Meeting Title: A83 Taskforce Meeting 7

Meeting Scope: A83

Venue: Three Villages Hall - Arrochar

Date: 10th June 2014 at 10am

Present: Keith Brown MSP – Minister for Transport and Veterans
Sean Clemie – Transport Scotland
Morag Mackay – Transport Scotland
Graham Edmond – Transport Scotland
David Hamilton – Transport Scotland
Eddie Ross – BEAR Scotland
John Wrigley – BEAR Scotland
Gary Allan – BEAR Scotland
Mike Story – Chair of A83 Marketing Sub-Group
Gordon Ross – Western Ferries
Neil McRae – Hitrans
Dick Walsh – Argyll & Bute Council
Duncan MacIntyre – Argyll & Bute Council
Jim Smith – Argyll & Bute Council
Donald Kelly - Argyll & Bute Council - Argyll First
Jane MacLeod – Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce
Alison Hay – Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce
Ian Nicholson – Loch Lommond & Trossachs National Park
John Hair – Forestry Commission
Ian MacInnes – Lochgilphead Community Council (part)

Apologies: Kirsty Robb, Ellen Morton, Peter McKerral, Sally Loudon, Jamie McGrigor MSP, Michael Russell MSP, Jackie Baillie MSP

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<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>Welcomes, Introductions &amp; Apologies</strong></td>
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<td>Minister welcomed participants to the meeting and restated the Scottish Government’s commitment to reducing the risk of landslides impacting upon the A83.</td>
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Keith Brown confirmed that over the last 7 years, over £32 million had been invested in works on the A83 trunk road. This includes £8 million on the A83 around the Rest and be Thankful. He noted that this together with the First Minister’s announcement on 28 August that the A83 between Campbeltown and Kennacraig would be trunked – that this was a clear sign of a commitment to the A83 and an acknowledgement that it is a lifeline to the local businesses and people of Argyll and Bute. He committed to continuing the momentum of the work done to date and noted that he had allocating £6 million to be spent within
Keith Brown highlighted that we cannot prevent landslides from occurring, but we can minimise the impact and disruption caused to the public and local businesses using this vital route. He noted this was demonstrated during the most recent landslide, where measures were successful in keeping traffic moving. Transport Scotland had now completed investigations at other known high landslide risk areas on the A83 at Cairndow, Glen Kinglas and Loch Shira and were programming to deliver schemes at both Loch Shira and Glen Kinglas in 2014/15.

2 Review of the works completed on Rest & be Thankful

John Wrigley confirmed that Phases 10, 11 and 12 of the Red Option debris fences were now complete. Completion of these last 3 phases close out the debris fencing recommended in the A83 Route Study. Transport Scotland will review the level of on-going risk reduction achieved at the Rest and Be Thankful on an annual basis as part of an annual slope report. This will identify any areas that would benefit from further works in future years and ensure our continuing commitment to reduce the impact of landslides on the A83 trunk road in future years.

John Wrigley confirmed that other works including remote monitoring points and drainage repair works are also nearing completion, as planned, with monitoring points currently being installed. Drainage and slope maintenance works on the OMR will also be undertaken in 2014/15.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

3 Review of the other known landslide areas

John Wrigley confirmed that investigations have now been completed at other sites of higher landslide risk on the A83 at Cairndow, Glen Kinglas and Loch Shira to look at options for mitigation to provide a similar level of residual risk as that at the Rest and Be Thankful.

John Wrigley highlighted that a similar methodology as that employed at the Rest and Be Thankful was used to assess the landslide risk at Glen Kinglas and Cairndow. The Investigations have identified and assessed channels within each of the higher risk sites as high, medium and low priority and will target the highest priority channels to reduce the risk of landslide impact on the trunk road network. The highest risk site has been identified as Loch Shira.

4 Summary of 2014/15 programme

Sean Clemie highlighted that funding had provisionally been identified from the 2014/15 budget including plans to invest £700,000 at Loch Shira and £1,600,000 at Glen Kinglas which will see the construction of the first phase of mitigation measures at both locations. Timescales for delivery of these schemes will be subject to land and certification considerations.

Sean Clemie confirmed the status of the various schemes being progressed on the A83.

Strone Point re-alignment scheme: detailed design of this scheme is being progressed and has been programmed to start construction of this scheme this financial year. Due to number of recent serious accidents at the location, we have decided to deliver this project ahead of Dunderave Phase 1.

Dunderave has been split into 3 phases to allow works to commence on site.
Phase 1 of the works is progressing through the detailed design phase over this financial year. The aim is to construct in 2015/16, subject to budgetary issues at that time. This carriageway improvement scheme seeks to incorporate localised widening where possible.

In Phase 2 & 3, we carried out £175 000 re-surfacing scheme at this location which has improved the road surface as a holding measure until final project is constructed.

Erines: detailed design has started and ground investigation works will be completed in 2014/15. Once complete, the construction works will be planned thereafter.

Balmore Road Tarbert: Feasibility report has been concluded and TS are currently considering the best way forward with this scheme.

Tarbet Tea Rooms Corner – This scheme will be delivered this year with a re-surfacing scheme between Tarbet and Arrochar at an estimated cost of £350,000.

Trunking of A83 from Kennacraig to Campbeltown – The formal trunking process is on schedule to be completed this Summer. Transport Scotland has set aside £750,000 in 2014/15 for works on this route. This includes a significant carriageway resurfacing scheme in Campbeltown plus various resurfacing schemes, improved road markings and increased drainage along the newly trunked section. The A83 Route Study has also been extended to include this section of the A83.

## Marketing sub-group update

Keith Brown highlighted that he was content that the procedures developed and now implemented have ensured that a consistent message was being put out by stakeholders when a road closure was required.

Mike Story (MS) confirmed that they had ongoing concerns regarding how this information was being interpreted and implemented by the media, BBC in particular. Use of dis-proportionate language and retaining information regarding routes being re-opened within traffic reports are significant issues.

MS stated that they now had 70,000 followers on social media, receiving quick information on delays and diversions.

Eddie Ross highlighted that re-tweeting of road closure information was leading to a degree of out of date information being re-spread by the public.

MS stated that the group changed its name to the communication group as the group focus is on communication not the marketing.

MS confirmed that he is on the A82 working group

MS comment the lack of attendance to the meeting by Visit Scotland. Keith Brown that he would speak to Visit Scotland to get them to engage with the Group

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<td>Gordon Ross identified that resilience measures in the event of a Road Closure had improved due to ferry routes into Campbeltown/Dunoon, the Old Military Road local diversion and the improved rail services from Dalmally into Glasgow.</td>
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<td>Graham Edmond highlighted that the use of VMS signing had further helped to inform the travelling public of road closures when implemented.</td>
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<td>Councillor Duncan MacIntyre highlighted that a lot had changed since the taskforce had been setup with increase in rail service to Oban and ferry to Campbeltown. He asked that the Comms group take this in to consideration. The Comms sub-group will take these suggestion on board</td>
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<td>Alison Hay identified that it was important that information to the public identified when road were reopened after a closure.</td>
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<td>Keith Brown re-iterated concerns regarding how the media handles information that they are provided.</td>
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<td>Eddie Ross confirmed that BEAR monitor and advise Radio Scotland on the accuracy of their traffic reports. BEAR however do not monitor Radio 2 traffic report.</td>
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<td>Mr Brown actioned the Group to write a letter to the BBC highlighting the need for accurate reporting of the events and the impact of incorrect report on Argyll. Gordon Ross made comment to similar letter he had written to BBC regarding Western Ferries.</td>
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<td>Cllr Dick Walsh was pleased at the announcement of the additional £6m for A83 for 2014/15 and the works that had already been done at the RaBT.</td>
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<td>He suggested that it would be good if TS could present there 2014/15 programme of works to Argyll and Bute Council at formal meeting. Date to be arranged.</td>
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<td>TS also committed to upload the presentation to the website.</td>
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<td>Cllr Donald Kelly highlighted concerns about the progression of a permanent solution to the Rest and Be Thankful.</td>
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<td>Minister Brown highlighted that the taskforce had considered several options presented within the route report and agreed to implement to the Red Route option to reduce the risk of the Trunk Road being disrupted by landslides.</td>
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<td>Sean Clemie confirmed that the long term slope planting option is being progressed. He advised TS are nearing the stage of finalising an agreement to take the scheme forward. This involves liaison with the landowner and Forestry Commission.</td>
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<td>Eddie Ross confirmed that the debris flow barrier works associated with the Red</td>
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| Option within the Route Study Report had been significantly implemented, however elements of the works had still to be concluded notably the tree planting. 

Keith Brown confirmed that the Scottish Government would want to see the success of the implemented measures prior to implementing further significant expenditure. 

Cllr Donald Kelly queried when they would be in a position to evaluate the success of implemented measures. Eddie Ross suggested that such measures could only be evaluated after further landslips had occurred. Graham Edmond confirmed that Transport Scotland continually reviews maintenance spending. |
| Councillor Duncan MacIntyre expressed that budget allocated for Rest and Be Thankful may be getting spent on other areas of the A83.  

John Wrigley confirmed that some elements of the works implemented had come in less than originally estimated and that this was due to a number of reasons including, economies of scales and contractors becoming more experienced in this type of work.  

David Hamilton confirmed that some elements of the works including tree planting had yet to be implemented.  

Graham Edmond confirmed that the works were a permanent solution and are about reducing the likelihood of potential disruption. |
| Ian MacInnes enquired about the recent closure on Sat May 31st/Sun 1st June 2014.  

Eddie Ross highlighted that readings from a site monitoring station located in the vicinity of a Boulder had triggered the road closure. Following investigation the road was reopened. Eddie Ross highlighted that design work was on-going for a system to stabilise the boulder in situ as a permanent solution. Site investigation works were yet to be concluded which would define the full extent of stabilisation measures required. The website will be updated as works progress.  

Jane MacLeod enquired if the implementation of these measures would require road closures. Eddie Ross confirmed that such closures were not currently planned although traffic lights would likely be required to be on all red for short periods of time. This would be fully assessed as part of the detailed design procedure. |
| Ian MacInnes highlighted that signing implemented in closures was difficult to understand.  

Sean Clemie highlighted that Transport Scotland are currently reviewing VMS provisions on the A83 alongside Argyll and Bute Council to develop a Priority list for VMS.  

BEAR/Transport Scotland to review signing of diversion routes and send a drawing to Ian MacInnes |
Jane MacLeod sought assurances that the speed limit on the Old Military road when in operation would be increased.

Morag McKay highlighted that discussions had been undertaken with Police Scotland on the operation of the convoy system and whilst the speed limit will not be increased, the use of a second convoy vehicle at the end of each convoy as well as at the front was identified. This will mitigate against the issue of convoy becoming spread out.

Ian MacInnes highlighted local concerns with regard to the period of time being taken to get the Old Military Road into operation when it was to be used.

Eddie Ross highlighted binding livestock agreements that were in place with the land owner of the old military road. Keith Brown proposed BEAR/Transport Scotland discuss refining the agreement with the land owner.

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<td>Ian MacInnes enquired about potential bus facilities at Ardgartan and at Rest and be Thankful. BEAR/Transport Scotland to investigate with HITRANS and feedback to Ian MacInnes. Keith brown ask that TS keep him up to date on progress of this item</td>
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7 **AOCB**

Keith Brown confirmed that the Scottish Government was committed to the importance of the message of maintaining Argyll and Bute open for business.

8 **Date of Next Meeting**

Keith Brown thanked all for attending and suggested that the next meeting be in December to allow for further discussions on the progress of landslide mitigation works. Details to be confirmed.