

A83 Trunk Road Route Study Frequently Asked Questions

What is the A83 Trunk Road Route Study?

The Study has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to inform their future programme of work on the A83 trunk road (Tarbet to Kennacraig) by identifying potential ways to minimise the effects of road closures on the local communities and road users in the area. The Study will consider measures to manage the effects of landslips at the Rest and be Thankful and will look at potential road realignments away from the hillside. The Study will also look into removing traffic pinch points and improving safety (including pedestrian safety in villages) along the route.

How do you choose the route of a new Trunk Road scheme?

As a trunk road the A83 is the responsibility of the Scottish Ministers. Taking forward any new trunk road requires statutory procedures to be followed. The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 sets out these procedures with regard to the promotion of orders. The principal stages of the process are:

- Choosing a preferred route
- Publication of draft road orders
- Draft compulsory purchase order (CPO)
- Publication of Environmental Statement (if required)
- Public local inquiry (if required)
- Finalised road orders and CPO
- Compensation

Choosing the route of a new trunk road in Scotland is undertaken through several stages of assessment reporting. This is to enable consideration of the various environmental, economic and traffic impacts and consultation with the public and the various stakeholders prior to establishing the defined route. On completion of each of the stages, Transport Scotland review and determine the feasibility of progressing to the next stage of the assessment. The first stage which shall be undertaken as part of this Study is the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment.

What is the DMRB?

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) is a comprehensive system which includes current design standards, advice notes and other published documents relating to the design, assessment and operation of trunk roads. The DMRB sets out the various stages that are required for road design.

What is the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment?

The DMRB Stage 1 Assessment is a preliminary assessment of broadly defined improvement strategies. Its purpose is to identify the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages / disadvantages / constraints associated with these and provides a stepping stone in the process with regards to the feasibility of the improvements.

For the A83 Trunk Road Route Study, it is proposed to undertake the assessment in two parts; Part A will concentrate on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful issues and Part B will be on the A83 Tarbet-Lochgilphead-Kennacraig route issues.

A DMRB Stage 1 Assessment is not necessarily required for minor improvements such as a new pedestrian crossing. Any minor improvements which are identified as

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part of the Route Study shall be reviewed with Transport Scotland and agreement reached as to how and when these works shall be undertaken.

What is the typical timescale for a DMRB Stage 1 Assessment?

The timescale for a DMRB Stage 1 Assessment can vary considerably depending on the size and complexity of the scheme, from typically a number of months for smaller schemes to potentially upwards of 6 months for larger complex schemes (£100m+).

What happens on completion of the Stage 1 Assessment?

On completion of the Stage 1 Assessment, if deemed feasible, the next step is a Stage 2 Assessment. Stage 2 identifies the various route options for the scheme, building on the advantages / disadvantages / constraints identified in the Stage 1 Assessment and enabling a preferred option to be established which can be assessed and developed in more detail in the Stage 3 Assessment.

Stage 3 will refine the preferred route where possible and is undertaken alongside an Environmental Assessment. Throughout the various stages of the Assessments both the public and stakeholders continue to be consulted on the proposals.

Again, typical timescales for the Stage 2 and Stage 3 Assessments can vary considerably depending on the size and complexity of the scheme. Normally this would be in a timescale of 6 – 18 months, however there a number of factors that need to be considered such as seasonal constraints for carrying out environmental surveys.

The Stage 2 and 3 Assessments are not part of this Route Study. The decision to proceed to a Stage 2 Assessment will be taken at the end of the current Stage 1 Assessment.

How will the impact on the environment be assessed?

Assessment of environmental impacts and identification of environmental constraints is carried out to an appropriate level of detail at each stage of the DMRB Assessment process. Once the preferred route is identified, an Environmental Statement is prepared which includes the details of the environmental surveys that have been undertaken and the assessment of the environmental impacts of the preferred route and the proposed mitigation measures to counteract this. The assessment considers impacts on many aspects of the environment including, but not limited to, land use, geology, contaminated land and groundwater, the water environment, ecology, visual, air quality, noise, pedestrians and non-motorised users.

What happens once a Stage 3 Assessment has been carried out?

On completion of the Stage 3 Assessment, a decision is made whether to proceed with the scheme. Should a scheme proceed the next step is to publish “Draft” Road Orders and an Environmental Statement. Before any new Trunk Road can be built, it requires the publication of Road Orders, Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO’s) and an Environmental Statement. The Orders are statutory documents which are necessary to comply with the requirements of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and the Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure) (Scotland) Act 1947.

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The Road Orders set out which powers of the Roads (Scotland) Act are being relied on to authorise the construction of the road and describe any conditions that must be met to exercise those powers. Each Order usually contains a Schedule which details the proposals by reference to plans showing the proposals.

If it is necessary to purchase land on which to construct the scheme, the land may be acquired either by agreement or by compulsory purchase. The CPO sets out the relevant statutory powers authorising the land acquisition and includes a Schedule detailing the land to be acquired by reference to plans showing the location of the land.

Following publication of the Draft Orders and Environmental Statement, a period of objection commences, allowing any person or body to object to the Orders. If an objection from a Statutory Consultee remains unresolved, this may lead to a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). Statutory Consultees may include landowners where land is being acquired or someone directly affected by the Road Orders.

Following the conclusion of the PLI, the Scottish Ministers may then decide to proceed with the scheme. Following a decision to proceed, the next steps are the making of the final Orders, the purchase of land, the preparation of contract documents and the appointment of a Contractor to construct the Works.

Is there any way to speed up the process?

The preparation of the scheme assessments and the publication of Orders are set out in statute and cannot be avoided and timescales vary depending on the size of the scheme. There are also strict timescales which must be followed as part of the Statutory Orders process, such as the length of the objection period.

In order to speed up the process, it is important to manage the project in the most efficient manner possible. A time saving could be made, for example, by preparing the Environmental Statement and Draft Orders at the same time as the Stage 3 Assessment is being carried out. This will allow for publication of Draft Orders and the Environmental Statement shortly after the Stage 3 Assessment and a positive decision to proceed with a scheme.

Effective stakeholder consultations are an important factor in the overall process. By setting out a clear consultation plan and working closely with landowners, it is possible to avoid the need for a Public Local Inquiry which can be a time consuming process.