

A83 Taskforce Meeting 15 Minutes

Venue: Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray

Date: 15 November 2018, 09:30 – 10:30 am

Present: Michael Matheson MSP (MM) – Chair Scottish Government
Pauline McMillan (PM) Assistant to Michael Matheson MSP
Marie-Claire Docherty (MCD) Assistant to Michael Russell MSP
Jackie Baillie MSP (JB) Scottish Parliament
Michelle Van Der Stighelen (MVDS) Assistant to Brendan O'Hara MP
Cllr Ellen Morton (EM) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Roddy McCuish (RMcC) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Bobby Good (BG) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Dougie Philand (DP) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Aileen Morton (Leader) (AM) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Gary Mulvaney (GM) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Sandy Taylor (ST) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr George Freeman (GF) Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Alan Reid (AR) Argyll & Bute Council
Scott Lees (SL) Transport Scotland
Jonny Moran (JM) Transport Scotland
Fiona Brown (FB) Transport Scotland
George Fiddes (GFi) Transport Scotland
Shailaa Kauser (SK) Transport Scotland
Steven Carmichael (SC) Transport Scotland (Comms)
Pippa Milne (PM) Argyll & Bute Council
Jim Smith (JS) Argyll & Bute Council
Eddie Ross (ER) BEAR Scotland
Ian Stewart (IS) BEAR Scotland
Mike Baxter (MB) BEAR Scotland
Niall MacLean (NMacL) Georope
Alastair McLundie (AMcL) Western Ferries
John Hair (JH) Forestry Enterprise Scotland
Alan Bell (AB) LLTNP
Martin Reid (MR) Road Haulage Association
Jane MacLeod (JMacL) Chamber of Commerce
Kenny MacLeod (KMacL) Chamber of Commerce
Iain Jurgensen (IJ) Wild About Argyll / AITC
Gavin Dick (GD) Wild About Argyll / AITC
Jennifer Nicoll (JN) Highlands & Islands Enterprise
John Semple (JS) NFU Scotland
Peter McKerral (PMcK) McKerral Timber
Kirsty Robb (KR) Ridings Sawmills
Iain Catterwell (IC) Argyll Timber Transport Group
Mary Haggarty (MH) Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui CC
Ronnie MacDonald (RMacD) Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui CC
Iain MacInnes (IMacI) Lochgoil CC
Dianne Paton (DPa) Lochgoil CC
Debbie Donald (DD) Cairndow CC
Donald Clark (DC) Hotel owner Inveraray
Jane Ireland (JI) Slanj Restaurant owner

Apologies: Seamus Leheny Freight Transport Association
Gordon Ross Western Ferries
Lucy Sumsion NFU Scotland
Michael Russell MSP Scottish Government
Brendan O'Hara MP UK Parliament

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	Description	Action
1	Welcomes, Introductions & Apologies	
	<p>MM opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending the meeting. MM announced to the Taskforce that he is acutely aware of the importance of the A83 Trunk Road to the communities and economy of the Argyll and Bute area. MM then announced that he has instructed officials at Transport Scotland to explore firstly, how consideration of transport issues in Argyll and Bute can be prioritised within the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), and secondly, that he has instructed officials to explore what additional physical measures can be undertaken to mitigate against landslides at the Rest and Be Thankful, and to report back to him within 3 months (by mid-February 2019).</p> <p>Apologies were intimated as previous page.</p>	
2	Review of Minutes of Meeting of 6th March 2018	
	<p>MM handed over to JM to review the actions from the previous meeting on the 6th March 2018.</p> <p>Item 2 – The Rest bus stop TRO. JS advised that ABC have concluded the TRO process to address the inconsiderate parking at the bus stop and they are considering enforcement options. ABC will write again to West Coast Motors on this subject to ask why they are not using the facility.</p> <p>Item 2 – VMS sited in Inveraray advising drivers of the diversion route. Transport Scotland has 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 is currently exploring options for a more permanent solution and will consult with local stakeholders before making any decision. An update will be provided to the Taskforce when available.</p> <p>Item 3 – BEAR has a programme of drainage works for the A83 that is updated annually. BEAR to review the current programme and add in additional areas of concern for the A83.</p> <p>Item 6 – Regarding the request from the community council to change the Succoth speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. TS propose to retain the existing 40mph speed limit. TS Road Safety team to correspond with MH.</p> <p>Item 6 – The issue of lack of lighting of the Cairndow junction with the A83 at the war memorial. TS Strategic Road Safety team to reply to the local Community Council.</p>	<p>ABC</p> <p>Transport Scotland</p> <p>BEAR</p> <p>Transport Scotland</p> <p>Transport Scotland</p>
3	Update on programmed works – Strone Point, Catchpits and Hillside Planting (Presentation from BEAR Scotland)	
	<p>MM invited IS of BEAR Scotland to present on programmed works for the A83. IS highlighted that significant investment has been targeted at the A83 at Strone Point as well as at the Rest and Be Thankful. The presentation also highlighted the significant resurfacing investment during FY 2018/19. The programme of work has been designed to address the highest priority locations across the network. Following conclusion of this part of the presentation, MM invited questions from the Taskforce.</p>	

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	<p>IMaCl asked what is the total cost of the current works at the Rest and Be Thankful? IS responded approximately £4.4M for the catchpit works and in excess of £1M for the planting proposal.</p> <p>IC stated that he cannot see the trial planting proposal working at this location. A discussion followed on the potential merits, with some for the proposal and some against. The group was reminded that following a presentation on the background and potential merits of the planting trial at the 14 March 2017 Taskforce meeting, the whole Taskforce meeting supported the proposal. As such, this project will continue.</p> <p>KR asked how long will the traffic lights be on for at the RABT? IS replied that while the catchpit works are ongoing, the TTM will be there for safety of the workforce.</p> <p>JMaCl asked if the OMR and the A83 roads could be used at the same time to keep traffic flowing? IS responded that the OMR is a private road and can only be used with agreement with the landowner when required.</p>	
4	Rest and Be Thankful Landslide response from 9th October 2018 (Presentation from BEAR Scotland)	
	<p>IS gave a presentation providing information on the recent Landslide events and response. After 48 hours of intensive rainfall (150mm), a landslide overnight into Tuesday 9 October 2018 closed the A83 Rest and Be Thankful until its reopening at 11.20am on 18 October. Over these 9 days, the strategic diversion (via the A85) or the local diversion (via the Old Military Road) were in place. This was the biggest landslide (3,200 tonnes in total) on the Rest and Be Thankful in at least a decade.</p> <p>However, due to the measures in place, the road continued to remain open during this period. Throughout this incident, our contractors worked around the clock to get the road opened by removing debris, assessing and monitoring the hillside, repairing damaged fences and clearing drainage channels or culverts. Also, Transport Scotland chaired frequent & daily conference calls with BEAR Scotland, Traffic Scotland, Police Scotland and Met Office. Regular communications were then issued to media outlets, radio stations, stakeholders and social media, reinforcing the message that Argyll remained open for business. IS advised that since they had been erected, the landslide mitigation measures were estimated to have kept the A83 open for 40 days when it would otherwise have closed.</p> <p>Following conclusion of this part of the presentation, MM invited questions from the Taskforce under Agenda item 5.</p>	
5	Future Strategy / General Discussion	
	<p>MVDS opened the general discussion by asking that if the catchpits were in place, would they have prevented the recent closure? NMaCl replied that the location of the largest material movement (Phase 1) is in the current programme of catchpit works, programmed for construction in Summer 2019. Due to the large capacity of the existing Phase 1 nets, other phases had been prioritised. Had it been constructed, then yes, it would have been expected to retain all the mobilised material at that phase. NMaCl explained that four different catchpits had caught material during the recent event and prevented the material from reaching the A83.</p>	

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<p>In response to some calls to use the forestry road as an alternative diversion route, NMacL also stated that there had been landslides affecting the forestry road on the other side of the glen. .</p> <p>IJ asked if risk assessments for stacking traffic on the A83 had been completed? IS responded that the temporary traffic lights have been positioned away from the 'at risk' areas. The temporary traffic lights can go to an 'all red' if required to allow for emergency vehicles. NMacL added that the risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated in line with the site traffic management plan. JM added that the BEAR / Georope staff have a presence on site when there is a threat of a landslide and they take action swiftly if required. For this event, the nets above the A83 worked and held back significant quantities of landslide material overnight.</p> <p>GD stated that he wants a permanent solution, when will that deliver? MM reiterated that Transport Scotland will make ABC one of the first regions to be reported on and this work will examine ABC as a region for transport priorities. Then it is about funding that priority. STPR2 will identify what priorities for future transport investment for Transport Scotland. Similar points, including those about prioritisation of any further permanent solution, were raised by a number of parties.</p> <p>JB asked when is a deliverable solution likely to be announced. Is this a national priority as opposed to a regional one? MM replied that STPR2 is a national process with regional components. The process will start early in 2019 and will be completed within the current Parliament (May 2021), however MM has asked that work in the Argyll region be expedited.</p> <p>KR stated that she felt the last event proved that the measures did not work and that Transport Scotland need to stop any further work. She added that she felt the OMR is not safe, and that we need an immediate start to the alternate solution. KR said that in her opinion, she believed the Taskforce may have been wrong in choosing the Red Option (similar points were later made by AR and IC). MM reiterated that the A83 Taskforce agreed to the implementation of the Red Option and that the agreed measures need to be completed. They are working, saving lives and reducing the risks. It was noted that they have helped to keep the road open for an estimated 40XX days since they were installed in 2013 & 2014, when they would otherwise have closed due to landslides. NMacL added that the OMR is only used when safe to do so and it provides an important diversion route to get traffic moving more quickly.</p> <p>GF stated that he does not want the mitigation works to stop, no matter what. GF also requested that the outcomes of the STPR2 work is presented to the A83 Taskforce at a future date. MM confirmed that this would be considered.</p> <p>AR asked for an update with regard to the VMS that were in use on the local road network during the event? IS replied that the VMS were used and BEAR Scotland will be liaising with ABC regarding the use of these signs moving forward.</p> <p>DD then asked if there is a wider risk assessment including Glen Kinglas and if the traffic lights need to be extended? JM answered, yes there is a wider strategic risk assessment that has, and continues to, prioritise</p>	
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	<p>landslide mitigation works at Glen Kinglass, Loch Shira and Cairndow.</p> <p>IMacl noted that the diversion signs at RABT for Lochgoil were missing during the last event? IS replied that BEAR Scotland will review, update and write out to stakeholders on this matter.</p> <p>DD requested that Transport Scotland use the Community Council network for STPR2. ABC could help with this with points of contact for each community. MM agreed to this. DD then enquired as to resilience arrangements for local communities if another event occurs? MM advised that ABC can pick this up with DD directly.</p> <p>JI raised concerns about lack of information at the strategic diversion points advising that local access to business was still available during the landslide closure (i.e. prioritise this, saying strategic traffic should divert). MH stated that she saw signs 'Local Access' signs erected on the first day of the incident. IS said BEAR will review this point.</p>	
6	AOCB	
	None	
7	Summary and Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>MM thanked all for attending and concluded what was acknowledged as a positive meeting.</p> <p>MM suggested that a further meeting be held in March 2019, date to be confirmed.</p>	