

Notes of Meeting

Meeting Title A83 Taskforce Meeting 13

Meeting Scope A83

Venue: Three Villages Hall - Arrochar

Date: 24 October 2017, 10:00 am

Present: Humza Yousaf MSP - Minister for Transport and the Islands (HY)
 Jonny Moran – Transport Scotland (JM)
 Fiona Brown – Transport Scotland (FB)
 George Fiddes – Transport Scotland (GF)
 Karen MacKinnon – Transport Scotland (KMack)
 Eddie Ross – BEAR Scotland (ER)
 John Wrigley – BEAR Scotland (JW)
 Jane Macleod – Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce (JMacl)
 Jim Smith – Argyll and Bute Council (JS)
 Councillor Roddy McCuish – Argyll & Bute Council (RMcC)
 Gordon Ross – Western Ferries (GR)
 Ronnie McDonald – Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Council (RMcD)
 Mary Haggerty – Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Council (MH)
 Iain McInnes – Lochgoilhead Community Council (IMcl)
 John Hair – Forest Enterprise Scotland (JH)
 Kirsty Robb – Argyll Timber Transport Group (KR)
 Councillor Dougie Philand – Argyll and Bute Council (DP)
 Michelle Vanderstighelen – office of Brendan O Hara MP (MV)

Apologies: Michael Russell MSP, Jackie Baillie MSP, Brendan O’Hara MP,
 Councillor Donald Kelly, Councillor Ellen Morton, Councillor Alan Reid,
 Donald Clark

	Description	Action
1	Welcomes, Introductions & Apologies	
	<p>The Minister opened the meeting with a round of introductions. Apologies were intimated above. He stated his pleasure at chairing the Taskforce meeting and re-emphasised to the Taskforce that he is acutely aware of the importance of the A83 trunk road to the communities of Argyll and Bute and to the local economy.</p> <p>The Minister reminded all of the £58M that has been invested in the A83 since 2007 up to the end of the last financial year. This includes £9.6M towards reducing the risk of impacts from landslides at the Rest and Be Thankful and the establishment of the local diversion route, which helps keep Argyll open for business.</p>	

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2	Review of Minutes of Meeting of 7th September 2016	
	<p>JM reviewed the actions from the previous meeting</p> <p>Item 2 – JM confirmed that Visit Scotland cannot source a supporting letter for this sign in their records. The sign may have been a historic local authority project pre the current Visit Scotland policies being set. The sign is no longer in place.</p> <p>Item 3 – JM confirmed that delays during the works are monitored. This will be monitored once catch pit works have commenced.</p> <p>Item 4 – JM referred to item 4 later in agenda.</p> <p>Item 5 – JM advised that several emails have been sent to Mike Story in order to progress this action but no response was received.</p> <p>Item 5 – JM sent an email on 14 June 2017 with contact details.</p> <p>Item 5 – JM referred to ABC for an update. JS advised that a meeting was held last month with Jackie Baillie MSP to agree on next steps.</p> <p>Item 6 – JM confirmed that a meeting was held on site on Thursday 19th August 2017 involving representatives from ABC / TS / Lochgoilhead CC / Forestry Commission / West Coast Motors / Citylink. The bus company advised at the meeting that patronage was higher than expected at the bus stop. The Rest bus stop will not be used by Citylink between 1st November 2017 and 28th February 2018 due to the Operator's perceived H&S concerns. ABC have initiated the TRO process to address the inconsiderate parking at the bus stop and they are considering installing an enforcement camera next year once the TRO is in place.</p> <p>Item 6 – JM confirmed that Transport Scotland have a temporary arrangement in place for Inveraray when the A83 is closed for long periods, a temporary VMS will be sited in Inveraray advising drivers of the diversion route. Transport Scotland are currently exploring options for a more permanent solution and will consult with local stakeholders before making any decision.</p> <p>Item 3 – JM confirmed that the contract was awarded to Geo-rope for the construction of catch pits at phases 5, 7 and 9 and that work commenced yesterday on site. He also advised of the intention to investigate further catch-pit options covering the future Medium and Low Frequency works that are programmed for tender and delivery in 17/18. Design and Certification process will be concluded this month. JM will refer to later agenda item 3 for further information and an update on the project.</p>	<p>ABC</p> <p>TS</p>
3	Update on progress A83 Route Study Recommendations and other investment in the A83	
	<p>JW gave a presentation providing information on schemes delivered in the current financial year and the progress with the landslide mitigation at Rest and Be Thankful.</p> <p>£2.85M of improvements works undertaken since the beginning of April 2016 including:</p>	

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- £2.0M of carriageway resurfacing works at 13 locations
- £95,000 of road restraint systems at 2 locations
- £101,000 of footway improvements at 3 locations
- £87,000 of drainage improvements at 8 locations
- £60,000 of signing and lining improvements
- £400,000 of works to widen the local Diversion Route

JW reported that since the last Taskforce meeting the Risk Reduction Measures contract has been tendered. Tenders were invited to address the High Frequency channels which were identified as the most likely to incur a landslide event through the study undertaken by AECOM on behalf of Transport Scotland but also with the instruction that tenderers undertook their own robust assessment of the hillside to provide flow paths, volumes and impact loadings.

JW explained that although the contract has been awarded to provide a reduction in risk at the high frequency channels (Phase 5, 7 and 9) there is an option in the future to extend these pits to reduce risk at all other channels identified to be a medium and low risk.

The process of gaining the necessary approvals and authorisations to commence construction is now ongoing with the contractor on site today to undertake investigations to develop their detailed design.

Up to £5.5M of improvements planned for the A83 during 2017 – 2018.

- £1.84M at Rest and Be Thankful for High Frequency event risk reduction, as discussed above.
- Potential Protection Measures at Glen Kinglas (see note 1 below)
- £1.0M at Rest and Be Thankful for Low and Medium event risk reduction
- Strone Point Realignment (see note 2 below)
- £100,000 of Footway and Drainage Improvements between Taret and Arrochar
- Carriageway resurfacing at a minimum of 11 locations with a total investment of £1.4M
- Continuation of improvements to drainage, safety fencing, footways, signing and lining along the route.

- 1) JW explained that discussions are to take place with the landowner at Glen Kinglas about re-using the excavated material from Rest and Be Thankful to create bunds in Glen Kinglas to protect the trunk road from the risk of landslides which have occurred

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4	Rest and Be Thankful – Update on progress of Proposed Hillside Planting Trial	
	<p>JM provided the group with an update on progress to date.</p> <p>Following the broad support received from the A83 Taskforce and the Minister for the proposed landscape mitigation planting trial, Transport Scotland has been progressing the preparation stages for this unique project. This is the first time in the UK that this technique has been used for stabilising a slope of this magnitude and there are a number of criteria that need to be met to give the initiative the best chance of success.</p> <p>Work is now underway in partnership with Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), who manage the National Forest Estate on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland, to source the required local provenance native tree species that will form the basis of the new woodland to be established on the steep slopes of Beinn Luibhean above the A83. It is hoped that planting will commence in spring 2018.</p> <p>FES will also assist Transport Scotland in the planning and delivery of a significant length of deer fencing, forming a complete contained area over the southern face of the hill so that the new planting will be protected from the attentions of browsing deer. It is planned for the fencing contract to be let this year and the works to start as early as possible before the winter season.</p> <p>At the same time, proposals are being put in place to ensure there is a robust monitoring programme in place for the planting scheme. This is likely to involve a number of people from a range of enterprises and institutions, including BEAR Scotland, the Transport Research Laboratory and the Universities of Strathclyde and Dundee.</p> <p>Whilst these preparations are taking place, Transport Scotland is also liaising with Solicitors, and the current landowner, to ensure the transfer of the required land can be concluded smoothly and as soon as possible, enabling the fencing works to commence.</p> <p>The planting will take a long time to establish (between 15–25 years) and there is no guarantee that this trial will be fully effective.</p> <p>Considerable financial investment of public funds to initiate the project, secure the required land, provide the necessary deer fencing and establish and maintain the planting. This is estimated at £1.2M and a further estimated value of £200k for on-going maintenance costs.</p> <p>The Minister stated that there should not be a fear of trying new things or being innovative as long as due diligence has been taken.</p> <p>MH asked why the hillside had not been planted before now? JH responded that it has been used for cattle / sheep for some time.</p>	
5	Discussion / Q&A	
	<p>HY indicated that a discussion could be held under AOCB.</p>	

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6	AOCB	
	<p>IMCl asked for an update on the bus stop arrangement at the Rest and Be Thankful. He is concerned that there is no TRO in place and that no service buses will stop during the winter months. GF / JS responded to the queries and confirmed that TS and Argyll & Bute Council are working together to identify an appropriate solution for the bus stop facility. A site meeting took place on 10th of August with all key stakeholders involved. HY requested that a regular update be provided to IMCl with progress on the various points. ACTION: Argyll and Bute Council to provide update</p> <p>MH raised an issue with regard to speeding in Arrochar and requested that the speed limit for the Succoth area of the village is changed to 30mph as opposed to 40mph. HY committed to speak with officers regarding the request and respond to MH. ACTION: Transport Scotland to respond</p>	<p>ABC</p> <p>TS</p>
7	Summary and Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>HY thanked all for attending and concluded what was acknowledged as a positive meeting.</p> <p>HY suggested that a further meeting be held in March / April 2018 however indicated that the next meeting may be brought forward should it be required. This will be reviewed at the end of 2017 in line with progress on key projects.</p>	