

**Meeting Title** A83 Taskforce Meeting 8

**Meeting Scope** A83

**Venue:** Three Villages Hall - Arrochar

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 10.00 to 11.30

**Present:**

- Derek MacKay MSP – Minister for Transport and Islands
- Michael Russell MSP
- Graham Edmond – Transport Scotland
- Sean Clemie – Transport Scotland
- Morag Mackay – Transport Scotland
- Alasdair Klimowicz – Transport Scotland
- Karen MacKinnon – Transport Scotland
- John Wrigley – BEAR Scotland
- Eddie Ross – BEAR Scotland
- Kirsty Robb – Timber Transport Group
- Gordon Ross – Western Ferries
- Ranald Robertson – Hitrans
- Councillor Ellen Morton – Argyll & Bute Council
- Donald Clark - Chamber of Commerce – Inveraray
- John Hair – Forestry Commission
- Stuart Clark – Argyll & Bute Council

**Apologies:** Mike Story, Dick Walsh, Neil McRae, Duncan MacIntyre, Peter McKerral, Sally Loudon, Jamie McGrigor MSP, Jim Smith, Jackie Baillie MSP, Jane MacLeod, Alison Hay, Ian Nicholson, Ian MacInnes, Donald Kelly

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<b>Welcomes, Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
1	The Minister welcomed participants to the meeting despite the harsh weather conditions and introduced himself to the participants.	
	DMack reiterated that it remains the Scottish Governments aim to mitigate the impact of landslides on the network to keep it running. He is very mindful of the significant challenges of this and he recognised the importance of this group. DMack was mindful of the significant event that occurred on the 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2014, and the challenges posed by that.	
2	<b>Review of previous minutes of meeting 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014</b>	

	Sean Clemie reviewed actions from previous minutes. SC confirmed that Transport Scotland have been working closely with the BBC on a national level to ensure accurate reporting of all major events. This action has been closed out following on-going discussions with the BBC.	
	Regarding Cllr Dick Walsh's suggestion, SC confirmed that a formal meeting took place in Kilmory House, attended by SC and Graham Edmond, to discuss the 2014/15 programme of works. This was also well attended by members of the council.	
	Regarding a query by Ian MacInnes, SC confirmed that the Lochgoilhead diversion route signing drawings have been sent through to him. SC and Iain MacDonald visited the local community to hear their concerns regarding the diversion route. During the recent events where the OMR has been in use, Transport Scotland now have a better understanding of the diversion so a review will be taken forward.	
	Following the discussion of livestock on the OMR, SC confirmed discussions have been held with the land owner, who has removed the livestock quickly every time it has been used. This time has not impacted on the overall opening timescale of the OMR. Other events happen concurrently; the time taken for the geotechnical engineers to arrive on site, traffic management to be set up and the deployment of the recovery vehicles.	
	Regarding Ian MacInnes enquiry about landscaping works, SC confirmed work at Ardgarten has been completed.	
	Following Ian MacInnes enquiry about bus facilities at Ardgarten and Rest and Be Thankful, SC confirmed that bus facilities at Ardgarten have been completed as part of carriageway surfacing works. Facilities at the Rest and Be Thankful will be undertaken by Argyll & Bute Council, where Transport Scotland and HiTrans will assist where necessary.	
3	<b>Update on progress of A83 Route Study recommendations</b>	
	SC reviewed the initial A83 Route Study, identifying the 6 corridor options that were reviewed and taken forward.	
	SC focused on the 'BCR' of the best three of the options, which led to the 'Red Option' being the option of choice.	
	<b>Presentation slides are attached.</b>	
	<b>Summary of 2014/15 programme</b>	
	John Wrigley updated the group on the programme of works. JW identified Part A; Rest and Be Thankful, Part B; Rest of the Route (down to Kennacraig at that time), and Part C – Kennacraig to Campbeltown trunked in 2014. He indicated a lot of work has been completed; some quick fixes and some longer term.	
	<p><b>Part A –</b> All fences have been completed. JW confirmed that the last landslide event struck fence 4a. This fence has since been repaired.</p> <p>Works on securing the large boulder is virtually complete. Specialized ropes required to secure it has been purchased; however, bad weather has prevented contractors accessing the hill to install. JW assured the group this will be completed soon.</p> <p>Additional slope monitoring equipment has been installed. TRL are working on new, more accurate trigger mechanism.</p>	

	<p>Additional work is on-going on the OMR, including drainage improvements. Following previous events, several washouts were found in channels below the trunk road and the OMR.</p>	
	<p><b>Part B –</b> Strone Point; Realignment option has been proposed and is on-going. Land access is complete for site clearance and ground investigation works are complete. Design is on-going. Work due to start in the next financial year.</p> <p>Numerous resurfacing works between Tarbet and Kennacraig in the past 9 months have been completed. During surfacing at Tarbet Tearooms, measures were introduced to reduce flooding. Work is mainly complete, awaiting lining and signing works.</p> <p><b>Proposed works within the financial year include –</b> Surfacing and patching at Dunderave, including drainage improvements and installation of safety fencing.</p> <p>Lining and Road Stud work between Tarbet and Kennacraig is on-going and will continue until the end of the financial year.</p> <p>In Tarbert, carriageway and footway will be resurfaced before the end of the financial year. New Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) will be installed on the bends either side of the Co-op reminding them on the 30mph limit. JW confirms that a review into installing VAS signs at the Barmore end to warn HGVs/LGVs of the narrow road ahead is underway. Following a public exhibition, other options are being reviewed such as a pedestrian crossing at the Co-op. JW confirmed the community council are aware of this.</p> <p>The preferred alignment has been selected for the Erines scheme. Access has been agreed with the landowner. JW indicated that site clearance should commence in the next 2 weeks. Once complete, ground investigation and detailed design can be completed with an aim of starting works in spring next year.</p> <p><b>Slope failure resilience measures –</b> The designs for Loch Shira and Glen Kinglas are now complete. Meetings are set up with landowners at both locations to gain access to the sites.</p> <p><b>Layby reviews –</b> Progressing reviews of layby upgrades and rationalisation.</p> <p><b>Variable Message Signs (VMS) –</b> JW indicated that where the intermittent VMS are in place (Inveraray, Dalmally and Lochgilphead), new signs will be installed and hardwired to Traffic Scotland so they will be a lot more informative.</p>	
	<p><b>Regarding Part C –</b> JW confirmed that resurfacing works on Hall Street in Campbeltown have been completed. Further surfacing works in the area are scheduled, valued at £1m. Weather dependant, this should be complete by the end of March 2015.</p>	

	<p>Verge marker posts, together with lining and stud work is on-going.</p> <p>JW confirmed a new weather station at Clachan is to be installed.</p> <p>Landscaping and cut-back to improve drainage on the newly trunked section should be completed by the end of March.</p>	
	<p><b>A83 2015/16 programme –</b>  JW confirmed the following works will progress in 2015;  Hillside planting at RaBT will be progressed subject to agreement with landowner  Strone Point realignment construction  Improvements at Dunderave  Progression of the realignment at Erines  Layby improvements  Further improvements on the newly trunked A83, including laybys, surfacing, lining/signing and drainage improvements</p>	
	<p><b>Review of recent events</b></p>	
	<p>Eddie Ross reviewed the events of the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014. 150-200 mm of rain fell across the west of Scotland over a very short period. This led to issues on the A82 and closures at Corran Ferry. Extensive flooding along the A83 and sections of the A82, which triggered 3 landslide events on the A83 between Tarbet and Inveraray.</p> <p>Glen Kinglas – 100 tonnes of slurry had come down the hillside, covering the road.</p> <p>Ardgarten – Large volumes of water coming down the stream brought with it gravel and rock, blocking the culvert which resulted in flooding.</p> <p>RaBT – 2500 tonnes of material came down the hillside. ER made reference to fence 4a being struck during that event. ER indicated that the previous largest landslide was 1000 tonnes. ER confirmed that 1700 tonnes of material was caught by the fences, including boulders, ultimately saving the A83 carriageway structure. ER indicated that the fence was designed to withstand 1000 tonnes, so it successfully held more than anticipated.</p> <p>In terms of the clear-up operation, ER confirmed that all 3 events were dealt with simultaneously during preparations to open the OMR. Following a geotechnical inspection, material was removed at Kinglas and Ardgarten. Upon completion, work started on the RaBT in conjunction with the opening on the OMR. ER indicated that this was the first time the OMR had been used day and night, following a risk assessment between BEAR and the police.</p> <p>ER highlighted that the fence 4a had been dismantled to remove the material and a temporary fence replaced the broken section. This was installed by a specialised contractor.</p> <p>Michael Russell MSP sought confirmation that during the operation of the OMR, it was closed twice due to flooding.</p> <p>ER confirmed this was true. During heavy rain, flooding did occur and affect the east end of the OMR in the valley. ER confirmed that 2 days after that event, BEAR resurfaced the flooded section of the OMR to raise it by 300 mm out of the flooding area. Unfortunately it then happened again, however not as bad as</p>	

	<p>before. This restricted cars to pass, however larger vehicles were unaffected. ER confirmed that in total, the OMR was closed for 2-3 hours overnight. ER indicated that a debriefing exercise took place to mitigate this problem. JW confirmed he is heading down there next week to review the drainage improvements for the OMR.</p> <p>ER indicated that slope monitoring took place during the clean-up operation. He indicates that further debriefing was completed, a normal process that has been adopted following all major events of this nature.</p> <p>Kirsty Robb mentioned the use of the words “temporary fence” and questioned if it there was plans to make it permanent.</p> <p>ER confirmed there is a design exercise underway to determine what the replacement fence would look like, based on the severity of the most recent event. This could be a fence, a pit or a combination of the two.</p> <p>DMack indicated the word “temporary” needs clarity, suggesting it will be taken away. DMack indicated that caution should be taken with the language used. If the mitigation installed is working, it will be improved upon, not removed.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson enquired if mitigation measures would be put in place to restrict the slurry reaching the road.</p> <p>JW confirmed that the fences are made up of two wire meshes, aimed at reducing the momentum of the slurry. In this case, boulders hit the fence also, which allowed slurry to pass.</p> <p>Donald Clark asked for confirmation of where the major landslides had occurred, thus identifying the most dangerous section of the A83.</p> <p>Graham Edmond confirmed that the most critical section is 850 m from top to bottom. He indicated that each landslide is unique and cannot guarantee the location of other potential landslides.</p> <p>JW confirmed that between Phase 10 fencing and the quarry at the bottom of the hill is 880 m.</p> <p>DC insisted that all the major landslides have occurred in one section so requested that Transport Scotland confirms that this is the most critical section and to identify the main hazard area. He also wishes to see a copy of the report that states that the critical length is 850 m.</p> <p>DMack indicated he wants to review where the landslide incidents have occurred and the impact of each. He agreed that landslides cannot be predicted and so we can only base assumptions on information from previous events.</p> <p>GE confirmed that Transport Scotland have 10 years of previous landslide data.</p> <p>Michael Russell MSP/Cllr Ellen Morton reiterated the need for a permanent solution.</p>	<p>TS</p> <p>TS</p>
4	<b>Marketing sub-group update</b>	
	<p>SC reviewed the marketing update in the absence of Mike Story.</p> <p>SC identified that during the last event that communications have been successful; however, improvements can be made.</p>	

	<p>SC indicated the importance to deploy VMS to more remote locations.</p> <p>Cllr Ellen Morton identified that the sub-group meeting has addresses various communication problems regarding signage indicating that the A83 was closed.</p> <p>DMack reiterated that it is important to local businesses that the correct information is getting out.</p> <p>Gordon Ross indicated that the perception is that the RaBT will be closed during periods of rain, which is not the case, even if the OMR is operational. GR questioned the environmental mitigation options that could be introduced, ie, planting/sheep.</p> <p>GE confirmed that there is money in the programme for planting to be taken forward on the bottom sections. Discussions with landowners are on-going.</p>	
5	<b>Discussion/ Q&amp;A</b>	
	<p>MR identified the need to agree and prepare a permanent solution despite the lack of resources at the moment. He identified that the answer may be a shelter over the critical section of the A83 and a permanent alternative route, preferably the development of the forestry track.</p> <p>GE confirmed to Kirsty Robb that the 'Cost Benefit Ratio' (CBR) is calculated over a period of 60 years.</p> <p>MR stated that 'CBR' is not easily quantifiable with regards to this scheme.</p> <p>DMack identified that incidents are unpredictable. Despite heavy rain at the moment, there are no landslide warnings on the RaBT. He indicated that the alerts on the RaBT are probably adding to the impression of impending closures.</p> <p>DMack not satisfied that everything possible has been done with the OMR and forestry track. He believes there is potential to explore further regarding the other options that will ensure the route is opened quickly, ensuring continuity.</p> <p>Donald Clark mentioned that a report has been made available indicating that over the next 20 years, the population of Argyll &amp; Bute will decrease by 13%. DC requests the costing of a covered single carriageway over 400 m in length operating under traffic management.</p> <p>GE identified structures should be future proof and up to standard to maximise value for money.</p> <p>MR noted that there is a petition heading to parliament demanding a permanent solution.</p> <p>DC enquired that if a proposed 5 m wide carriageway was not sufficient, then what width would be required. GE compared this to the Strome Ferry shelter. He indicates the improvements on the A82 is to remove pinch-points from the network. Ellen Morton identified that the traffic management at the Inveraray</p>	

	<p>bridge is not an issue.</p> <p>GE confirmed that the 'BCR' incorporates alternative that are available. GR identified that if the alternatives were taken out of the equation then the result would be different.</p> <p>MR indicated that a meeting in April would be beneficial to discuss potential permanent solutions.</p> <p>DMack confirmed that there is no addition funding available to take forward a permanent solution at the moment; however, work could commence on scoping potential options.</p>	TS
	<p>DMack indicated that the future aim of the meeting should be continuity of access to Argyll &amp; Bute. DMack agreed that a meeting sooner than June is justified. DMack proposed that the group identify the critical point of landslides, and review options that will address the continuity of access.</p> <p>The group are appreciative of the work that has been done so far.</p>	TS
7	<b>AOCB</b>	
	N/a	
8	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	To be arranged for June 2015.	