

From: Minister for Transport and the Islands
Sent: 22 December 2017 15:47:31
To: Public Engagement Unit Subject:
Fw: Argyll and Bute Letter

Attachments: Connectivity 221217.pdf

[Redacted]

Dear Mr Yousaf

Please see attached letter for your attention. Kind Regards

[Redacted]

Directorate Support Officer Development and
Infrastructure Argyll and Bute Council

Tel: [Redacted]

Argyll and Bute Council - Realising our potential together



Development and Infrastructure Services

Executive Director: [Redacted]

Humza Yousaf MSP
Minister for Transport and the Islands
T3.24
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Development and Infrastructure Services
Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT
Tel: [Redacted]
E-mail: [Redacted]
Website: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Ask For: [Redacted]
Our Ref: **PMAK**
Date: 22nd December 2017

By email to MinisterTI@gov.scot
humza.yousaf.msp@parliament.scot

Dear Humza

At a meeting of Argyll and Bute Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 8th December 2017, the committee considered a report regarding the aspirations of the Cowal Fixed Link Working Group to connect south Argyll and Bute to the central belt.

You may recall from the meeting we attended with David McKenzie from the Cowal Fixed Link Working Group, at the Scottish Parliament on 13th June 2017, that the group believe that the poor economic conditions in Cowal and other parts of South Argyll could be addressed by a fixed link or links which would permit Cowal and South Argyll to grasp a unique opportunity due to the proximity of Glasgow, helping to avert the population decline in the area.

In its consideration of the matter the Committee noted the ongoing issues with other national transportation infrastructure such as the Dunoon – Gourock ferry and the lack of a permanent solution at the A83 Rest and be Thankful, which both have an impact on Cowal and Dunoon. The Committee took cognisance of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Transport Connectivity Report which identified that fixed links brought risks as well as benefits and listed a range of potential fixed link options within Argyll and Bute. They also considered the experience of the Faroe Islands where they are reportedly able to construct tunnels at a cost of £11m per kilometre.

The Committee agreed that the scale of a fixed link project would make it a national infrastructure project that should be led by Transport Scotland on behalf of Scottish Government. On that basis they asked me to write to you to ask that you urgently investigate the feasibility of constructing tunnels at the following locations in Argyll and Bute, in order of priority:

- At the A83, near the Rest and be Thankful, where the road is most prone to landslides
- From Gourock to Dunoon, and on to Bute
- Across Loch Fyne

The Committee also ask that Transport Scotland consult within the Bute and Cowal area on the prioritisation of infrastructure investment.

I hope that you feel able to consider these requests and look forward to hearing from you on these matters.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted]

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure

Minister for Transport and the Islands
Humza Yousaf MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Ms [Redacted]
Executive Director of Development and
Infrastructure
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
Argyll
PA318RT

Our ref: 2017/0046735

25 January 2018

Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 2017 regarding the Cowal Fixed Link Working Group and your council's own priorities for strategic transport connections between Argyll and Bute and the central belt.

The Scottish Government understands the transport challenges faced by Scotland's rural communities and you will be aware that Transport Scotland is now undertaking a review of the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) to establish the strategic direction for transport in Scotland over the next 20 years. Part of that work will consider the important issue of connectivity to the country's islands and remote communities. This is being done through the "Enabling Economic Growth" group which is one of the NTS Working Groups which is also considering connectivity across the whole of Scotland.

The NTS2 review will inform the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) which will identify the transport interventions required to provide Scotland with a transport network fit for the 21st Century and I note your priorities for significant improvement in transport infrastructure at three locations across Argyll and Bute. I would like to reassure you that we are committed to a collaborative approach to both NTS2 and STPR2 and there will be wide ranging engagement with stakeholders, including transport users, local businesses, community organisations and local politicians as both these pieces of work continue to move forward.

It is at the discretion of Argyll and Bute Council if they wish to conduct further transport appraisal work to consider fixed links.

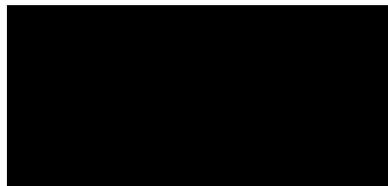
As you will be aware, following the A83 Route Study which was published in 2013, I continue to chair the regular A83 Taskforce meeting twice a year, where stakeholders provide feedback and commentary on proposals for the A83.

These meetings are constructive and well received by stakeholders, including Councillor [Redacted]. [Redacted] and and [Redacted] of the Mid-Argyll Chamber of Commerce, who are engaged with and supportive of the current plans to minimise the effects of closures at this location, which is amongst the most highly ranked debris flow hazard sites in Scotland. We have invested over £60 million in the A83 since 2007, including £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. A further £4.7M of improvements are programmed for the remainder of this financial year, and next financial year, on the mitigation measures and other schemes on the A83 such as at Strone Point. Future investment in the A83 will be considered as part of the second STPR.

In terms of connections across the Clyde, and in particular between Gourock and Dunoon, you will be aware that Transport Scotland meets regularly with Council officials, CalMac and CMAL to discuss future investment planning for ferry services to islands within Argyll & Bute. These meetings provide a forum for any proposals which the Council wishes to put forward for consideration. The Scottish Government's Interim Report on the procurement of ferry services for this route, published on 20 December 2017, sets out the way forward for ferry services in Argyll & Bute. The current Gourock-Dunoon ferry service contract, operated by Argyll Ferries Ltd, has been extended to December 2018 and the currently paused tender exercise for the Gourock-Dunoon ferry service will be restarted as soon as practicably possible to allow for the possibility of a commercially viable vehicle service being reintroduced.

Finally, my officials keep me updated on discussions with you on the Argyll and Bute Growth Deal and I am pleased to note that they report these are both collaborative and constructive. I would be happy to make sure that my officials keep you updated as work on the reviews of the NTS and STPR2 progresses.

I hope this is helpful.



HUMZA YOUSAF

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 02 November 2019 08:37:54
To: scottish.ministers@gov.scot
Subject: Mr Matheson - Road Bridge.

<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8"><div dir="auto">Dear Mr Matheson,<div dir="auto">
</div><div dir="auto">I am writing this email to enquire if the Scottish Government is planning to construct a road bridge for the Lower Clyde? Possibly between James Watt Dock in Greenock and Ardmore - just outside Helensburgh. I think this is the shortest crossing point in the Lower Clyde. From Glasgow to Erskine there seems to be a point of crossing the Clyde - Kingston Bridge, Squinty Bridge, Clyde Tunnel, soon to be bridge from Braehead to Yoker and Erskine Bridge. </div><div dir="auto">
</div><div dir="auto">I think this would greatly help the communities of Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute and others regarding jobs oppurtunities, help cut down in travelling time for many workers and tourism etc. This would make an instant gateway to the Loch Lomond and beyond and tie in with the new Cruise Ship Terminal at Greenock. </div><div dir="auto">
</div><div dir="auto">I have been working in Rosneath, Kilcreggan and Garelohead recently and some parents with young children are having to travel 4 hours for work every day, and thats just to the likes of Inverclyde and Largs. </div><div dir="auto">
</div><div dir="auto">If not a road bridge, is it not time a decent vehicle ferry was brought into service for a triangular route of Gourock/Helensburgh/Dunoon? </div><div dir="auto">
</div><div dir="auto">Thank for taking the time to read this email.</div><div dir="auto">
</div><div dir="auto">[Redacted].</div></div><br clear="both">

Transport Strategy and Analysis

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
Direct Line: [Redacted]
[Redacted]



Mr [Redacted]
By Email
[Redacted]

Our ref:
2019/0031989

Date:
25 November 2019

Dear Mr [Redacted]

Thank you for your email dated 2 November 2019 to Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport Infrastructure and Connectivity, regarding the potential benefits of the construction of a bridge on the Lower Clyde. As this matter is delegated to Transport Scotland I have been asked to respond.

The Scottish Government currently have no plans for a bridge on the lower Clyde between Greenock and Ardmore or at any other locales.

However, we are keen to explore opportunities for improving connectivity within Scotland through the National Transport Strategy which in turn will be informed by the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). Work is well underway with STPR2, the scope of the review will extend to the strategic road and rail networks, with further consideration of national infrastructure investment to support active travel, island connectivity, buses and ferries also taking place, this will be delivered within the lifetime of this Parliament (2021).

A key opportunity to engage in the STPR2 process is anticipated to take place before Christmas via an online survey. Please take this opportunity to inform the review process by highlighting the ideas outlined within your correspondence. More information on the survey launch date will be available on the [Transport Scotland website](#) in due course.

I hope this is helpful

Yours Sincerely
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Project Administrator

From: [Redacted]

Date: 23 September 2020 at 21:32:15 BST

To: "Matheson M (Michael), MSP" [Redacted]

Subject: Note from [Redacted] to your Facebook Page Michael Matheson MSP. Reply-To: [Redacted]

CAUTION: This e-mail originated from outside of The Scottish Parliament. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr Matheson,

I was reading an article on proposed options for the Rest and be Thankful, I have no idea of the validity of what was written, however it has always struck me that an ambitious approach taking into account all future costs and benefits would be the overall long term best option for both the tax payer and the people of Argyll.

Some of the proposals are indeed ambitious suggesting a tunnel between Dunoon and Gourock, this would certainly benefit the cowl peninsula greatly. I feel that this in combination with a tidal barrage between Otter ferry and Port Anne with a road link across it would be an opportunity to not only massively reduce both travel time and emissions from vehicles traveling between Argyll and the central belt but also create an opportunity to produce a great deal of renewable power that is predictable.

My thoughts are a causeway partway across with a lock for shipping and a tidal generator, there is a hard rock quarry at Furnace that could be used for creating the necessary infill for the causeway across the shallow sand spit that stretches about 3/4 of the way across, also rock from the associated cuts that would be needed for road access could be utilised keeping costs relatively low.

If a cost/ benefit analysis was done taking into account power generation and fuel savings along with the boost to the wider economy it would soon look feasible given our future net zero ambitions

I appreciate that there may be reservations regarding marine implications but I'm sure the benefits would outway the negatives.

I would urge that a costly sticking plaster is not applied to this problem that does not significantly improve things.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this idea.

Yours sincerely [Redacted]

Transport Strategy and Analysis

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
Direct Line: [Redacted]
[Redacted]



[Redacted]
By Email:
[Redacted]

Our ref:
2020/0003627

Date:
22 October 2020

Dear Mr [Redacted]

Thank you for your recent email of 23 September 2020 to Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson with regard to your proposals surrounding tunnel connecting Dunoon and Gourock as an alternative to the Rest & Be Thankful, as this matter is delegated to Transport Scotland I have been asked to respond.

As a long-term strategic response to these events on the Rest & Be Thankful the Scottish Government Argyll and Bute (A83) project team have progressed [eleven potential corridor options](#), with the expectation a preferred route corridor will be determined in Spring 2021.

These high-level corridors have been developed for initial sifting and appraisal considering topographical, engineering and environmental constraints at a level appropriate with a strategic appraisal. These are now published and Transport Scotland are consulting the public via a [dedicated section of the Transport Scotland website](#). The deadline to submit comments is Friday 30 October.

A preliminary engineering assessment of possible route options will be carried out based on readily available information, which is sufficient to develop broad cost estimates for each corridor to facilitate the sifting and appraisal of options at this stage. Detailed surveys and modelling have not been undertaken at the present time, this includes specifics on whether bridge or tunnel solutions may be required, which is normal for this stage in the process and given the large geographical area covered by the corridor options.

In the meantime, work will resume on the next catch pit on the A83 and we will continue to consider further catch pits at the site. Contractor BEAR will also monitor the situation, on how best to negate the possibility of a similar event reoccurring. For more information please contact 01738 448600.

I hope these interventions assure you of the Scottish Government's commitment to improving transport conditions for the people of Argyll.

Yours Sincerely
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Project Administrator

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-corridor-options-access-to-argyll-and-bute-a83/>

1. Project Corridor Options - Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)

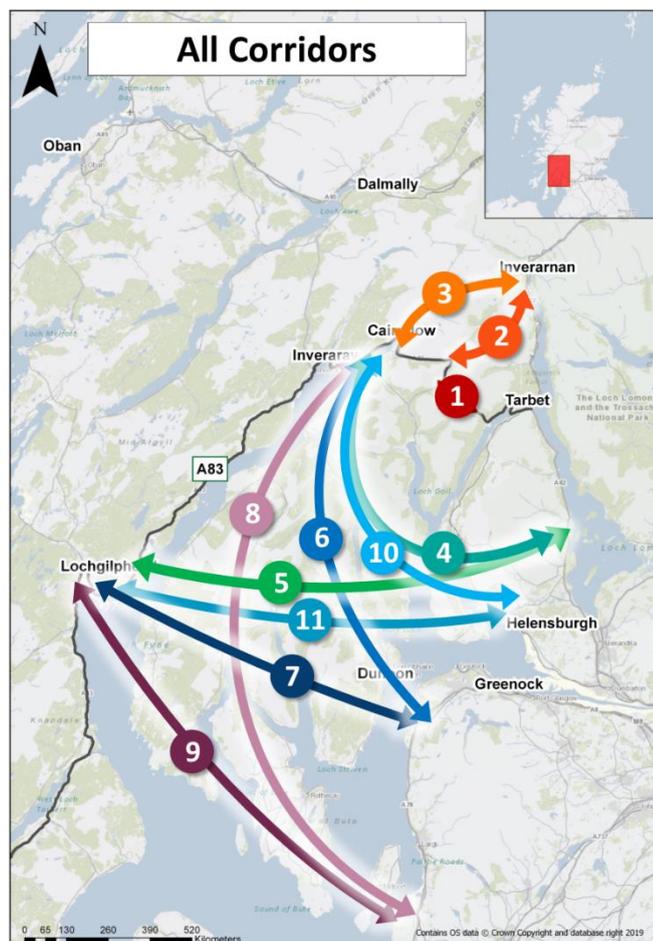
We asked for comments on the following 11 project corridor options, and any other options you though we should be considering by **Friday 30 October**.

The feedback received will inform the progression of Stage 1 data collection, assessment of corridors and sifting work and we will provide an update on that work as it progresses.

We will then look to make recommendations for a preferred route corridor with alignment options in Spring 2021.

2. Overview map of the eleven options

This map indicates schematically the eleven options that are under consideration during the first stage of the development work. More detailed maps of each individual option can be found below.



3. Project Corridor Option Drawings - See descriptions below

- [View Corridor 01 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 02 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 03 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 04 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 05 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 06 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 07 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 08a and 08b - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 09 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 10 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)
- [View Corridor 11 - A83 Access To Argyll And Bute](#)

4. Corridor Option 1 - Glen Croe (Existing A83)

This corridor was identified in the A83 Trunk Road Route Study Report, published in 2013.

The Glen Croe (A83 online) sub corridor is adjacent to the existing road corridor starting from the bridge over Coire Croe Burn between the Cobbler and Beinn Luibhean. It is offset from the existing A83 Trunk Road and re-joins the alignment of the existing A83 Trunk Road before the bend prior to the junction with the B828 and the access to the Rest and Be Thankful car park. It is approximately 1.5 kilometres long and would generally follow a similar profile to the existing road.

The Glen Croe (southern side) sub corridor is an off-line corridor within Glen Croe in the area of forestry on the south-west side of the valley. The corridor is approximately 4.3 kilometres in length and ties-in to the existing A83 Trunk Road approximately 3.2 km north-west of Ardgartan, in the vicinity of the A83/Forestry Commission Track & the Old Military Road junction, and the north side of the Rest and Be Thankful car park at the B828. The corridor generally follows the Forestry Track and road structures and ground engineering measures would potentially be required to fit the new road into the topography of this side of Glen Croe.

5. Corridor Option 2 - Glen Kinglas

This corridor was identified in the A83 Trunk Road Route Study Report, published in 2013.

The Glen Kinglas corridor is off-line within Glen Kinglas and follows the wide valley floor, from the A83 Trunk Road west of the Rest and Be Thankful, heading north-east towards Loch Sloy, and then continuing to the A82 Trunk Road north of Ardlui. The overall length of the corridor is approximately 12 kilometres. The corridor passes through similar terrain to that of the Rest and Be Thankful. Road structures and ground engineering measures would likely be required to fit the new road in the topography of the valley.

6. Corridor Option 3 - Glen Fyne

This corridor was identified in the A83 Trunk Road Route Study Report, published in 2013.

The Glen Fyne corridor is off-line within Glen Fyne and follows the wide valley floor, from the A83 Trunk Road at the head of Loch Fyne, heading north-east, to the A82 Trunk Road north of Inverarnan. The overall length of the corridor is approximately 15 kilometres. The corridor passes through similar terrain to that of the Rest and Be Thankful. Road structures and ground engineering measures would likely be required to fit the new road in the topography of the valley.

7. Corridor Option 4 - A82 - Cowal - Cairndow

This corridor was identified in the A83 Trunk Road Route Study Report, published in 2013.

This corridor would be a combination of new offline carriageway and online upgrading works which generally follows the existing road network with a new fixed link crossing at Loch Long.

From east to west, the corridor initially follows the existing A817 and A814 from the A82 Trunk Road north of Arden, to Whistlefield, near Garelochhead, with a new length of road and an approximate 1.4km fixed link crossing at Loch Long to Barnacabber. The corridor then generally follows the existing C09 and A815 to tie back into the A83 Trunk Road at Cairndow. The approximate length of the corridor where no road currently exists is approximately 5.5km with the full corridor approximately 57.9km in length. Construction is required in the vicinity of the Ministry Of Defence (MOD) bases of Faslane and Coulport with a section of the proposed corridor utilising the MOD owned carriageway.

8. Corridor Option 5 - A82 - Cowal - Lochgilphead

This corridor was initially identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be a combination of new offline carriageway and online upgrading works which generally follows the existing road network with new fixed link crossings at Loch Long and Loch Fyne.

From east to west, the corridor initially follows the existing A817 and A814 from the A82 Trunk Road north of Arden, to Whistlefield, near Garelochhead, with a new length of road and an approximate 1.4km fixed link crossing at Loch Long to Barnacabber. The corridor then generally follows the existing C09 and A815 to Dalinlongart and then the existing B836, A886, C11 and B8000 to Otter Ferry, on the eastern shore of Loch Fyne. An approximate 2.7km fixed link crossing of Loch Fyne ties into the A83 Trunk Road at Port Ann. The approximate length of the corridor where no road currently exists is approximately 5.5km with the full corridor approximately 76km in length. Construction is required in the vicinity of the MOD bases of Faslane and Coulport with a section of the proposed corridor utilising the MOD owned carriageway.

9. Corridor Option 6 - Inverclyde - Cowal - Cairndow

This corridor was initially identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be generally online linking the A78 Trunk Road at Inverclyde to Cowal, with the provision of a fixed link crossing of the Firth of Clyde.

From south to north, the corridor includes a connection from the A78 Trunk Road to Cowal via an approximate 3.9km fixed link crossing of the Firth of Clyde and upgrades along the A815 corridor, to its connection with the A83 Trunk Road at Cairndow. The approximate overall length of the full corridor is 50.7km in length. The fixed link crossing over the Firth of Clyde will present considerable challenges. This area is used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport. The structure will require to span a deep section of the Firth of Clyde as well as have adequate clearance for large marine vessels.

10. Corridor Option 7 - Inverclyde - Cowal - Lochgilphead

This corridor was initially identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be generally online linking the A78 Trunk Road at Inverclyde to Cowal, with the provision of fixed link crossings of the Firth of Clyde and Loch Fyne.

From south to north, the corridor includes a connection from the A78 Trunk Road to Cowal via an approximate 3.9km fixed link crossing of the Firth of Clyde and upgrades along the A815 corridor between Dunoon and Dalinlongart. The corridor then generally follows the existing B836, A886, C11 and B8000 to Otter Ferry, on the eastern shore of Loch Fyne where an approximate 2.7km fixed link crossing of Loch Fyne ties into the A83 Trunk Road at Port Ann. The approximate overall length of the full corridor is 43.6km in length. The fixed link crossing over the Firth of Clyde will present considerable challenges. This area is used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport. The structure will require to span a deep section of the Firth of Clyde as well as have adequate clearance for large marine vessels.

11. Corridor Option 8a - North Ayrshire - Cairndow via Colintrave

This corridor was identified by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be a combination of new offline carriageway and online upgrading works which generally follows the existing road network, with new fixed link crossings to the Isle of Bute and Cowal. The corridor includes a connection from the A78 Trunk Road in North Ayrshire to Cowal via a 2.65km and 2.53km fixed link crossing between the mainland (within the vicinity of Portencross) and the Isle of Bute via Little Cumbrae Island and a 0.5km fixed link crossing between the Isle of Bute and Cowal (within the vicinity of the Colintrave to Rhubodach ferry crossing).

From east to west, a new section of carriageway will be required between the A78 Trunk Road and the fixed link crossing to the Isle of Bute. Once on the Isle of Bute, the corridor then generally follows the existing B881, A844 and A886. Once on Cowal the corridor generally follows the A886 again and thereafter the A815 to tie back into the A83 Trunk Road at Cairndow. The approximate length of the corridor where no road currently exists is approximately 6.7km with the full corridor approximately 89.8km in length. The fixed link crossings to the Isle of Bute will provide significant technical challenges. This area is used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport.

12. Corridor Option 8b - North Ayrshire - Cairndow via Dunoon

This corridor was identified by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be a combination of new offline carriageway and online upgrading works which generally follows the existing road network with new fixed link crossings to the Isle of Bute and Cowal. The corridor involves a connection from the A78 Trunk Road in North Ayrshire to Cowal via a 2.65km and 2.53km fixed link crossing between the mainland (within the vicinity of Portencross) and the Isle of Bute via Little Cumbrae Island and a 2.23km fixed link crossing between the Isle of Bute and Cowal (within the vicinity of the Craigmore and Toward).

From east to west, a new section of carriageway will be required between the A78 Trunk Road and again between the fixed link crossing from the Isle of Bute to the B881. Once in Cowal, the corridor then generally follows the existing B881, A844 and A815 past Dunoon, meeting corridor option 8a again at the junction with the A886 near Strachur, to then tie back into the A83 Trunk Road at Cairndow. The approximate length of the corridor where no road currently exists is approximately 6.7km with the full corridor approximately 76km in length. The fixed link crossings to the Isle of Bute will provide significant technical challenges. This area is used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport.

13. Corridor Option 9 - North Ayrshire - Cowal - Lochgilphead

This corridor was identified by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be a combination of new offline carriageway and online upgrading works which generally follows the existing road network with new fixed link crossings to the Isle of Bute and Cowal. The corridor includes a connection from the A78 Trunk Road in North Ayrshire to Cowal via a 2.65km and 2.53km fixed link crossings between the mainland (within the vicinity of Portencross) and the Isle of Bute via Little Cumbrae Island and a 0.5km fixed link crossing between the Isle of Bute and Cowal (within the vicinity of the Colintraive to Rhubodach ferry crossing).

From east to west, a new section of carriageway will be required between the A78 Trunk Road and the fixed link crossing to the Isle of Bute. Once on the Isle of Bute the corridor then generally follows the existing B881, A844 and A886. Having crossed to Cowal the corridor generally follows the A886 again up to Ballochandrain. Thereafter the corridor generally follows the C11 and B8000 to Otter Ferry, on the eastern shore of Loch Fyne where an approximate 2.7km fixed link crossing ties into the A83 Trunk Road at Port Ann. The approximate length of the corridor where no road currently exists is approximately 6.7km with the full corridor approximately 62.7km in length. The fixed link crossings to the Isle of Bute will provide significant technical challenges. This area is used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport.

14. Corridor Option 10 - Helensburgh -Cowal - Cairndow

This corridor was identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor would be generally online linking the A814 at Helensburgh to Cowal, with the provision of fixed link crossings at Gare Loch and Loch Long.

From east to west, the corridor involves a connection from the A814 to Cowal via approximately 0.68km and 2.98km fixed link crossings to the Rosneath Peninsula and the corridor generally follows the B833 whilst on the Rosneath Peninsula. Having crossed Loch Long on the western side of the peninsula, the corridor generally follows the existing A880, C09 and A815 to tie back into the A83 Trunk Road at Cairndow. The approximate overall length of the full corridor is 50.3km in length. The fixed link crossing over Gare Loch and Loch Long will present considerable challenges as both lochs are used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport.

15. Corridor Option 11 - Helensburgh -Cowal - Lochgilphead

This corridor was identified by the Cowal Fixed Link working group and has subsequently been considered as a potential corridor by Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review team.

This corridor is generally online linking the A814 at Helensburgh to Kintyre via Cowal, with the provision of fixed link crossings at Gare Loch, Loch Long and Loch Fyne.

From east to west, the corridor involves a connection from the A814 to Cowal via approximately 0.68km and 2.98km fixed link crossings to the Rosneath Peninsula and the corridor generally follows the B833 whilst on the Rosneath Peninsula. Having crossed Loch Long the corridor generally follows the existing A880 to Ardbeg and the A815 to Dalinlongart, before then following the B836, A886, C11 and B8000 to Otter Ferry on the eastern shore of Loch Fyne. A 2.7km fixed link crossing of Loch Fyne ties into the A83 Trunk Road at Port Ann. The approximate overall length of the full corridor is 48.6km in length. The fixed link crossing over Gare Loch and Loch Long will present considerable challenges as both lochs are used by large marine vessels as well MOD submarines which are based at Faslane and Coulport.

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 11 November 2020 17:18

To: Transport Scotland Info <info@transport.gov.scot>

Subject: Consultation on A83 options

Dear sir/madam,

I attach my response regarding this consultation.

My contact details are included.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

Corridor Options – Access to Argyll and Bute

Response to consultation exercise by Transport Scotland

Prepared by [Redacted]

General comments on consultation exercise

There are significant omissions which diminish the value of the consultation exercise, as follows:

1. The consultation does not provide any information on either absolute or relative **costs** of each option.
2. The consultation does not give any information regarding **potential environmental disbenefits** of each option.
3. The consultation does not give any information regarding the **strategic objectives** of A83 corridor improvements. In short, it has not been explained why any option other than improvements to Glen Croe (as originally proposed in the Jacobs report of 2012, see Table 1) should be considered.

In what follows, I have made my own judgments about these aspects.

Table 1: Options for Rest and Be Thankful summarised from 2012 Jacobs (Civil Engineering consultants) report

Option	Indicative cost (2012 exc. VAT)	Comment
Red Corridor	£9-10 million	This was the selected option – “A range of landslide mitigation measures”
Brown Corridor	£105-120 million	As for Red Corridor PLUS 1 km long ‘debris flow shelter’.
Yellow Corridor	£83-95 million	A new road slightly offset from the current road and including a 1.2 km long viaduct.
Purple Corridor	£460-520 million	A 1.9 km twin-bore tunnel from low on the glen ending at Loch Restil.
Blue Corridor	£66-75 million	An improved Old Military Road with a gradient of about 8% maximum. “With this option the likelihood of road closure due to landslides is considered to be negligible” – yet the August 2020 landslide crossed the Old Military Road.
Green Corridor	£27-91 million	A new 4km single carriageway road on the opposite side of the glen from the present A83.

Potential **strategic objectives** of A83 corridor improvements

In my view, the strategic objectives of A83 upgrades are as follows:

1. Provide a 'once and for all' solution to Rest and Be Thankful landslide issues.
2. Improved, faster access from Kintyre to the Glasgow and beyond.

Note: The total population of Kintyre and Islay (accessed via Kennacraig in Kintyre) is less than 20000, so expenditure of potentially tens of billions of pounds for improved access is difficult to justify. However, the second strategic objective might also have potential significance for any future bridge/tunnel to Northern Ireland, if the NI bridge were built from Kintyre. The construction of such a link is by no means certain and, if built, the link may in any case use a Stranraer – NI route.

Other important issues taken into consideration

1. The preservation of an area of great natural beauty. Most of these routes would fundamentally change the Cowal peninsula and/or Bute, which are exceptionally beautiful areas of mountains, forests, and lochs. This issue should be uppermost in the minds of decision makers.
2. Cost. In my opinion, the options will range from 'order of' £100 million to 'order of' tens of billions £.
3. No matter which option is selected, existing local access arrangements must be maintained. (For example, continuing local access to emergency and health services, and proximity of Cairndow and Lochgoilhead to Arrochar & Tarbet railway station. In particular, this would mean that if ANY option apart from no.1 were selected, an access road up Glen Croe should nonetheless be maintained.)
4. Winter accessibility (e.g. altitude, exposure, road gradients).
5. Reliable access to (especially) Kintyre, Knapdale and Cowal.

Review of options and conclusions

My review is carried out in Table 2 below, which ranks each of the 12 options according to cost, environmental disbenefit, and whether the two strategic objectives above are met.

No options meet both strategic objectives.

The costs of options requiring large-span bridges will be significant, certainly into billions of pounds, and it becomes difficult to support such options when they do not address the Rest and Be Thankful landslide problem, and when the beneficiaries (i.e. the population of Kintyre) are few in number.

My conclusions are that the best 5 options can be ranked as follows:

<u>Option</u>	<u>Brief title</u>	<u>Ranking</u>	
1	Glen Croe	1	
2	Glen Kinglas	2=	
3	Glen Fyne	2=	
5	Garelochhead – Ardentinny - Loch Eck – Loch Striven – Otter Ferry – Lochgilphead	4=	Hence, from a viewpoint of cost and of minimal environmental disruption, improvements to the Glen Croe corridor are preferred. Three sub-options from the 2012 consultants' report – the brown , yellow and green corridor options - seem most attractive. In particular, from the experience of landslides in the last few years, the green corridor on the opposite side of the glen from the existing A83 seems a good choice.
7	Gourock- Dunoon- Loch Striven- Otter Ferry- Lochgilphead	4=	

Table 2: Analysis of cost and environmental disbenefit, and ranking of all options

Option	Brief title	Cost	Comments	Environmental disbenefit	Which strategic objectives are met? (See above)	Ranking (no. of £ + no. of X) <u>plus further 2</u> when no strategic objectives are met
1	Glen Croe	£	(a) See options from 2012 consultant engineer's report. These are summarised below. (b) The brown , yellow and green corridor options seem most attractive. (c) All three options were priced in 2012 at about £100 million.	X	1	2
2	Glen Kinglas	££	(a) No large-span bridges. (b) There will be a steep climb from Inverarnan/Ardlui up to c.300 m (i.e. higher than Rest and Be Thankful) and the road along upper Glen Kinglas will be quite exposed and prone to drifting in winter. (c) This option will probably require an upgrade of the road between Tarbet and Inverarnan on Loch Lomond.	XX	1	4
3	Glen Fyne	££	(a) No large-span bridges. (b) There will be a steep climb from Inverarnan up to c.300 m (i.e. higher than Rest and Be Thankful), and a steep descent down to Loch Fyne. (c) This option will probably require an upgrade of the road between Tarbet and Inverarnan on Loch Lomond.	XX	1	4
4	Garelochhead – Ardentinny – Strachur-Cairndow	£££	(a) One large-span bridge (across Loch Long). (b) The route up Glen Finart will be quite steep and exposed – maybe a tunnel option here? (c) This option includes road improvement/major upgrade along the north end of Loch Eck, which is an exceptionally beautiful and unspoiled area. (d) Any upgrades around Cairndow would have to protect the magnificent gardens at Ardkinglas. (e) This route will not shorten the distance from Kintyre to Glasgow significantly.	XXX	?	8
5	Garelochhead – Ardentinny - Loch Eck – Loch Striven – Otter Ferry – Lochgilphead	£££	(a) Two large-span bridges (across Loch Long and across Loch Fyne, respectively). (b) The route up Glen Finart will be quite steep and exposed – maybe a tunnel option here? (c) This option includes road improvement/major upgrade along the south end of Loch Eck, which is an exceptionally beautiful and unspoiled area. The area includes Puck's Glen and Benmore Gardens.	XX	2	5

			(d) This option makes use of the existing high-quality road between the A82 and Garelochhead.			
6	Gourock-Dunoon-Loch Eck-Strachur-Cairndow	£££	(a) One large-span bridge (across the Clyde estuary from Gourock to Dunoon). (b) This route will be expensive without greatly shortening the route from Glasgow to Kintyre. (c) This option includes road improvement/major upgrade along the entire length of Loch Eck, which is an exceptionally beautiful and unspoiled area. The area includes Puck's Glen and Benmore Gardens. (d) Any upgrades around Cairndow would have to protect the magnificent gardens at Ardkinglas. (e) This option is entirely at low level, so it should not suffer excessively from drifting and icing in winter.	XXX	?	8
7	Gourock-Dunoon-Loch Striven-Otter Ferry-Lochgilphead	£££	(a) Two large-span bridges (across the Clyde estuary from Gourock to Dunoon, and across Loch Fyne at Otter Ferry). (b) This option is mostly at low level, so it should not suffer excessively from drifting and icing in winter.	XX	2	5
8(a)	West Kilbride – Little Cumbrae-Bute- Colintraive-Strachur-Cairndow	££££	(a) Three large-span bridges (West Kilbride to Little Cumbrae, Little Cumbrae to Bute, Colintraive). (b) This route will be expensive without shortening the route from Glasgow to Kintyre. (c) The Isle of Bute will become an extension of the mainland with a major road passing through it. This would be a significant change, not necessarily for the better. (d) The road through Bute would include a major upgrade to the road between Rothesay and Colintraive, a beautiful stretch of road along the Kyles of Bute. (d) (e) (f)	XXXX	?	10
8(b)	West Kilbride – Little Cumbrae-Bute- Rothesay-Toward- Dunoon-Loch Eck-Strachur-Cairndow	££££	(a) Three large-span bridges (West Kilbride to Little Cumbrae, Little Cumbrae to Bute, Rothesay to Toward). (b) This route will be expensive without shortening the route from Glasgow to Kintyre. (c) The Isle of Bute will become an extension of the mainland with a major road passing through it. This would be a significant change, not necessarily for the better. (d) This option includes road improvement/major upgrade along the entire length of Loch Eck, which is an exceptionally beautiful and unspoiled area. The area includes Puck's Glen and Benmore Gardens.	XXXX	?	10

			(e) Any upgrades around Cairndow would have to protect the magnificent gardens at Ardkinglas.			
9	West Kilbride – Little Cumbrae- Bute- Colintraive- Otter Ferry- Lochgilphead	££££	(a) Four large-span bridges (West Kilbride to Little Cumbrae, Little Cumbrae to Bute, Colintraive, and across Loch Fyne at Otter Ferry). (b) The Isle of Bute will become an extension of the mainland with a major road passing through it. This would be a significant change, not necessarily for the better. (c) The road through Bute would include a major upgrade to the road between Rothesay and Colintraive, a beautiful stretch of road along the Kyles of Bute.	XXXX	2	8
10	Rhu- Rosneath- Ardentinnny- Loch Eck- Strachur- Cairndow	£££	(a) Two large-span bridges (across Gare Loch at Rhu, and across Loch Long). (b) This route will be expensive without shortening the route from Glasgow to Kintyre. (c) The route up Glen Finart will be quite steep and exposed – maybe a tunnel option here? (d) This option includes road improvement/major upgrade along the north end of Loch Eck, which is an exceptionally beautiful and unspoiled area. (e) Any upgrades around Cairndow would have to protect the magnificent gardens at Ardkinglas.	XXX	?	8
11	Rhu- Rosneath- Holy Loch- Loch Striven- Otter Ferry- Lochgilphead	££££	(a) Three large-span bridges (across Gare Loch at Rhu, across Loch Long, and across Loch Fyne at Otter Ferry). (b) This option is mostly at low level, so it should not suffer excessively from drifting and icing in winter. (c) This looks like a ‘best’ solution for improving access to Kintyre, although it will be one of the most expensive.	XX	2	6

Declaration of interest

The author owns a property in [Redacted].

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

11 November 2020

Contact details:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Phone: [Redacted]

Email: [Redacted]



Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
[Redacted]@transport.gov.scot

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Our ref:
TS2020/2702
Date:
23rd of November
2020

Dear Mr [Redacted],

New Access To Argyll And Bute

Thank you for your email dated 11th of November 2020 concerning a solution to the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

The Scottish Government is committed to an infrastructure solution to address the A83 Rest and Be Thankful landslip risks, which goes beyond the current mitigation works (fencing, catchpits and investment in the Old Military Road as a diversion). Recognising the need to identify a long term sustainable and resilient alternative to the A83 Rest and Be Thankful, Transport Scotland has commenced the necessary development and assessment work.

Your comments on this issue have been passed to the project engineers and will be considered as part of the current consultation to find a long term solution.

I hope you find this information helpful

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Project Administrator

RESTRICTED HANDLING**TEMPLATE 1 - POLICY ANALYSIS FOR SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENTS***Guidance notes*

- Please complete the attached template. This is one of the commitments in the SNP manifesto and has been identified as being significant in terms of scale, cost or impact, or is new or significantly different from what is currently being done.
- The restricted handling procedures set out from paragraph 10 of the 'arrangements for handling sensitive material' document will apply to this material. In particular, drafts, working papers and final papers should be stored only on eRDM – outlook folders should not be used – and eRDM links only should be used to pass copies of papers on a restricted circulation list.
- Any emails related to this should be marked Official-Sensitive.
- Templates must be signed-off by relevant Deputy Directors.
- Please work with Analytical Services, Finance business partners, Procurement Business Partners, SGLD and other professional advisers as appropriate in completing the template.

In the case of any queries which cannot be answered by Directorate Coordinators, please contact [Redacted] or [Redacted].

1. Commitment	Political party
Please give a concise summary of the commitment and flag if this has been described as a 'red line' commitment i.e. one which parties have said must be delivered if they were to take part in Government formation with another party.	
<p>The commitment given in the manifesto is as shown below:</p> <p>We will explore the potential to build more fixed links to island and remote communities, such as the potential for a bridge from Gourock to Dunoon, and work with island communities to reduce reliance on ferries.</p> <p>This is not a red line commitment as it only reflects the position that fixed links will be explored as a possible replacement for existing SG funded ferry services.</p>	SNP

<p>2. How does this commitment differ from the previous administration's policy in this area? Would it involve a step change in policy or delivery?</p> <p>Please flag if commitment involves close down of any existing programmes or approaches</p>
<p>This commitment is currently being taken forward as part of Transport Scotland's second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). The review is currently investigating the possibility of new fixed links at a number of potential locations across Scotland, this is in the context of a wholesale review of SG investment in transport infrastructure for the next 20 years.</p> <p>In some cases this may include the potential replacement of an existing SG funded ferry service by a fixed link. Therefore this commitment is not a change in current policy or delivery.</p>

To note that consideration of a Dunoon to Gourock link has already been partly considered with the context of STPR2 and more widely as part of work being led by Transport Scotland to consider a permanent solution to the landslide problems experienced on the A83 trunk road at that the Rest and Be Thankful (RaBT). As part of this work 11 potential corridors were consulted on by Transport Scotland in Q4 2020. Two of these corridor options, Option 6 was an alternative Gourock to Cowal Peninsula (Dunoon) and Option 7 Gourock to Cowal Peninsula to Lochgilphead Project Corridor Options - Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) (transport.gov.scot), both options would have involved in some way a fixed link connection. Following further appraisal and public engagement, on the 18 March 2021, Option 1 (a route/option within the existing Glen Crow) was confirmed as the preferred corridor that will now be considered in more detail A83 access to Argyll & Bute - preferred route corridor identified (transport.gov.scot). A sensitivity and possible tension in relation to this particular part of the commitment would be that we would not look to consider again a fixed link across the Clyde given reason for doing so was to address the problems being experienced on the A83 RaBT.

As STPR2 started in 2019 and is currently continuing (due to report in late 2021), this a continuation of a policy position first confirmed in 2016.

3. If implemented, what would the impacts in Scotland be? What are the benefits and risks?

Please outline any analysis used and assumptions made in assessing likely impact.

Consideration of a fixed link between the Scottish mainland and one of the many populated islands has been a continuing issue raised throughout the last parliamentary term and in many cases for many years prior.

The evidenced transport appraisal process being conducted through STPR2 will help establish where there is merit (in the form a Strategic Business Case) of further investigation / development of options for a new fixed link. In a number of cases this may in preference to an existing SG funded ferry service. The construction of a fixed link may also allow the re-figuration of existing ferry services to allow a different service schedule or operation of vessels within the fleet.

4. Please describe any potential implications, either direct or indirect, for related or linked policy areas (e.g. cross cutting areas like climate, poverty, jobs and equality and human rights). Please also confirm whether these implications have been highlighted to relevant colleagues from those linked areas.

The enactment of the Island Act and supporting Islands Plan has raised the profile and potential consideration of transport with island communities. New fixed links have the potential to improve transport connections between islands and the Scottish mainland replacing existing ferry services and offering more reliable connections. This in turn could offer more opportunities for islanders around access to services and education opportunities. However, the replacement of an existing ferry service may not be welcomed by all those living on a island.

5. What are the key delivery implications of the commitment?

(If key information needed to assess delivery implications is not included in the manifesto, please outline the assumptions or information you have based this analysis on.)

a) **Financial implications** – Will this create additional set up and delivery costs in 2021-22? – Please split by resource and capital.

STPR2 budget is already committed in the current FY 2021-22 budget.

<p>Will these be one off costs for 2021-22 or will these costs recur in future years?</p>	<p>The current FY budget covers the completion of the review process and the recommendations for future transport investment. Should STPR2 recommend any fixed links this would be subject to consideration as part of future capital spending reviews.</p>
<p>If these new costs are recurring, what would the full year costs be to deliver this commitment in full in future years? – Please split by resource and capital.</p>	<p>Any new fixed link would require capital expenditure on construction and thereafter on-going resource related maintenance. It is not possible to identify at this time any of these costs as the review process is not complete.</p>
<p>Will this new cost create a financial pressure for the portfolio or can it be delivered within the existing budget or by making efficiencies?</p>	<p>STPR2 budget is sufficient to conclude STPR2 in this FY.</p>
<p>b) Workforce implications for the Scottish Government and wider public sector (including any increases or decreases in workforce and changes in skills needed).</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Can this commitment be delivered within existing portfolio operating costs?</p> <p>If no, what is the estimated new cost in 2021-21 and in any subsequent years?</p>	<p>Yes, it can be delivered in the current operating costs.</p>
<p>Will this commitment create additional or reduced staffing requirements in the wider public sector?</p> <p>If yes, please explain and quantify where possible:</p>	<p>For the review work – no</p> <p>Delivery and bringing into operation – yes.</p>
<p>Does this commitment create a need for new or changed skills?</p> <p>If yes, please explain:</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>c) Timescales outlined in manifesto (if available) and implications of these e.g. on other work (would other work need to be paused in order to deliver this?), finances, staffing.</p>	<p>No timescales or resourcing implications.</p>
<p>d) Legislative implications and any legal issues (including Bills, contracts and procurement) Please also highlight relevant issues to SGLD and PLU colleagues.</p>	<p>If the decision was taken to proceed, this would probably require some form of parliamentary bill in a similar way to that required for the Queensferry Crossing.</p>

e) Is the proposal/commitment affected by the UK's changed relationship with the EU?	No
f) How will this policy be delivered? I.e. what are the delivery implications for SG, relevant partners etc. (or where not proposed, advice on what might be required by Scottish Government or others)	To be confirmed, however it is likely that Scottish Government would procure the work which would then be undertaken by consultancy.
g) Any other delivery implications . For instance, in relation to COVID-19 recovery and renewal, climate change, inequalities, jobs, public bodies, local government, equality and human rights, and digital issues	No significant implications identified at this stage.

6. What is the response to the commitment likely to be? Consider key stakeholders, other political parties and UKG/other devolved administrations.
Welcomed by stakeholders and other political parties.

7. Is the commitment within:	Tick box that applies	Any comments?
a) devolved powers	Y	
b) would require new powers	N	

Are there any likely implications for UK relations?
It is unlikely that this has any implications for UK relations.

	Name
Lead policy contact	[Redacted]
Manifesto coordinator	[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 17:25
To: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP
Importance: High
Subject: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP
Importance: High

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

[Redacted]
Communications Manager
Transport Scotland

Mob: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 16:44
To: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 16:20
To: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 16:19
To: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

[Redacted]
Communications Manager
Transport Scotland
Mob: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 16:08
To: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

[Redacted]
Transport Strategy and Analysis
Transport Scotland
[Redacted] / [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Date: Wednesday, 25 Aug 2021, 3:57 pm
To: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP
From the FMQ brief [Redacted] circulated last week:

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 15:44
Cc: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP
Importance: High
Subject: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP
Importance: High

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

[Redacted]
Communications Manager
Transport Scotland
Mob: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 15:44
To: [Redacted], [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted], [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: Media enquiry - Deal with Greens - A83 & Dunoon to Gourock bridge - Donald Cameron MSP
Importance: High

Hi [Redacted] & [Redacted],

[Redacted 10(4)(e) - Internal Communications]

Thanks, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Communications Manager

Transport Scotland

Mob: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 25 August 2021 14:58
To: Press Transport Scotland <media@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: FW: PRESS RELEASE - Donald Cameron MSP

Hi folks,

Can I check if there would be any response to this?

Tomorrow would be fine for a line.

Cheers,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

The Press and Journal

[Cameron calls on Transport Minister to ‘strongly resist’ any Green attempts to abandon Rest and Be Thankful project](#)

Date: 25/08/2021

Embargo: For immediate publication

Scottish Conservative and Unionist MSP Donald Cameron has urged the Transport Minister Graeme Dey to resist any moves by the Scottish Greens to abandon local road redevelopment projects, including the long awaited plans to replace the existing A83 Rest and Be Thankful route.

Recent media reports have suggested that the Scottish Greens may call on the SNP to ditch plans to dual the A9 and A96 roads as part of an formal coalition-style deal, leading to fears that a similar fate may meet other major infrastructure projects, including the planned ‘new route into Argyll’.

Donald Cameron MSP has written to the Transport Minister to seek urgent assurances that any attempt by the Scottish Greens to abandon plans to replace the A83 Rest and Be Thankful are ‘resisted in the strongest possible terms’.

He also called on the SNP Government to clarify its election pledge to build a bridge between Dunoon and Gourrock, and has asked whether a deal with the Scottish Greens would impact this pledge.

Donald Cameron MSP said:

“A coalition of chaos between the SNP and Scottish Greens is bad enough, without it potentially impacting various local transport infrastructure projects, including that of the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

“Local residents and business have been forced to put up with an inadequate route into and out of Argyll for far too long, and SNP Ministers need to confirm to the public that they still intend to press on with the new route, despite asking the Greens to join them in government.

“Any failure to deliver on this would be a damning indictment of this SNP/Green Government, and further prove that it only cares about the Central Belt rather than the needs of rural communities.”

ENDS

Editors notes

1. Please find attached a copy of a photo of Donald Cameron MSP at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.
2. Please find attached a copy of the letter that Donald Cameron MSP sent to the Minister for Transport.

For further information, please contact:

[Redacted]

Head of Office to Donald Cameron MSP

T [Redacted]

E: [Redacted]



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Donald Cameron MSP
MSP for Highlands and Islands Region

Graeme Dey
MSP Minister for Transport
The Scottish Government St
Andrew's House Regent
Road
Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

24/08/2021

Dear Graeme,

Future of the A83 Rest and Be Thankful redevelopment

I write to you to seek assurances that the proposed plans to construct a new route into Argyll and Bute are still the intention of the Scottish Government, following the proposed deal between the SNP Government and Scottish Greens which casts doubt over the promise to dual the A96 and A9 roads.

I know that we both share a similar view on the significant economic and social benefits of establishing a new route into Argyll and Bute, and it is clear that there is a great public appetite locally for a new route, following extensive public consultation.

I am aware that it has long been a position of the Scottish Greens to oppose investment in new road building projects, and I am therefore understandably concerned that this much needed new road into Argyll and Bute may be compromised by the deal announced between the SNP and the Scottish Greens.

Indeed, I am also concerned that any other new routes into Argyll and Bute may now be abandoned by such a deal, including the promise that the SNP made at the recent election to build a bridge between Dunoon and Gourock.

I would be grateful for your assurances that the SNP Government will keep its promise to residents across Argyll and Bute to deliver the new route to replace the existing A83 Rest and Be Thankful corridor, and resist any opposition from the Scottish Greens to this project, or any other road building project that will have a positive economic impact for the people of Argyll and Bute.

I would also like to know if the SNP intends to keep its election pledge to build a bridge between Dunoon and Gourock, and whether it intends to hold a public consultation on this in the near future.

I look forward to your imminent response.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Cameron MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament
Highlands and Islands Region

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** Cameron D (Donald), MSP
Sent: 25 August 2021 13:47
To: Minister for Transport <MinisterFT@gov.scot>
Subject: Letter from Donald Cameron MSP

Our ref: **A83RABT**

Good afternoon,

Please find attached a copy of a letter for the attention of the Minister for Transport concerning the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

I would be grateful if any holding and final response could include my reference number – **A83RABT**.

I look forward to your imminent response.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Cameron MSP | Member for the Highlands and Islands Region
Dòmhnall Camshron BPA | Ball airson sgìre na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean

Tel: 0131 348 6990 | Email: donald.cameron.msp@parliament.scot
M2.02, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Donald Cameron MSP
MSP for Highlands and Islands Region

Graeme Dey
MSP Minister for Transport
The Scottish Government St
Andrew's House Regent
Road
Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

24/08/2021

Dear Graeme,

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I write to you to seek assurances that the proposed plans to construct a new route into Argyll and Bute are still the intention of the Scottish Government, following the proposed deal between the SNP Government and Scottish Greens which casts doubt over the promise to dual the A96 and A9 roads.

I know that we both share a similar view on the significant economic and social benefits of establishing a new route into Argyll and Bute, and it is clear that there is a great public appetite locally for a new route, following extensive public consultation.

I am aware that it has long been a position of the Scottish Greens to oppose investment in new road building projects, and I am therefore understandably concerned that this much needed new road into Argyll and Bute may be compromised by the deal announced between the SNP and the Scottish Greens.

Indeed, I am also concerned that any other new routes into Argyll and Bute may now be abandoned by such a deal, including the promise that the SNP made at the recent election to build a bridge between Dunoon and Gourock.

I would be grateful for your assurances that the SNP Government will keep its promise to residents across Argyll and Bute to deliver the new route to replace the existing A83 Rest and Be Thankful corridor, and resist any opposition from the Scottish Greens to this project, or any other road building project that will have a positive economic impact for the people of Argyll and Bute.

I would also like to know if the SNP intends to keep its election pledge to build a bridge between Dunoon and Gourock, and whether it intends to hold a public consultation on this in the near future.

I look forward to your imminent response.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Cameron MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament
Highlands and Islands Region

Minister for Transport
Ministear airson Còmhdhail
Graeme Dey BPA/MSP



T : 0300 244 4000
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Donald Cameron MSP
donald.cameron.msp@parliament.scot

Our Reference:
202100233578

Your Reference:
A83RABT

8 September 2021

Dear Donald

Thank you for your letter of 24 August 2021 regarding the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

I can assure you we remain absolutely committed to ensuring continuity of access to the Argyll and Bute region by finding a long term solution to the A83 Rest and Be Thankful. Delivery of a permanent and resilient solution is a priority and we will continue to seek ways to achieve that as quickly as possible, noting all of the options require complex civil engineering.

Please refer to page 11 of our published 'Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Draft Shared Policy Programme' which states:

"We also agree:

- work on other trunk roads projects and programmes under construction, design, development or procurement will continue and be subject to the normal statutory assessment and business case processes."

This confirms our commitment to finding a solution to the landslides at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful, which is currently in the design process.

As you are aware a preferred route corridor for the permanent solution was announced on 18th of March 2021. Route option designs within the preferred corridor are being progressed, and as with other projects to improve the trunk road network, there will be a need to collect the necessary baseline information and complete the engineering and environmental assessments and statutory process to allow the project to be constructed.

Now that a preferred corridor has been selected, possible route options within the preferred corridor have been published. These options range from traditional roads and localised structural protection, to full tunnel options. The range of engineering structures reflects the challenge of building resilience into the route.

Work continues on the design of the long term options along with data gathering such as topographical and environmental surveys as well as scoping work for an upcoming ground investigation to assess the ground conditions in the route corridor.

In recognition of the urgency to find a solution Transport Scotland is also progressing work to look at a medium term resilient route through Glen Croe to include consideration of the Forestry Track, improvements to the Old Military Road and other options on land already owned by Scottish Ministers.

I can assure you we are focussed on developing a proportionate, resilient and safe route for all road users that may be able to be delivered quickly if we are able to work with the land or rights we already hold.

We are doing everything we can to arrive at a robust and safe solution as quickly as possible.

I would also note that with regard to the Gourock to Dunoon bridge that you mention, the commitment was to “explore the potential to build more fixed links to island and remote communities, such as the potential for a bridge from Gourock to Dunoon, and work with island communities to reduce reliance on ferries”. This is exactly what we are doing as part of the appraisal for the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2).

I would further note that the appraisal process, which is being undertaken as part of STPR2, involves considering the social and economic benefits and impacts of each option against a range of appraisal criteria, to determine the overall Value for Money. The appraisal also takes into account risks, uncertainties and other factors such as affordability, deliverability and the wider acceptability of options. This is an important consideration given the pressures on current and future public finances.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Graeme Deay', is positioned above the printed name.

GRAEME DEY

Councillor Christopher McEleny (ALBA)
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
PA15 1LY



To: Michael Mathieson
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy
And Transport

Direct Line: [Redacted]
Email: chris.mceleny@inverclyde.gov.uk
Date: 24/01/2022

Cancellation of Gourock to Dunoon Bridge and reallocation of budget

Dear Michael

I hope you are well. I note that STPR2 has now been published setting out the Scottish Government's investment priorities for the next 20 years.

The Scottish Government was elected in May with a manifesto commitment to construct a bridge between Gourock and Dunoon.

I have carried out an extensive consultation with my constituents who live immediately next to the area of Gourock that the plans devised by transport Scotland would have the bridge join to land in Gourock.

The overwhelming feedback received was that members of my community are opposed to such a project by a considerably large margin.

Although a minority expressed a view that a bridge would be a good investment due to the potential economic benefits of a fixed link between Argyll & Bute and Inverclyde, the vast majority opposed on grounds of negative impact on the environment, the increased road traffic the bridge would result in, the destruction of natural habitat, and the adverse impact on the world renowned beauty of the Firth of Clyde vista.

I therefore support my constituents on this matter and strongly oppose the development. I would therefore ask to you confirm the following:

A). That the Scottish Government will confirm that it does not intend to progress the Gourock to Dunoon Bridge project.

B). As this was a manifesto commitment it must've had a budget earmarked for the project because of course the Scottish Government would not have made such a promise in advance of an election if the funds were not there to deliver it. A modest projection of the cost of the bridge is estimated at £1.5Bn. As this funding was intended to benefit the people of Argyll & Bute, and Inverclyde, I am formally requesting that you allocate a share of the funding earmarked for this project to create an Inverclyde Investment fund.

I would propose investment in the following projects from the funds that were earmarked for the Gourock to Dunoon Bridge:

- 1) £50M for the construction of 2x roll on roll off car passenger ferries for the Gourock to Dunoon route.
- 2) £10M for a new Kilcreggan ferry which is able to also service a reinstated Gourock to Helensburgh Crossing.
- 3) £50M Flood prevention measures on the A8 at Cappielow in Greenock and a Peatland restoration project and mass tree planting scheme in the hills of Greenock to capture water that exacerbates flooding on the A8.
- 4) £40M for an Inverclyde bypass road to provide better access between West Inverclyde and the M8 with priority bus lanes to promote the use of public transport.
- 5) £50 Million directly to Inverclyde Council to be spent on a targeted employability programme over the next 5 years.
- 6) £50 Million to create a community owned hydro wind scheme capturing wind and water potential of Inverclyde's hills which will generate electricity to be sold to the national grid with the profits used to lower the electricity costs of homes in Inverclyde.
- 7) A £25 Million home insulation green cheque fund to provide free external insulation to homes to reduce heating costs.
- 8) A £50 Million Inchgreen Dry Dock Development Fund to bring the Dry Dock into public ownership and designate it as the Scotwind centre of excellence that will construct the Turbines and Towers for the next twenty years of Scottish Offshore Wind Power.

As you will see from the above, these targeted measures will make an immense difference to improving the environment, Inverclyde's transport infrastructure, reducing poverty and creating jobs. Furthermore these projects would cost less than 20% of the construction cost of your proposed bridge between Gourock and Dunoon.

Although it is not within your portfolio, it would be possible to construct a new Inverclyde Royal Hospital and a new Greenock Prison in addition to the proposed measures and combined they would still cost less than the budget earmarked for the bridge, which evidences both the potential these proposed projects would bring to Inverclyde and the uneconomical Gourock to Dunoon bridge project.

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours Sincerely,



Cllr Christopher McEleny
Alba Party
Councillor
Inverclyde Council

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport
Michael Matheson MSP
T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Councillor Christopher McEleny
Municipal Buildings
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Our Ref: 202200276145

21 February 2022

Thank you for your letter of the 24 January 2022 regarding the option for a potential bridge across the Firth of Clyde. The SNP 2021 manifesto commitment was to “explore the potential for more fixed links to island and remote communities, such as the potential for a bridge from Gourrock to Dunoon”. The consideration of fixed links was part of the [second Strategic Transport Projects Review \(STPR2\)](#), published in draft in January 2022.

I have noted your comments and two specific questions. With respect to first, I can confirm that STPR2 has not recommended any further work is progressed on a proposed fixed link across the Firth of Clyde. This was on the basis that the preliminary assessment work had highlighted significant issues in relation to topography and infrastructure requirements needed for this option.

With regard to your second question, I would note that at preliminary appraisal stage of STPR2 there were 1400 individual options under consideration, across all modes of transport. The proposed fixed link option that you refer to was one such option and its inclusion at that stage was not in any way a funding commitment for this or any of the other potential options. As such no budget had been allocated to this option as is clearly note in the [Scottish Budget 2021 to 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

You may also be aware that the Scottish Government has a clear process for considering wider capital investment, which is through [A National Mission with Local Impact: Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) which was published in February 2021. The Infrastructure Investment Plan shows where the capital invested in infrastructure will go. It covers projects which Scottish Government or its agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) deliver directly, such as boosting our digital and transport connectivity, reducing the reliance of our homes on fossil fuels, boosting economic growth across our cities and regions, or improving our services with better health and educational facilities. I hope this clarification has been helpful.

Michael Matheson
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport

STPR2 Preliminary Appraisal Summary Table – Grouping IC5: Fixed Links

Region:	Multiple Regions				Cost:	£[Unknown at this stage] Capital £[Unknown at this stage] Revenue
Position in Sustainable Investment Hierarchy:	1. <i>Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</i>	2. <i>Maintaining and safely operating existing assets</i>	3. <i>Making better use of existing capacity</i>	4. Targeted infrastructure improvements		
					Summary Rationale:	
					<p>This grouping considers the introduction of fixed links in multiple STPR2 regions. It performs well against a number of the STPR2 Transport Planning Objectives and STAG criteria in particular. Provision of fixed links would enable improved connectivity for islands/remote communities and reduce reliance on ferry services. They would facilitate enhanced access between islands and the Scottish mainland and between islands themselves. However, in some cases the challenges and costs for construction would result in some significant affordability concerns.</p> <p>Several options in this grouping have been ‘reassigned’ for consideration within specific geographic groupings that also include consideration of ferry service enhancements. The remaining options in this grouping will not be progressed to detailed appraisal and, on this basis, Grouping IC5 is not retained.</p>	
Outcome:	Grouping not retained					

Grouping Description

Grouping IC5: Fixed Links

Fixed links are being considered in STPR2 where options within the grouping meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Connecting the Scottish mainland to an island;
- Reducing the operating costs of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS)ⁱ and Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS)ⁱⁱ networks;
- Addressing a strategic problem as identified through evidence-based appraisal that cannot be addressed by reasonable alternatives.

The following options have been identified through the generation and sifting of options for assessment in the preliminary appraisal:

- Targeted fixed links which connect the Scottish mainland to main populated islands
- Targeted fixed links to improve connectivity and reduce reliance on CHFS
- New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the West Highland Line or rail network in Inverclyde or North Ayrshire, including fixed link or ferry crossings
- New rail connection to/from Kintyre linking to Cowal, including fixed link or ferry crossing
- Ferry link/Fixed link from South Ronaldsay (Orkney) to Scottish mainland and onward road connection to Inverness
- Sound of Harris Fixed Link

Alignment with NTS2 Outcomes

The grouping aligns with NTS2 outcomes as follows:

- Will provide fair access to services we need
- Will be easy to use for all
- Will get people and goods to where they need to get to
- Will be safe and secure for all

- Sound of Barra Fixed Link
- Fixed link from Western Isles to Scottish mainland
- Fixed link between Mull and Scottish mainland
- Tunnel between Benbecula and Skye

At present there is limited information or detail available on these options. More feasibility and appraisal work will be required to understand the impact of implementing fixed links, including their induced economic impacts on islands/remote communities. At this time, preliminary appraisal of the anticipated impacts of these options has been undertaken, and, where appropriate, the need for further work to understand the impacts of fixed links is identified. It is also identified where fixed links need to be assessed in conjunction with the operation of ferry services – this AST highlights where fixed link options are to be subsequently reassigned to other geographic groupings to enable a holistic appraisal of island/remote community connectivity within STPR2.

Grouping Relevance, Cost and Interdependencies

Relevance and Cost

Interdependencies

- For some of the specific fixed link options in the IC5 grouping, there are identified reliability issues associated with the equivalent (existing) ferry crossing: on the Mull – Scottish mainland (Craignure – Oban) route, 21.6% of the 5,533 sailings on this route in 2018 experienced a delay. Of the delays on this route, 84.5% were less than 15 minutes and 9.9% were >15 minutes but <30 minutes.ⁱⁱⁱ
- On the Berneray – Leverburgh route, across the Sound of Harris, 7.7% of the total 2,248 sailings on this route in 2018 were cancelled – and 8.1% were delayed. Of the delays on this route, 16.4% were less than 15 minutes, 15.8% were >15 minutes but <30 minutes and 59.6% were >30 minutes but <120 minutes.^{iv} The vessel on this route, the MV Loch Portain, requires to navigate the short crossing in shallow water, resulting in a crossing time of one hour for a distance of only 12 miles. On the Barra – Eriskay route, across the Sound of Barra, 9.2% of the total 3,578 sailings on this route in 2018 were cancelled. Of the delays on this route, 27.3% were less than 15 minutes, 36.4% were >15 minutes but <30 minutes and 33.3% were >30 minutes but <120 minutes.^v
- The Stornoway – Ullapool route is also subject to high capacity utilisation and delays – 27.7% of the 2,040 sailings on this route in 2018 were delayed. Of the delays on this route, 78.1% were less than 15 minutes and 12.7% were >15 minutes but <30 minutes.^{vi}
- A tunnel option is identified between Benbecula and Skye in the IC5 grouping. On the Skye (Uig) – Western Isles (Tarbert – Lochmaddy) ferry route, there is a significant amount of seasonal travel on all legs on this route with a much larger proportion of sailings over 90% capacity in the summer as compared to the winter. 43.8% of the 2,230 sailings on this route in 2018 experienced a delay. Of the delays on this

- There is overlap with all Ferries / Island Connectivity groupings being considered in STPR2 – fixed links cannot be considered in isolation.
- There also needs to be synergy with future ferry route planning – i.e. through (draft) Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP) 2020^x – the Island Connectivity Plan and the National Islands Plan (2019)^{xi}.

route, 59.2% were less than 15 minutes, 23.8% were >15 minutes but <30 minutes and 13.2% were >30 minutes but <120 minutes.^{vii}

- Fixed links would help to address the above constraints by providing improved reliability of travel between islands and the Scottish mainland and between islands themselves by removing issues associated with restricted operating hours, capacity and delays on ferry services.
- Where a fixed link is replacing a ferry service there would be a reduction in ferry vessel replacement and operating costs, which would need to be compared with the cost of constructing and maintaining the fixed link over a suitable appraisal period (e.g. 60+ years).
- A fixed link can have a positive impact on an island's social and economic viability through creating a permanent link; it can make an island more attractive as a place to live and work, thus sustaining and increasing population. It can also expand labour markets (travel to work areas) and local markets for local businesses, mobile trades etc
- The cost of implementing new fixed links for each of the options have not been estimated at this stage – costs would vary depending on route, distance and link type. For example, the Corran Narrows Study estimated a cost of between £42 million-£50 million for the lowest cost bridge option through to £66 million-£108 million for a tunnel option^{viii}. The Whalsay Fixed Link Paper estimated the cost of a 5.4km subsea tunnel between Whalsay and Shetland Mainland to be in the region of £143 million.^{ix}

Assessment against STPR2 Transport Planning Objectives		Scenario	
STPR2 TPO	Summary Assessment	Low	High
<p>A sustainable strategic transport system that contributes significantly to the Scottish Government's net-zero emissions target.</p>	<p>There is potentially significant negative impacts on this TPO as the implementation of fixed links could result in an increase in vehicle kilometres travelled by the induction of additional traffic. Fixed links could increase the frequency at which typical trips are made or may induce trips that may not have otherwise been made when the ferry service provided the only transport connection.</p> <p>There would also potentially be significant negative effects on the environment at the construction phase – further environmental assessment would be required to identify location-specific environmental impacts and mitigation where appropriate. Potential negative effects on climatic factors and air quality would be subject to further assessment to determine these impacts.</p> <p>Further analysis would be necessary to understand whether these impacts could be offset by the benefits of removing any ferry services from the networks.</p>	--	--
<p>An inclusive strategic transport system that improves the affordability and accessibility of public transport.</p>	<p>This grouping would have a minor positive impact on public transport accessibility, by removing constraints and limitations of ferry services where they are the principal transport connection, (though fixed links may still be subject to closure during adverse weather). This may provide enhanced opportunities for bus services to run between islands and the Scottish mainland. Transport and travel has the potential to become more affordable for those using the fixed link – depending on how the fixed links are funded – compared with having to pay a fare for ferry usage.</p>	+	+

<p>A cohesive strategic transport system that enhances communities as places, supporting health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>This grouping would have a minor positive impact on this TPO. A fixed link connection would offer an improved level of connectivity that affords people more choice or greater accessibility with regard to the places they want to travel to and the activities they wish to undertake.</p> <p>Positive impacts related to Population and Human Health as the enhancements seek to improve accessibility, reduce severance and increase transport choice would also be anticipated.</p> <p>There may however be some perception of potential erosion of island identity with the onset of fixed link connections to the Scottish mainland, but the overall impact on the TPO is considered to be minor positive.</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>
<p>An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth in Scotland.</p>	<p>This grouping would have a significant positive impact on this TPO by providing permanent links between islands and the Scottish mainland and between islands themselves. The introduction of fixed links could fundamentally change connectivity for a particular community through reduced journey times, for example, or the ability to travel to a new location. This could have a significant impact on how that community develops in the future: creation of island jobs, the ability to take up opportunities elsewhere that was not possible before and new opportunities for tourism. All of which enable that community to remain sustainable and experience inclusive growth.</p>	<p>++</p>	<p>++</p>
<p>A reliable and resilient strategic transport system that is safe and secure for users.</p>	<p>This grouping would have an overall minor positive impact on this TPO as the introduction of fixed links would remove issues associated with ferry service operation as it would be anticipated that there would be fewer occasions on which a fixed link was closed compared with occasions when a ferry service was cancelled.</p> <p>Although an increase in the number of vehicle kilometres travelled on the CHFS and NIFS networks associated with the introduction of fixed links would be anticipated (thus increasing the potential for road traffic collisions), the overall impact on the TPO would be minor positive overall.</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>

Further to this, perceptions of security could be influenced by any design elements (e.g. tunnels having adequate lighting).

Assessment against STAG Criteria		Scenario	
Criterion	Summary Assessment	Low	High
Environment	See SEA Assessment overleaf.	-	-
Safety	This grouping would have a minor negative impact on Safety as the introduction of additional road capacity (bridges, tunnels or causeways) increases the potential for an increase in road traffic collisions. Perceptions of security could be influenced by any design elements (e.g. tunnels having adequate lighting).	-	-
Economy	<p>This grouping would have a significant positive impact on Economy. This could have a significant impact on how that community develops in the future: creation of island jobs, the ability to take up opportunities elsewhere that was not possible before and new opportunities for tourism. All of which enable that community to remain sustainable and experience inclusive growth.</p> <p>It is acknowledged however in some cases the challenges and costs for construction would likely result in some significant affordability concerns and associated low rate of return on investment.</p>	++	++
Integration	This grouping would promote a significant positive impact on aspects of integration. Fixed links would fully integrate island and remote communities into the wider transport network, with associated journey time benefits. This could fundamentally change connectivity for a particular community through reduced journey times, for example, or the ability to travel to a new location. Additional	++	++

Assessment against STAG Criteria		Scenario	
Criterion	Summary Assessment	Low	High
	opportunities may be afforded by introducing fixed links in terms of better integrating island and remote communities into the public transport network – for some communities this could enable significantly enhanced access to the rail network (e.g. Mull – Oban, (depending on where the fixed link connected to the Scottish mainland) or Benbecula/Skye – Kyle of Lochalsh).		
Accessibility and social inclusion	<p>This grouping would have a significant positive impact on accessibility and social inclusion, where fixed links promote new travel opportunities for those living on islands and in remote communities. The introduction of new routes would provide greater levels of connectivity between islands and the Scottish mainland; and between islands themselves. Intra-island links may not only reduce journey times to the mainland for some communities, but they would also have a role to play in terms of enabling island communities to visit one another and build intra-island links once again.</p> <p>Fixed links would also address issues of peripherality (and social exclusion associated with this).</p> <p>Also refer to EqlA/ICIA/CRWIA/FSDIA Assessment overleaf.</p>	++	++

Statutory Impact Assessments		Scenario	
Criterion	Summary Assessment	Low	High
SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)	This grouping is likely to result in positive effects on the SEA objective related to Population and Human Health (Objective 4) as the enhancements seek to improve accessibility, reduce severance and increase transport choice. It is likely to result in negative effects on SEA objectives related to Climatic Factors (Objective 1) and Air Quality (Objective 3) due to potential for an increase in motorised traffic to and from the Scottish mainland. Negative effects are also anticipated on biodiversity, water, soil, cultural heritage, landscape and material assets (Objective 9) SEA objectives during construction and operation of such infrastructure. As is standard with marine infrastructure developments further environmental assessment would be required to identify location-specific environmental effects and mitigation where appropriate.	-	-
EqlA (Equalities Impact Assessment)	The implementation of fixed links between islands and the mainland will increase connectivity and access to services as well as potentially supporting job growth on the islands. These are benefits that can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. However, the extent to which accessibility and connectivity benefits would be shared amongst those with protected characteristics would depend on the provision, availability and affordability of public transport services using the fixed links. Furthermore, the extent to which job growth on the islands would support those from protected characteristics groups would depend on the sustainability and inclusivity of the employment opportunities created.	+	+
ICIA (Island Communities Impact Assessment)	As Scotland's internal ferry networks require significant investment over the coming years; this grouping would have a significant positive impact on islands and remote communities by improving connectivity and accessibility and reducing reliance on the CHFS and NIFS networks.	++	++

Statutory Impact Assessments		Scenario	
Criterion	Summary Assessment	Low	High
CRWIA (Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment)	The implementation of fixed links is likely to have a negligible impact on children and young people. Improved access and connectivity would result in better opportunities to education health and employment. However, an increase in motorised traffic would potentially have a negative impact on children as they are more vulnerable to the adverse health impacts of increased emissions.	~	~
FSDIA (Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment)	Improving links to/from island and remote/rural communities enables residents there to have more equitable and fairer access to opportunities and facilities, as compared with people living on the Scottish mainland, or in urban areas for example.	+	+

Deliverability		Scenario	
Criterion	Summary Assessment	Low	High
Feasibility	<p>The introduction of fixed links would likely have significant implementability risks.</p> <p>Further work is required to understand the extent of technical and operational feasibility risks associated with implementing fixed links in Scotland – there is opportunity to draw on the experience of neighbouring countries in Europe (e.g. Norway and the Faroe Islands) and how their schemes have been implemented to improve island connectivity.</p>	--	--
Affordability	<p>Further work and feasibility would be required to ascertain the whole life costs of any fixed links proposals. It is however clear the capital and ongoing operational costs would be significant. However, depending on the route and crossings selected there may be the option to offset some of the costs with savings to the CHFS and NIFS network. Whilst significant development work would require to be undertaken to determine the costs of investment it is anticipated that there would be minor to major negative impacts on affordability. As a result, it would be likely that some fixed link options would deliver poor value for money.</p>	--	--
Public Acceptability	<p>There would be a minor positive impact overall associated with the introduction of fixed links in terms of public acceptability, particularly where island or remote communities are afforded new (or improved) opportunities to reach the Scottish mainland.</p> <p>There may be a degree of public acceptability risk if there is a perception that there would be potential erosion of island identity with the onset of fixed link connections to the Scottish mainland.</p> <p>The viability and value for money of fixed links may also receive more negative feedback from the wider public.</p> <p>Further assessment would be necessary to gauge the public acceptability of any fixed links progressed.</p>	+	+

Grouping Options Retained

Option	Status	Rationale
Targeted fixed links which connect the Scottish mainland to main populated islands	Option Not Retained	Option rephrased to <i>Targeted fixed links</i> as opposed to <i>Implement fixed links</i> .
Targeted fixed links to improve connectivity and reduce reliance on CHFS	Option Not Retained	These options will not be retained as they do not identify specific fixed link options that can be subject to appraisal.
New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the WHL, including fixed link or ferry crossings	Option Not Retained	Options to be merged and rephrased to: <i>New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the WHL or rail network in Inverclyde or North Ayrshire, including fixed link or ferry crossings</i>
New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the rail network in Inverclyde, including fixed link or ferry crossings	Option Not Retained	<p>Connections to Cowal were previously considered within the scope of the A83 Access to Argyll work.</p> <p>This work highlighted issues with some of the route corridor options in this study in relation to topography and infrastructure requirements.</p>
New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the rail network in North Ayrshire, including fixed link or ferry crossings	Option Not Retained	On this basis, while the presentation of the options in Grouping IC5 can be simplified, the revised option will not be progressed within STPR2.

Grouping Options Retained

Option	Status	Rationale
New rail connection to/from Kintyre linking to Cowal, including fixed link or ferry crossing	Option Not Retained	<p>Connections to Cowal were previously considered within the scope of the A83 Access to Argyll work.</p> <p>This work highlighted issues with some of the route corridor options in this study in relation to topography and infrastructure requirements.</p> <p>On this basis, this option will not be progressed within STPR2.</p>
Ferry link/Fixed link from South Ronaldsay to Gills Bay (main land) and onward new road connection to Inverness	Option Retained See Rationale	<p>Options to be rephrased to: <i>Ferry link/Fixed link from South Ronaldsay (Orkney) to Scottish mainland and onward road connection to Inverness</i></p> <p>Requires holistic consideration of connectivity alongside ferry options. Option transferred to: STPR2_AST_IC1d_Ferries-Island Connectivity_Northern Isles Connectivity</p>
Sound of Harris Fixed Link	Option Retained See Rationale	<p>Requires holistic consideration of connectivity alongside ferry options. Option transferred to: STPR2_AST_IC1e_Ferries-Island Connectivity_Outer Hebrides Connectivity</p>
Sound of Barra Fixed Link	Option Retained See Rationale	<p>Requires holistic consideration of connectivity alongside ferry options. Option transferred to: STPR2_AST_IC1e_Ferries-Island Connectivity_Outer Hebrides Connectivity</p>
Fixed link from Western Isles to Mainland	Option Retained in Part See Rationale	<p>Option to be merged with: <i>Tunnel between Benbecula and Skye</i> [see below]</p>

Grouping Options Retained

Option	Status	Rationale
Fixed link between Mull and Scottish mainland	Option Retained See Rationale	Requires holistic consideration of connectivity alongside ferry options. Option transferred to: STPR2_AST_IC1c_Ferries-Island Connectivity_Mull Connectivity
Tunnel between Benbecula (Rarnish) and Skye (Neist Point)	Option Retained See Rationale	Options to be rephrased to: <i>Tunnel between Benbecula and Skye</i> Requires holistic consideration of connectivity alongside ferry options. Option transferred to: STPR2_AST_IC1e_Ferries-Island Connectivity_Outer Hebrides Connectivity

ⁱ Transport Scotland, Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) network, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/ferries/ferry-services/#45750>

ⁱⁱ Transport Scotland, Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS), <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/ferries/ferry-services/#45751>

ⁱⁱⁱ Jacobs/AECOM, Baseline of Ferry and Air Service Provision for Scotland's Islands and Remote Communities, 2021

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Ibid

^{viii} Stantec, Corran Narrows Study, 2020

^{ix} Peter Brett Associates, Whalsay Fixed Links Paper, 2016

^x Transport Scotland/CalMac/CMAL, Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan Version 7.0 – re-draft with NSPSG pre-consultation engagement feedback, 2020

^{xi} Scottish Government, The National Islands Plan, 2019, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your EIRs request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Hugh Gillies, Chief Executive, Transport Scotland, Buchanan House 58 Port Dundas Road Glasgow G4 0HF. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within 20 working days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.