- provide contributions for edge strengthening and general repairs to the local road network (A819 and A815) which is receiving additional traffic when the A83 and the OMR is not available.
 - improvements to parts of the A82 diversion route where the road is currently of poor alignment and doesn't readily allow two HGVs to pass (a comprehensive realignment and improvement package is already developed but as yet no start date or funding has been announced).
 - improvements to Tarbert – Portavadie – Hunters Quay route. This is not considered to be a diversion route however provides additional choice for people travelling into and out of Argyll and Bute. Sections of the road are single track with passing places and this proposal would enable

additional passing places and localised improvements to be progressed. In addition to the road improvements, adjustments may be required to the ferry timetable, particularly between Tarbert – Portavadie to accommodate any additional demand. It is considered that this route could be publicised as an alternative tourism route for light traffic as an aid to boosting the tourism industry post Covid.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report confirms that a preferred set of options contained in corridor 1 has been announced by the Cabinet Secretary and that 5 individual options within this corridor are currently out for consultation. The report also recommends that the Council agrees at a political level to lobby the Scottish Government that other infrastructure is upgraded.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – the recommendations in this report would see the Council update its policy position in respect of the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.
- 5.2 Financial – funding for the project to be met by Scottish Government. Additional maintenance costs being incurred on the local road network due to additional traffic - this is detailed in the report.
- 5.3 Legal – none for the Council although Transport Scotland may have to acquire land to deliver on some of the options.
- 5.4 HR – none known at this stage of the process in determining a preferred route.
- 5.5 Equalities – none known
- 5.6 Risk – no further risks
- 5.7 Customer Service – none known

**Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services,
Kirsty Flanagan**

Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services, Jim Smith

Policy Lead for Roads and Infrastructure Services, Cllr Rory Colville

March 2021

For further information contact: Jim Smith

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Timeline of Events

Appendix 2 – Route Corridor Option 1

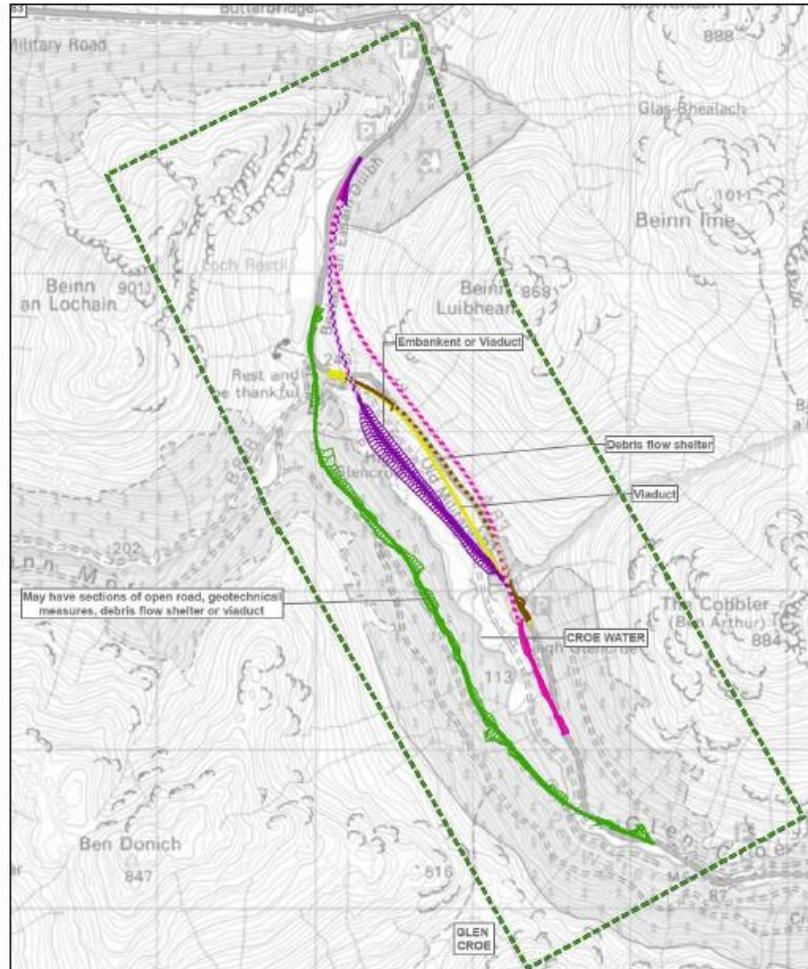
Appendix 1 – Timeline of Events

DATE	EVENT
2004	Transport Scotland undertook the Scottish Road Network Landslides Study which identified the A83 Ardgartan to Rest and Be Thankful as amongst the most highly ranked debris flow hazard sites in Scotland.
Oct 2007	A significant landslide occurred, closing the road for several days.
2007 - 2012	Numerous subsequent landslides occurred, leading to multiple road closures.
Mid 2012	Some preventative measures had been installed – the upgrade of culverts and the use of fences and debris flow barriers.
July 2012	Transport Scotland commissioned the A83 Trunk Road Route Study to examine the landslide problem at Rest and Be Thankful.
Aug 2012	To provide leadership and direction, the A83 Task Force was established. (This is ostensibly a consultative forum with decisions on improvements taken by the Cabinet Secretary and Transport Scotland).
Feb 2013	<p>The Jacobs Report was published, and the Red Corridor Option was selected. This involved the installation of additional debris flow mitigation barriers; improved drainage; and the introduction of hillside planting. The Jacobs report itself describes this option as one which would: “<i>significantly reduce the frequency of occurrence of landslide debris reaching the A83 Trunk Road.</i>”</p> <p>This, obviously, does not constitute a permanent solution which guarantees the route remains open. The 2013 route study included a Transport appraisal in accordance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) which requires five main areas of impact to be considered: Environment, Economy, Safety, Integration and Accessibility & Social Inclusion. The preferred option (red corridor) was also the lowest cost solution and the summary report stated “<i>The Red Option is expected to significantly reduce the frequency of occurrence of landslide debris reaching the A83 Trunk Road at a much lower cost than the other options.</i>” Suggesting that cost was a factor in choosing this option.</p>
2013 - 2020	Landslides and road closures continued despite further catch pit works. The Old Military Road (OMR) relief road was utilised as an alternative on some occasions.

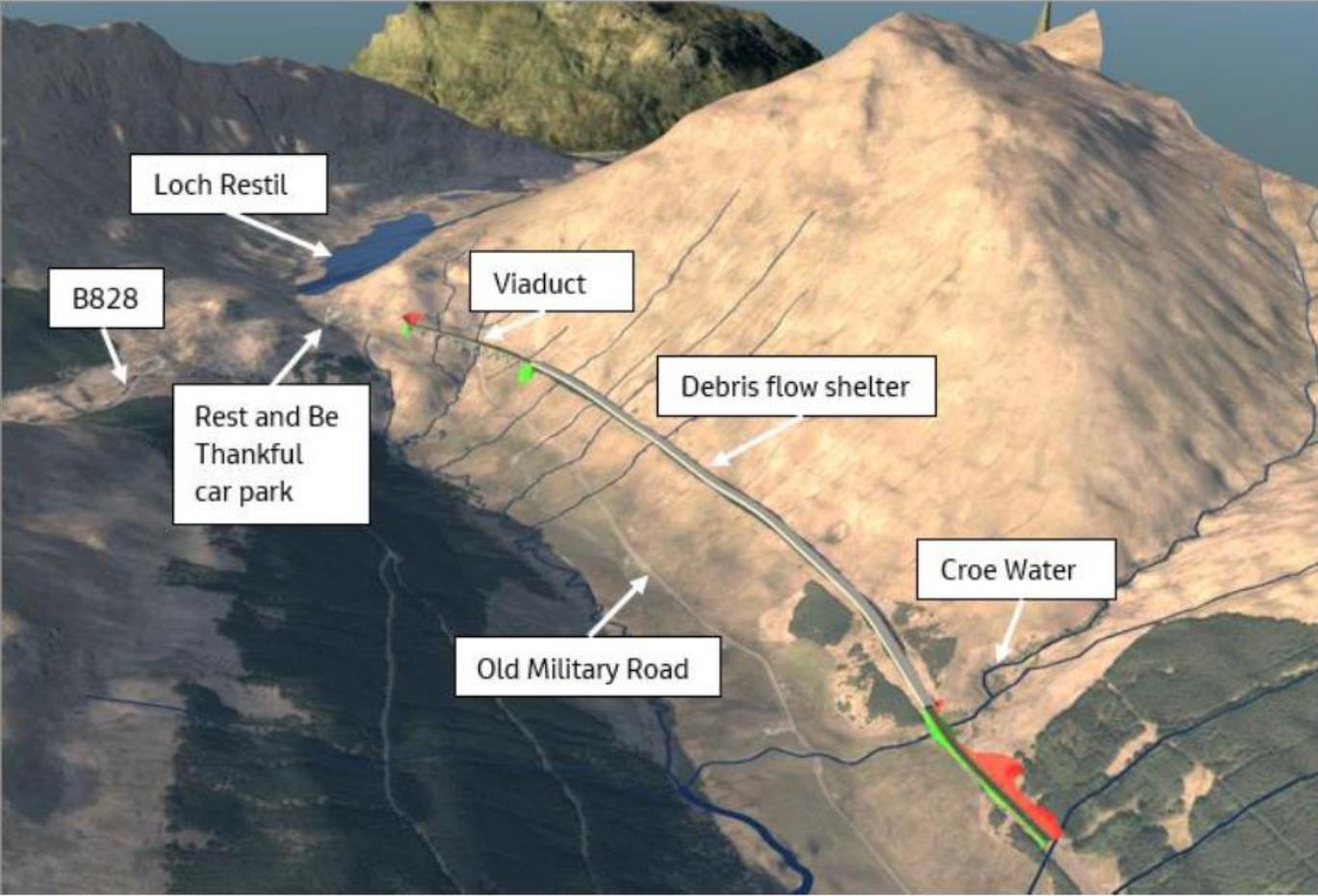
	To accommodate the ongoing catch pit works the road was restricted to single file traffic for much of this period.
Nov 2014	<p>Argyll and Bute Council agrees a clear and unanimous position on the Rest and Be Thankful. The Council agreed:</p> <p><i>That Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government be asked to provide a permanent solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.</i></p> <p>The minutes of this meeting can be found at:</p> <p>https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&MId=6412</p>
June 2016	<p>HIE publish the Argyll and Bute Transport Connectivity and Economy Research Report. Among other things this report, identified the poor resilience of journeys between Lochgilphead, Campbeltown and Glasgow by road due to impacts of landslides and accidents on the A83 as a key transport issue. The report is available at:</p> <p>http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/argyll-and-bute-transport-connectivity-and-economy-research.html</p>
Oct 2018	<p>Following a further road closure Argyll and Bute Council re-affirmed its position:</p> <p><i>The Council agrees that the failure of the most recent works to keep the road open through severe weather demands an urgent review of existing and future plans at the Rest and Be Thankful.</i></p> <p>The full meeting minute is available at:</p> <p>https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&MId=8015</p>
Summer/ Autumn 2020	Further landslides and road closures (including the OMR being unavailable)
Aug 2020	Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, announced at A83 Taskforce group (online) meeting that the Scottish Government was now committing to a permanent solution.
Sept 2020	<p>Transport Scotland publish 11 Project Corridor Options:</p> <p>https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-corridor-options-access-to-argyll-and-bute-a83/</p>

March 2021	Cabinet Secretary announced that Route Corridor 1 – Glen Croe will be taken forward as the preferred corridor. This corridor consists of 5 main options with sub options and there is a consultation on these options which runs until 28 May.
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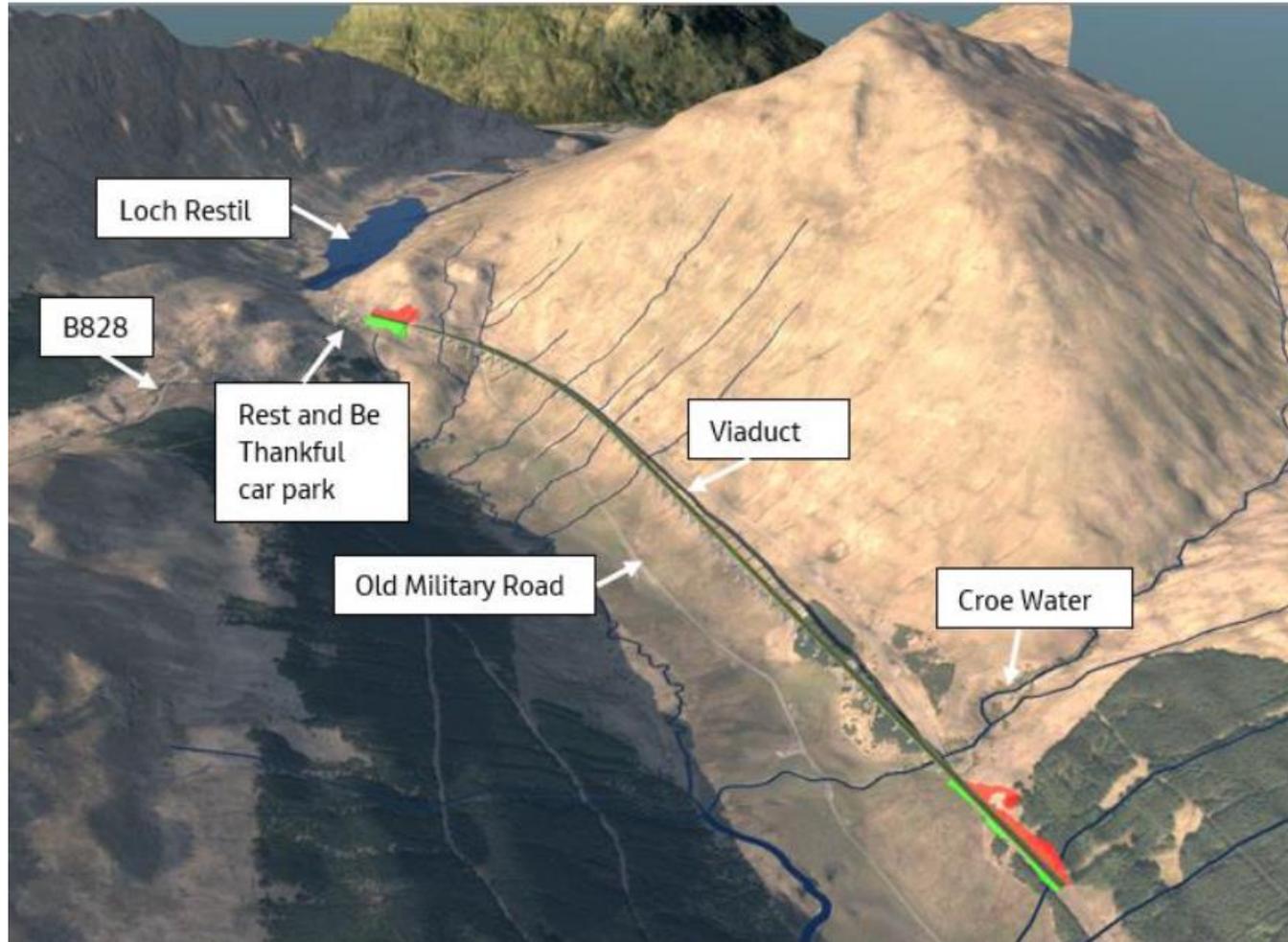
Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options



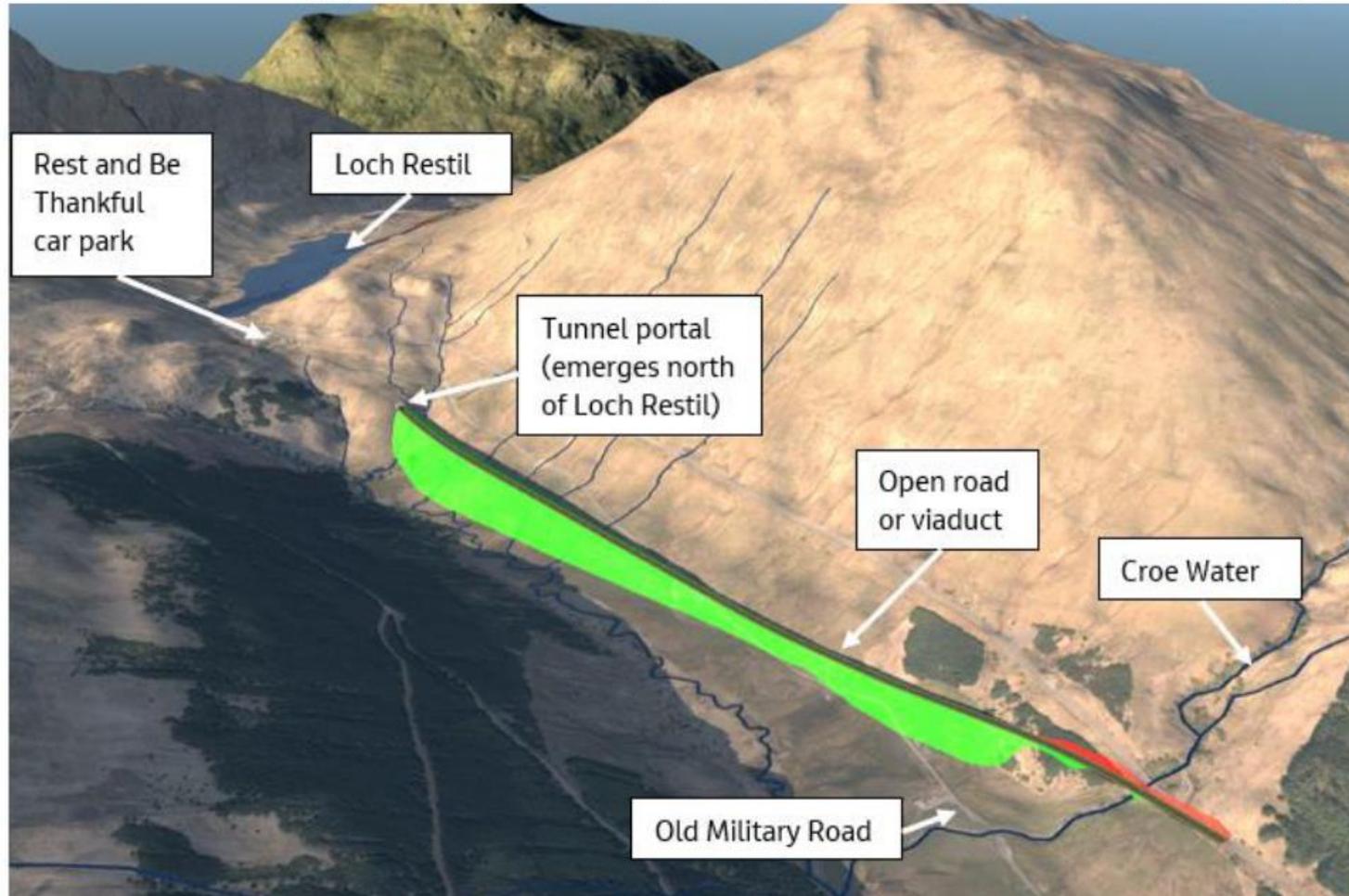
Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options – Brown Option



Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options – Yellow Option



Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options – Purple Option



Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options – Pink Option

