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9 March 2021

Dear Robin,

A83 Rest and Be Thankful

Thank you for your joint letter with Michael Russell MSP dated 16 February 2021 in relation to the A83 Rest and Be Thankful.

I would like to reassure you that the Scottish Government is committed to an infrastructure solution to address the A83 Rest and Be Thankful landslip risks. I do not underestimate the disruption that closures of the route cause and I'm grateful for the patience that local residents and businesses have shown. 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.

I recognise that the timescales for developing an alternative to the current route and finding a long-term solution to the challenges created by the Rest and Be Thankful section of the A83 are frustrating for the local community. However, it is important that the correct statutory process is followed to ensure a fair and transparent assessment of options and impacts on local communities and road users.

I can also confirm that we remain committed to progressing substantial shorter-term investment in the existing A83 in tandem with the work to identify a permanent solution as part of a two-phased approach. Notwithstanding, I have instructed officials to look at ways to accelerate work for the long term improvement and to consider a medium term strategy to increase route resilience further. In terms of the long term improvement it is expected that a preferred corridor will be announced by the

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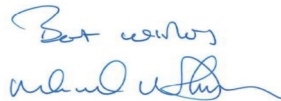


Spring.

Mitigation measures to address the impact of recent landslide events, as well as non-emergency works, have seen the installation of netting, bunds, additional catchpits and improvements to drainage. These interventions have already proven to be successful, helping to keep the A83 open for an estimated 48 days when it would otherwise have closed.

I can advise that Transport Scotland will be setting up the next Taskforce meeting in the coming weeks. Moving forward, once a preferred corridor for the long term improvement is announced, the project team will be contacting those groups directly affected by the long term proposals, including Argyll and Bute Council, so that engagement on that can be focussed on working together to develop the scheme and try to reduce the delivery timescales further.

I hope this is of assistance.



Michael Matheson

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