

# Transport Scotland submission of 24 October 2022

## PE1967/A: Protect Loch Lomond's Atlantic oakwood shoreline by implementing the high road option for the A82 upgrade between Tarbet and Inverarnan

I refer to the above noted Petition which is *“Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reconsider the process for selecting the preferred option for the planned upgrade of the A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan, and replace the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) based assessment with the more comprehensive Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance.”*

I can confirm that the development and assessment of the A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme has been undertaken in a manner underpinned by the principles of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

Targeted interventions to the A82 to improve road standards between Glasgow and Oban/Fort William formed part of the first Strategic Transport Project Review (STPR) from December 2008, which can be viewed on Transport Scotland's website at the following link:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/strategy/strategic-transport-projects-review/>

The STPR was undertaken using an objective-led, evidence-based approach to appraise potential means of addressing transport issues. This approach is compatible with STAG methodology and ensured that the Government's priorities at the time, as set out in the [Scottish Government's Economic Strategy of 2007](#) of a Wealthier and Fairer, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Smarter and Greener Scotland which underpinned the STPR were met. Investment resulting from the STPR assessment was targeted on those recommendations that most effectively supported improving Scotland's sustainable economic development.

The work undertaken to support the STPR identification of potential interventions for the A82 was consistent with STAG appraisal

requirements. The STAG 2008 guidance document, which was current at the time of the DMRB Stage 1 options appraisal process, states at paragraph 1.5.1:

*“All appraisals using STAG must encompass the principles of being objective-led rather than solution-led, present the appraisal of options against the Transport Planning Objectives, STAG Criteria and established policy directives.....STAG should, however, be applied proportionately to the impacts of the issue under consideration. Help and advice is available from Transport Scotland on this frequently misunderstood point to ensure that the appraisal presents the information required by the decision maker in a timely manner that also represents value for money.”*

As part of the early stages of development of the A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme, a verification and validation process complying with STAG was undertaken in order to confirm that the previously identified problems, issues and constraints were still valid.

This process was subsequently supplemented with the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment in order to support the Strategic Business Case for the scheme (March 2014). Appendix B of the Strategic Business Case incorporates the STAG Part 1 Appraisal Summary Tables, which include an assessment of the options against the STAG criteria, namely Environment, Economy, Accessibility and Social Inclusion. The Strategic Business Case is publicly available on Transport Scotland’s website at the following link:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/51175/strategic-business-case.pdf>

The options appraisal process for the A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme was completed in 2014 and reported in the Strategic Business Case (May 2014) and the DMRB Stage 1 Scheme Assessment Report (May 2014). The High Road Option which is referenced in the petition was considered during the DMRB Stage 1 route option selection stage. Full details of the assessment of the High Road Route, known as Option 3, are publicly available in of the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment Report which is available on Transport Scotland’s website at the following link:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a82-tarbet-to-inverarnan/project-details/#52885>

Transport Scotland is therefore satisfied with the outcomes and conclusions of the DMRB Stage 1 options appraisal process, and has

undertaken a significant amount of work since then on the detailed development and assessment of the preferred route option. We further confirm that the principles of STAG were used in the development and assessment of the A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme and we consider that the approach taken was rational and proportionate.

I can advise that detailed development and assessment of the preferred route option for the scheme continues, with a view to publishing draft Orders and the associated Environmental Impact Assessment Report for formal comment in due course. Should members of the public or other stakeholders wish to provide formal comment or objection to the proposed scheme, they will be able to do so during the statutory consultation period which will follow publication of the draft Orders. Future scheme progress will in part depend on the level and nature of comment received following publication of the draft Orders and whether a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) is required to consider objections received. As with any major roads project a PLI is the appropriate forum to consider objections received but not withdrawn and the appointed independent Reporter would require to consider any proposed scheme alternatives put forward by objectors during the statutory consultation period. The Reporter will then consider the evidence as a whole and prepare a report containing their recommendations to the Scottish Ministers.

Delivery of the scheme itself can only commence if the scheme is approved under these statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be set in line with available budgets.

I hope this is of assistance.