

**REST AND BE THANKFUL UPDATE**

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**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. The Council responded to the consultation following a report in October 2020. In March 2021, 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.
- 1.3 In December 2022, the Transport Minister announced improvements to the Old Military Road as a medium term solution to improve the resilience of the temporary diversion route to the A83, should it be closed.
- 1.4 An announcement on a permanent solution is expected in the Spring this year.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members note and consider the Scottish Government's recent announcement on progress.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 3.1 At the Rest and Be Thankful Taskforce meeting held on 25 January 2023, Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth, with technical support from Scottish Government officials and consultants provided an update to the Task Force regarding:-
- current mitigation works
  - medium term solution and
  - the Minister gave a verbal commitment that funding would be available for both the medium and permanent solutions.

- 3.2 The Taskforce meeting was attended by the Council Leader, Provost and Councillor Paterson from ABC Members, various local community councils, West Coast Motors, Western Ferries, HIE, Forest and Land Scotland, Portavadie, timber transport reps, Jenni Minto MSP, Transport Scotland, BEAR, Transport Scotland's new project consultant Atkins WSP (consortium) (full list will be published with the minutes).
- 3.3 During the Taskforce meeting, a discussion took place about the communication of the announcement for the medium term solution and also about some of the less than positive communications transmitted by national media groups in situations when the Rest and Be Thankful is closed. It was agreed by all at the meeting that endeavours would be made for more positive communications about Argyll and Bute being open for business in situations when the A83 may not be available.
- 3.4 At the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the Council Leader also raised the question of the commitment of funding for the medium term and long term solutions. The Minister from Transport confirmed that monies are guaranteed and that this is a priority project for the Scottish Government and finance will be put in place for both the medium and long term solutions.
- 3.5 In line with major road schemes in the UK, Transport Scotland are working to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Within DMRB there is a methodology used for scheme development and delivery which is summarised in the table below with indicative timescales for each of the stages. Note the construction time period will be determined by the option which is progressed with some engineering works taking longer than others. At the Taskforce meeting on 25 January, the Minister and Transport Scotland officials confirmed that, where possible, the Stage 3 timescale will be compressed and to facilitate this a large engineering team has been assembled through the consortium of consultancies which have been procured to progress the permanent route.

<b>Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) process</b>	<b>Typical project timescale</b>
DMRB stage 1	1-2 years
Feasibility, preliminary engineering studies	Completed March 2021
DMRB stage 2	1.5 – 2 years
Route options, assessment	Currently at this stage with the permanent route announcement anticipated in Spring to then allow the detailed work in Stage 3 and beyond to commence.
DMRB stage 3	1.5 – 2 years
Design and assessment of preferred option	

Statutory process Publication of Environmental Impact Assessment, draft Road Orders, Compulsory Purchase Orders, planning etc.	1-2 years (subject to statutory process and need for public Inquiry etc.)
Procurement, tender process and appointment of roads contractor	1 year subject to procurement route
Construction	Duration dependent on route choice etc.

3.6 A summary of the three phases of the work are detailed below:-

#### **Mitigation Works (ongoing on A83)**

- Catch pit construction continues, BEAR aiming to have both lanes of A83 open by June/July this year and traffic signals removed
- Monitoring (by electronic and when necessary visual methods) and saturation modelling will continue, this being used on a daily basis for determining which route to utilise, TM decision etc.

#### **Medium term alternative route (OMR)**

- Route announcement 23 December, the Minister acknowledged that the announcement could have been better communicated
- Old Military Road (OMR) to be upgraded to provide 2 way running along much of its length with the hairpins at the northern end continuing to be single lane with TM control
- OMR works to be delivered in 3 phases with the initial phase delivered asap and latter phase likely to require an EIA therefore longer lead time
- OMR works yet to have a time line concluded (may need EIA as well as procurement, consent info etc – can only realistically be provided once a contractor(s) appointed).

#### **Permanent Solution**

- Currently at DMRB Stage 2 underway to provide the preferred route and justification. Intending to have stage 2 concluded by spring 2023 which will produce a preferred route. Next task force meeting in June 23 (date TBC)
- The coloured route options shown below are still in the mix although the alignment of some may move horizontally slightly, based on ground investigation findings (basically initial alignment on ground too steep to cost effectively build abutments should a viaduct be built).

- Once DMRB Stage 2 is completed and a preferred route announced TS will move to DMRB Stage 3, detailed design of the preferred solution, statutory processes, procurement and then build. The actual timescale will be determined by the route choice, statutory requirements etc.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

4.1 This report provides an update on the recent announcement for improvements to the Old Military Road as a medium term solution to improve the resilience of the temporary diversion route to the A83, should it be closed. The report also provides an update on the anticipated announcement on a permanent solution in the Spring this year.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – in line with the Council’s policy position in respect of the A83 Rest and Be Thankful which is seeking a long term permanent solution.
- 5.2 Financial – funding for the project to be met by Scottish Government.
- 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 Fairer Scotland Duty: none known.
- 5.5.1 Equalities – none known.
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known.
- 5.5.3 Islands – none known.
- 5.6 Climate Change – none known.
- 5.7 Risk – ongoing connectivity challenges for Argyll and Bute until a permanent sustainable solution is completed.
- 5.8 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 Transport, Councillor Andrew Kain**

January 2023

**For further information contact:**

Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services

[Jim.Smith@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Jim.Smith@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – A83 Indicative Route Options

Appendix 2 – Timeline of Events

Appendix 3 – Route Corridor 1



## APPENDIX 2 – 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 &amp; 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>

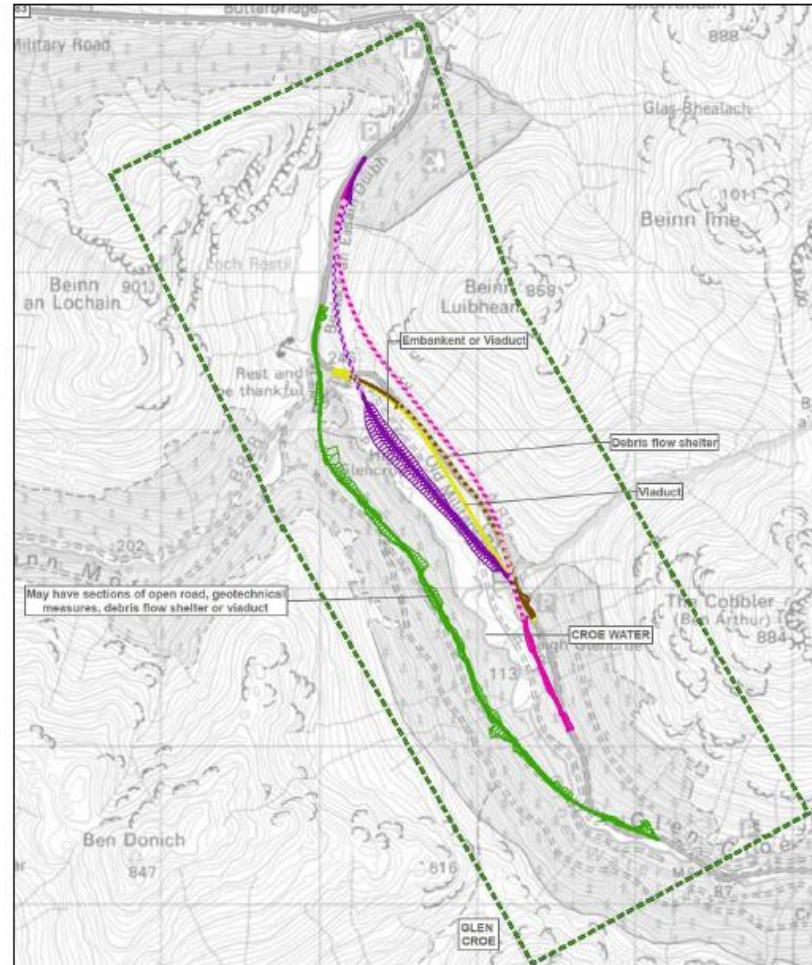
2013 - 2020	<p>Landslides and road closures continued despite further catch pit works. The Old Military Road (OMR) relief road was utilised as an alternative on some occasions.</p> <p>To accommodate the ongoing catch pit works the road was restricted to single file traffic for much of this period.</p>
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><a href="https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&amp;MId=6412">https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&amp;MId=6412</a></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><a href="http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/argyll-and-bute-transport-connectivity-and-economy-research.html">http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/argyll-and-bute-transport-connectivity-and-economy-research.html</a></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><a href="https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&amp;MId=8015">https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=257&amp;MId=8015</a></p>



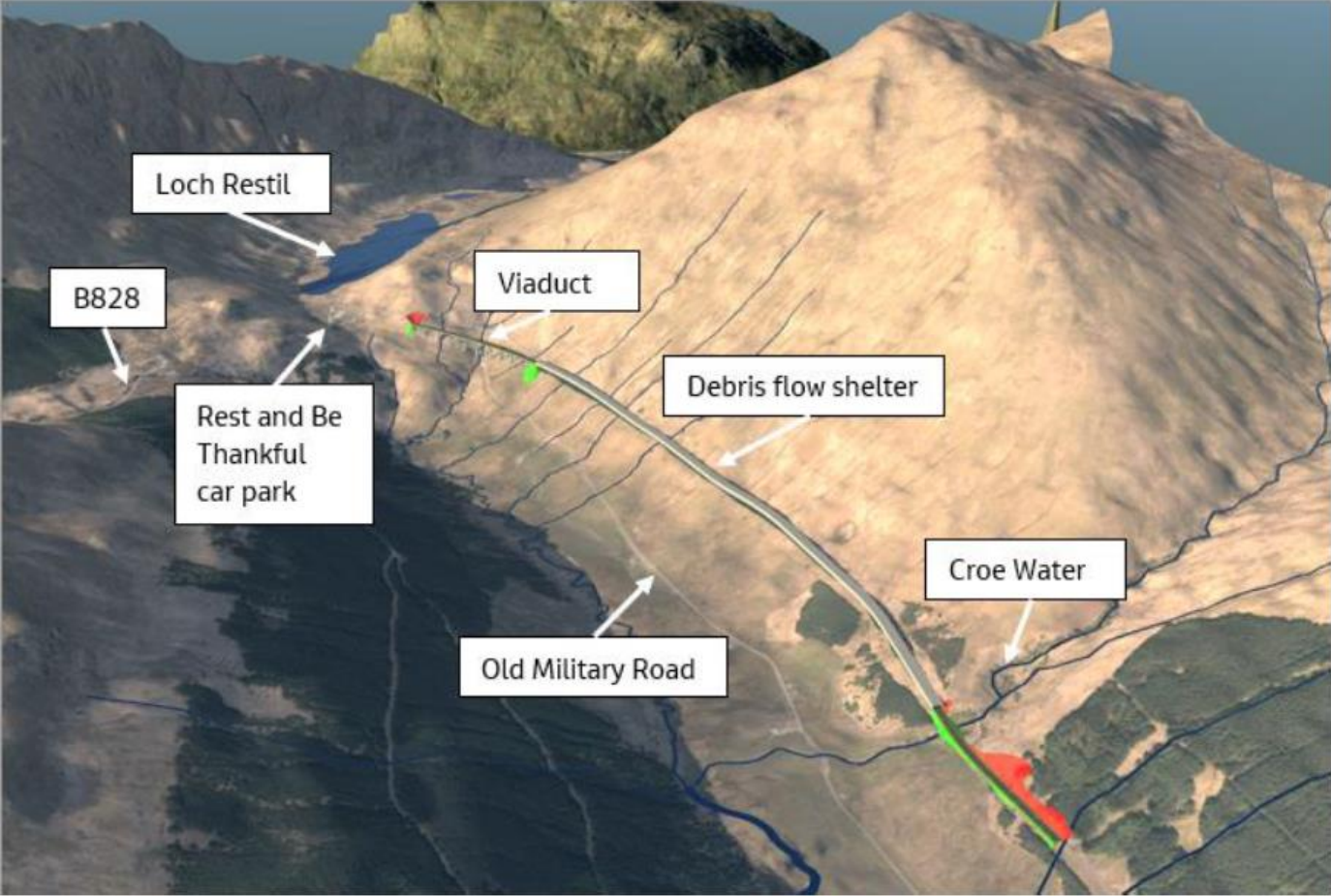
Summer/ Autumn 2020	Further landslides and road closures (including the OMR being unavailable)
Aug 2020	Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, announced at A83 Taskforce group (online) meeting that the Scottish Government was now committing to a permanent solution.
Sept 2020	Transport Scotland publish 11 Project Corridor Options: <a href="https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-corridor-options-access-to-argyll-and-bute-a83/">https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-corridor-options-access-to-argyll-and-bute-a83/</a>
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.

## APPENDIX 3 – ROUTE CORRIDOR 1

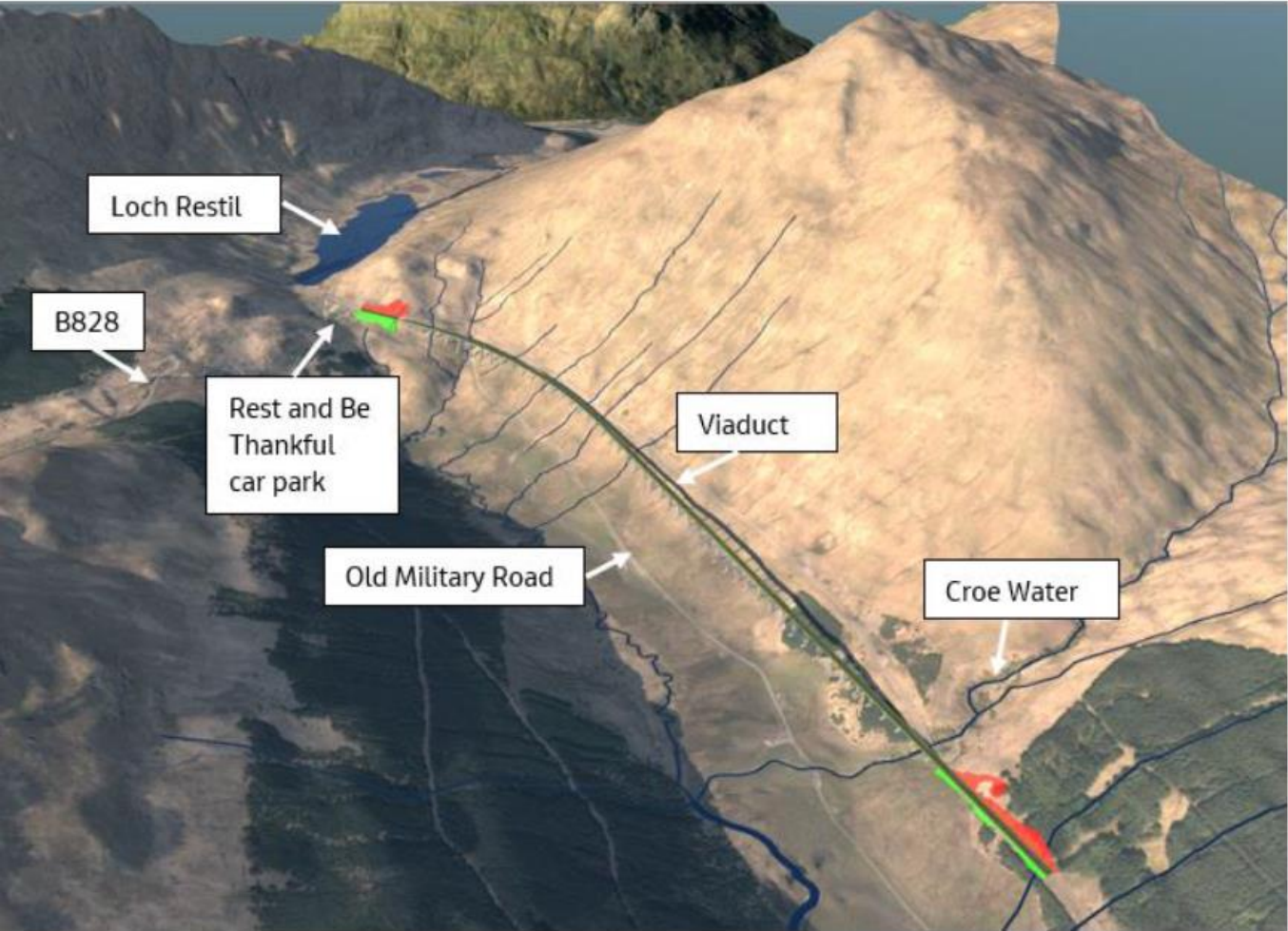
# Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options



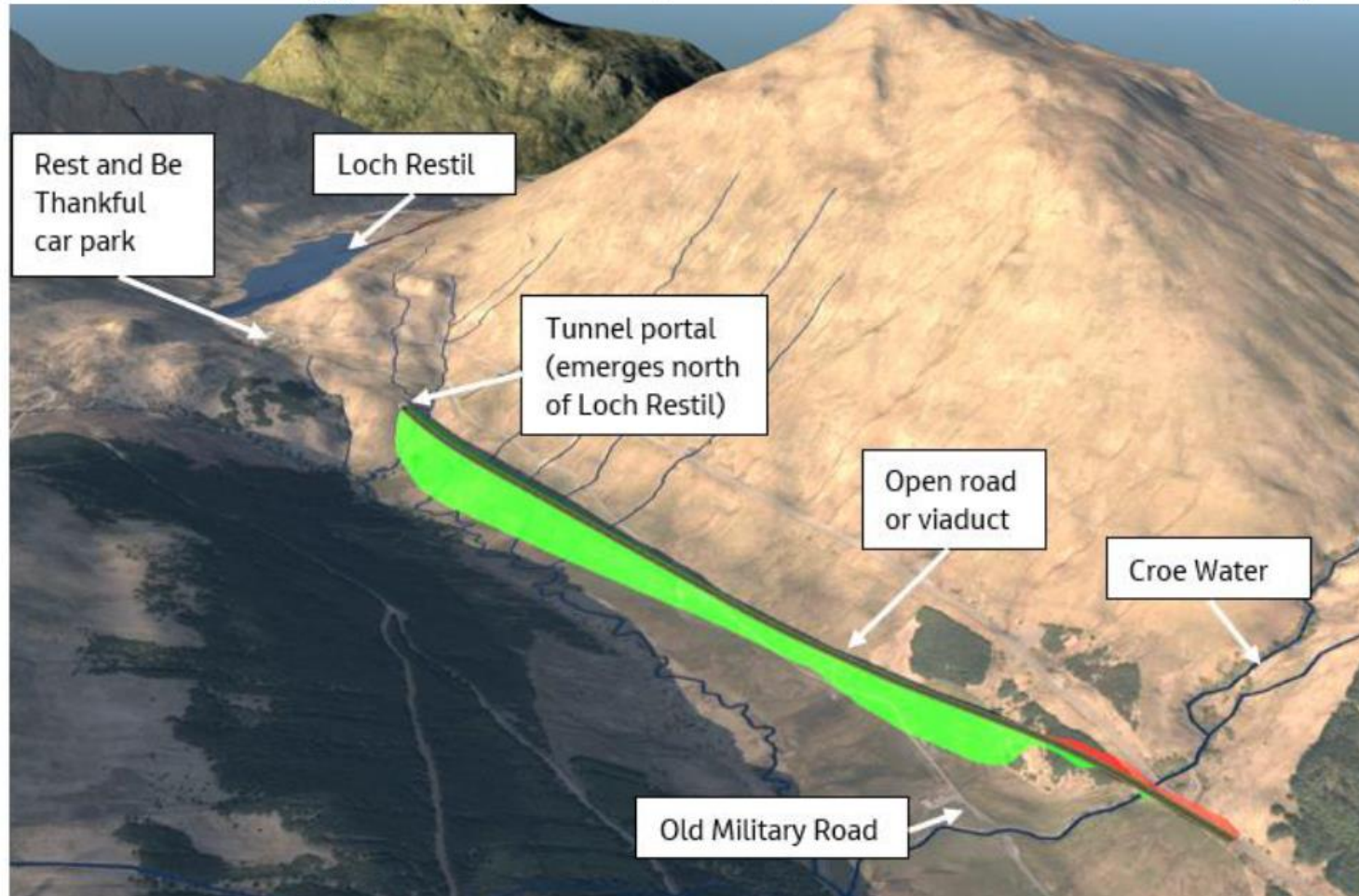
# Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) – Indicative Route Options – Brown Option



# 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

