

A83 Rest and Be Thankful

MTS EIAR VOLUME 4, APPENDIX 7.1 – POPULATION AND
HUMAN HEALTH LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Transport Scotland

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A7-1. Population and Human Health Legislation, Policy and Guidance

A7-1.1. Introduction

- A7-1.1.1. National, regional and local policy as well as guidance, relating to the assessment of Population and Human Health has been reviewed and an overview of implications and key aspects of relevance to the Proposed Scheme are set out below.
- A7-1.1.2. There are a wide range of documents relating to health in Scotland. While brevity does not allow full exploration of all these documents, general themes can be determined which recognise that Scotland has significant public health challenges and set out (amongst a range of aims and objectives) to improve life expectancy, reduce health inequalities, improve health outcomes and promote health and wellbeing.
- A7-1.1.3. The consideration of population and human health is cross cutting across a number of environmental topics such as air quality, noise etc. Reference should be made of those technical chapters in respect of legislation, policy, and guidance relevant to that topic. The MTS concerns improvements to the Old Military Road (OMR) which runs adjacent to the A83 and is used as a diversionary route in times of planned and unplanned (e.g. landslips) closures. As such the Proposed Scheme, while not directly concerning the A83, improves the resilience of the transport network by acting as a vital link during such closures. It is therefore reasoned that this review of Legislation, Policy and Guidance includes that relevant to the A83.

A7-1.2. National Policy

National Transport Strategy – Protecting our Climate and Improving Lives 2020

- A7-1.2.1. This Strategy advocates a Vision for Scotland's transport system, that will help create great places - a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors. This Strategy has four priorities, including reducing inequalities and improve health and wellbeing. A strong

emphasis is placed on a number of elements relevant to the Proposed Scheme, including active travel (of relevance to the walking routes in Glen Croe), safety and minimising connectivity disadvantages (relevant to the need to provide a robust and safe route through this rural area to allow people to access the key services, community and healthcare facilities, employment opportunities they require).

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

- A7-1.2.2. In respect of Population and Human Health, NPF4 clearly recognises there are significant health inequalities in Scotland, with a clear need for community resilience and sets out as a spatial principle, support for local living, that will improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally. The A83 provides that function to access services for the population within the immediate area to the route such as at Succoth and Arrochar, as well as those in key centres across the wider Argyll & Bute area. Similarly, the A83 supports rural revitalisation, another key aim of NPF4, by helping provide access to wider markets, as well as supporting tourist movement to and through the area. During normal operation, the A83 ensures social connectivity to allow people to visit friends and family – with a positive benefit on health and wellbeing, reflecting a key element of successful places.
- A7-1.2.3. NPF4 recognises that economic development has an effect on overall health and wellbeing and it is to be recognised that the A83 has an important role in the economy by providing route to markets, supporting local supply chains and commercial businesses and so on. NPF4 also recognises the importance of protecting people from harm and mitigating risks arising from safety hazards – key elements of the Proposed Scheme.
- A7-1.2.4. NPF4 also places an important emphasis on a national walking, cycling and wheeling network, with an ambition to strengthen and extend a national active travel network. While this is closely linked to reducing emissions from transport, there are also linkages to health and wellbeing. Within the area of Glen Croe, there are numerous active travel routes, including the Old Military Road (OMR), an informal WCH route impacted by the Proposed Scheme.

A7-1.3. Regional Policy

Argyll & Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy

- A7-1.3.1. While this document does not apply to the area of A83 (which falls within the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy), it does provide an indication of population, health and wellbeing issues considered of note in the wider area. A key element in this document is the wish for Argyll & Bute to have well connected places where people are able to meet their full potential without prejudicing the quality of life of future generations. Improved access to key global markets and lifeline services is critically important to the region as without this, businesses and population may relocate out of the area if they feel that their access routes are not fit for purpose or resilient enough. The Proposed Scheme is clearly aligned with these aspirations and note is also made that the A83 (along with A82 and A85) provides lifeline access to the rest of Argyll and the Inner and Outer Hebridean Islands, as well as the north-west Highlands and the general western seaboard. The A83 is recognised as being a particularly fragile, though significant link, with significant safety issues. Network resilience is recognised as critical to community wellbeing and the MTS will act to support that overall network resilience during periods of closure on the A83.

Argyll and Bute Council Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2024

- A7-1.3.2. LDP2 replaced the 2015 LDP as of February 2024. LDP2 contains a wide range of aspects with implications for population and human health. As with LDP 2015, there is a focus on tackling deprivation and health inequalities and promoting healthier and more active lifestyles e.g. through protecting long distance routes – this could have implications for the Proposed Scheme, given the need to protect such long distance routes.
- A7-1.3.3. The Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan (ABOIP) was used as a guiding strategy for the LDP2 and sets out the key challenges faced which includes the remote and rural geography, economic fragility and a reducing, ageing population. It notes a need to tackle critical economic infrastructure, tackle deprivation and health inequalities and unlock economic and employment potential. The LDP2 sets out the spatial strategy that supports the delivery of the ABOIP and is a pivotal tool to help deliver its vision and outcomes.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park LDP 2017-2021

- A7-1.3.4. It is noted within the National Park Plan that the area around Succoth and Arrochar will likely have a growing population, with a number of housing sites identified. There are also noted plans for additional community facilities and it is noted that the area offers great opportunities for a range of new homes, employment, community and visitor infrastructure. It is also noted that the population profile within the park area is trending toward older cohorts, reflecting Argyll & Bute and Scotland as a whole.
- A7-1.3.5. In addition, the LDP sets out that the area of the park includes a number of walking and cycling routes, including those of long distance and references that the development of a strategic network of well maintained long-distance paths and trails through Scotland will enhance visitor and recreation experiences for all users, as well as supporting active travel and improving health and well-being. The LDP expands upon relevant aspects of active travel – for example Overarching Policy 2 notes the need to support Active Travel choice where possible, while Transport Policy 2 notes the need to promote sustainable travel. While the A83 project will have implications (during construction) on access to walking routes to the hills, there will also be opportunities for enhancement of some routes.
- A7-1.3.6. Overarching Policy 2 also notes the need for ‘social wellbeing and economic vitality’ and notes that development should be ‘designed for extreme weather..., support new businesses, training/jobs for local people’. It is considered that the A83 project aligns with this Policy through providing protection to the route from extreme weather events, as well as providing a link that will allow people in the wider area access the jobs and economic opportunities they require.
- A7-1.3.7. Other aspects of the LDP have elements which would be indirectly supportive of general health and wellbeing. For example there are Policies relating to Open Space and the need to protect this, as well as the need to consider land contamination (Natural Environment Policy 16). While these Policies are not anticipated to directly link to the A83 project (in terms of health and wellbeing) it is worth noting that such matters will be addressed e.g. through the need to avoid pollution during construction..

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Core Path Plan (2023)

- A7-1.3.8. The preparation of a Core Paths Plan is a statutory duty for the National Park Authority under Sections 17-20 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003). The Core Paths Plan relates to improving connectivity and infrastructure, and which deals with rights of way and public access. Of note a review of the Core Path Plan began in 2017 and set out an additional 81km of Core Paths and removal of 4km (less than 1% of the overall network).

Community Action Plan 2014-2019

- A7-1.3.9. The National Park Plan also references the Community Action Plan (2014-2019) for Arrochar which notes among the top 10 priorities for the local community as being 'Safe and well maintained trunk road corridors through our villages, along with better transport links for residents and visitors' and 'improving transport links between villages and major settlements'. This theme continues in the superseding Trossachs Community Action Plan (2020-2025) which notes priorities including provision of more sustainable transport solutions and an increase in the number of walking and cycling paths in the area.

A7-1.4. Guidance and Standards

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) - LA 112 Population and human health

- A7-1.4.1. This document provides a framework for assessing, mitigating and reporting the effects of motorway and all-purpose trunk road projects on population and health. It introduces significance criteria that aid consistent and proportionate assessment to support the reporting of significant effects of population and human health. Environmental assessment of population and human health effects shall report on the following elements:
- Land-use and accessibility including private property and housing, community land and assets, development land and businesses, agricultural land holdings and walkers, cyclists and horse-riders (WCH).
 - Human health including; health profiles of affected communities; health determinants (e.g. noise or air pollution) and likely health outcomes.

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) - LA 104 Environmental assessment and monitoring

- A7-1.4.2. This document provides additional information to be considered in respect of LA 112 and sets out how environmental assessment is the process by which information about environmental effects is collected, assessed and used to inform decision-making. This includes Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)
Guidance on 'Determining Significance for Human Health in
Environmental Impact Assessment' 2022

- A7-1.4.3. This guidance covers the consideration of health as a topic in EIA. It presents a framework that supports a proportionate approach that can apply to all scales of EIA. Of relevance to this project is that it allows differentiation to be made of effects on human health, to a greater degree than DMRB allows, by allowing significance of effect on health to be attributed.