

# Transport Scotland submission of 25 January 2023

## PE1916/E: Request a public inquiry into the management of the Rest and Be Thankful project

Thank you for your letter of 14 November 2022 in which you ask for information about what impact the Capital Spending Review has had on the funding for the A83 Rest and Be Thankful project.

The Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to an infrastructure solution to address the A83 Rest and Be Thankful landslip risks, recognising the impacts that this has had on the local community and businesses. The situation is being treated with the seriousness and urgency it deserves, with measures to maintain connectivity on a short, medium and long term basis being implemented.

In terms of a permanent solution, potential route designs are being progressed and these range from traditional roads and localised structural protection to full tunnel options. As previously advised we are working towards announcing a preferred route option for a permanent solution by Spring 2023.

Further, in August 2022, the Scottish Government announced the appointment of new technical consultants, Atkins WSP Joint Venture, to take forward the next stages of design and assessment work. The contract represents approximately £25m of Scottish Government investment, an estimate of the overall contract value for undertaking the design and assessment, promotion, procurement and construction supervision of the medium and long-term solutions. This investment represents a significant milestone because it will allow the vital design work needed to continue to be taken forward at pace.

In recognition of the urgent need to secure a long term solution for local communities in and around the A83, the Scottish Government has now arranged for more frequent meetings of the A83 Taskforce, which is chaired by the Minister for Transport, with the next meeting planned for 25 January 2023 in Argyll.

At the same time we are progressing a medium term solution to improve the resilience of the diversion route when the A83 is closed. On 23 December 2022 the Minister for Transport announced improvements to the existing Old Military Road (OMR) through the Glen Croe corridor as

the preferred medium term solution to make it a more resilient diversion route until the long term solution to the problems at the Rest and Be Thankful is in place.

The improvements to the OMR will improve the resilience of the diversion route, reduce journey times, are the quickest to implement, of relatively lower cost and would have the least impacts overall across the range of criteria assessed.

A detailed programme for the proposed improvements will now be developed. These include debris catch fences, temporary bunds, drainage improvements and widening and discrete realignment to improve bends and avoid flooding. It is expected that these works will be carried out on a phased basis starting later this year.

As the Committee will be aware, there are significant financial challenges across the Scottish Government. Budgets are confirmed as part of the annual budget setting process, with the 2023-24 budget laid before the Scottish Parliament on 15 December 2022. The Capital Spending Review differs from a detailed annual budget, in that it does not represent confirmed budget allocation, rather sets out indicative allocations over the review period.

The Scottish Government remains committed to investing in Scotland's future, including the A83, and we regularly assess future funding and financing opportunities to deliver strategic assets in the right places, that is good Governance.

I hope this is of assistance.