



Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report

Non-Technical Summary

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Key Facts	
Project	Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)
Responsible Authority	Transport Scotland
Purpose of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Preliminary Engineering Support Services (PES)	To identify a preferred corridor for access to Argyll and Bute from the wider transport network. This will review the problems and opportunities relating to the existing A82, A83, A85 and A828 Trunk Roads and consider various route corridor options, including the existing A83 Trunk Road corridor.
Scheme objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transport Planning Objective (TPO)1 Resilience – reduce the impact of disruption for travel to, from and between key towns within Argyll & Bute, and for communities accessed via the strategic road network. ▪ TPO2 Safety – positively contribute towards the Scottish Government’s Vision Zero road safety target by reducing accidents on the road network and their severity. ▪ TPO3 Economy – reduce geographic and economic inequalities within Argyll & Bute through improved connectivity and resilience. ▪ TPO4 Sustainable travel – encourage sustainable travel to, from and within Argyll & Bute through facilitating bus, active travel and sustainable travel choices. ▪ TPO5 Environment – protect the environment, including the benefits local communities and visitors obtain from the natural environment by enhancing natural capital assets and ecosystem service provision through delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure.
Area to be Considered	The study area for the SEA Scoping Report included 11 route corridors across Argyll and Bute. These corridors, together with an additional 4 route corridors options that were identified through public consultation and have undergone Preliminary Assessment. Following recommendation of a preferred corridor, the study area for the SEA Environmental Report has focused on the Glen Croe corridor (corridor 1), which is 2km wide area and approximately 6km long.
Period Covered by the PES and SEA	2021 - 2030
Frequency of Update	Live project with ongoing updates for the SEA Post Adoption Statement and future project stages (design development)
Project Website	https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a83-access-to-argyll-and-bute/
Contact Details	Comments can be provided by email to: Sinead.Thom@transport.gov.scot and Steve.Isaac@jacobs.com; or by post to: [Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF]

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Non-Technical Summary

1.1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a non-technical summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project.

1.2 Background of the Project

1.2.1 Following recent landslide events in August 2020 at the Rest and Be Thankful on the A83 trunk road, one of which was the largest recorded in the area, Jacobs / AECOM was commissioned by Transport Scotland to undertake a SEA and provide preliminary engineering support services (PES) to help identify a preferred corridor for access to Argyll and Bute.

1.2.2 As such, there has been a need to consider the route corridor options available to improve resilience and safety for traffic currently using the A83. This included examining the existing route corridor as well as various route corridors, both to the north and south of the existing route, that could provide a suitable alternative route to the A83. The 11 potential route corridors (shown on Figure 1.1) were presented on the Transport Scotland project website for public consultation between September and October 2020 and were assessed as part of the SEA and Preliminary Engineering Support Services (PES). Four additional route corridors were suggested in feedback received from this public consultation, route corridors 12 to 15, and these were also assessed as part of the SEA and PES. The outcome of this assessment was the recommendation of corridor 1, Glen Croe as the preferred corridor for the project.

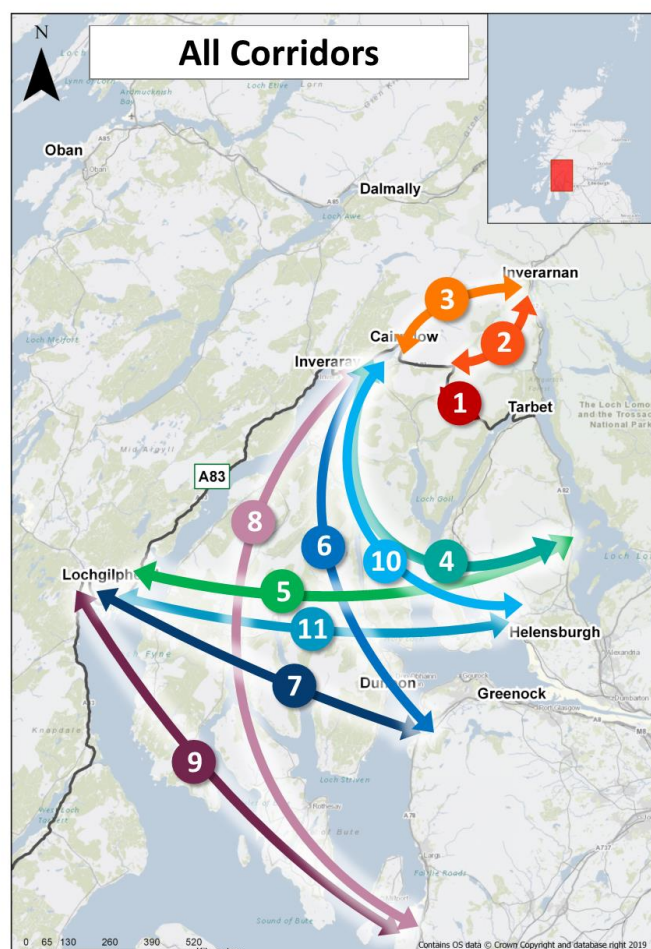


Figure 1.1: Route Corridor Options (Transport Scotland, 2020)

1.3 SEA Requirements

- 1.3.1 SEA is the process by which information about the environmental effects of proposed plans, policies and programmes are evaluated.
- 1.3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 transposes the requirements of the European Community SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). Under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, those bodies preparing qualifying Scottish plans are required to undertake a SEA of plans that are likely to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.
- 1.3.3 SEA aims to offer greater protection to the environment by ensuring public bodies (in this case, Transport Scotland) and those organisations preparing plans of a 'public character' consider and address the likely significant environmental effects. The SEA also offers a foundation for future project stages and assists an environmentally led design.
- 1.3.4 The SEA for the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project has assessed the impacts of the project on nine key environmental topics listed in the SEA Directive (refer to Box 1.1).

- biodiversity, fauna and flora;
- population and human health;
- water environment;
- soil;
- air quality;
- climatic factors;
- material assets;
- cultural heritage; and
- landscape and visual amenity.

Box 1.1: Environmental topics listed in SEA

- 1.3.5 A set of objectives were developed to cover each of these environmental topics. These were used to assess the environmental performance of the project. The key findings of this assessment are presented in Section 7.
- 1.3.6 A Habitats Regulations Appraisal is also being undertaken, to ensure the project complies with the Scottish Habitats Regulations and protects sites designated for their international importance for biodiversity.

2. Key Stages in SEA

2.1.1 The key stages in the SEA process are set out below.

SEA Scoping (complete) – The scoping stage includes the production of an SEA Scoping Report. This report includes baseline data (including figures), a plans, programmes and strategies review and a proposed methodology for undertaking the SEA from the Environmental Report stage onwards.



Draft Environmental Report – The assessment stage establishes the likely significant (positive and negative) environmental effects of implementing the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project. Any potential reasonable alternatives have been considered at this stage, along with viable mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects. The assessment and a summary of key findings have been included in the draft Environmental Report, which will be available for consultation alongside the PES Report. The draft Environmental Report will be consulted on for a minimum of eight weeks.



Final Environmental Report – This will only be produced if there are significant amendments required for the draft Environmental Report or PES Report as a result of consultation feedback.



SEA Post Adoption Statement - This statement will be produced after the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project has been adopted. It will outline how the SEA and consultation responses have been taken into account within the finalised project and the influence the SEA has had on the project. It will also include the final environmental monitoring programme for the project.

3. Legislative and Policy Context

3.1.1 The Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project is supported by plans, programmes and strategies at the national, regional and local level. At the national level, those most relevant and closely linked are as follows:

- National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) identifies 14 major transport, energy and environmental infrastructure projects that are of national significance to Scotland and are considered by Scottish Ministers to be essential to the delivery of the spatial strategy set out in NPF3, which is currently being updated.
- National Transport Strategy (NTS2) was published in 2020. NTS2 includes an updated vision over a twenty-year period for a transport system which is 'sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors'.
- The forthcoming Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) will inform transport investment in Scotland over the next 20 years, helping to deliver the objectives and visions for transport set out in NTS2 and aligning with other national plans such as the National Planning Framework and the Climate Change Plan.
- The update to Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan outlines how investments can help in reducing climate change. The update focuses on a Green Recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and provides actions which align with the new emissions reduction targets up to 2032.
- The draft Infrastructure Investment Plan outlines where capital invested in infrastructure will go, covering 2021-22 to 2025-26. It includes around £24 billion of major projects and large programmes which reflect the Scottish Governments vision for future infrastructure that 'supports Scotland's resilience and enables inclusive, net zero and sustainable growth'.

4. Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation specific to the SEA is required at several stages, in line with the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance. The SEA stages and their consultation requirements are shown in Section 2.
- 4.1.2 The SEA is developed to incorporate the feedback from statutory Consultation Authorities. The Scottish statutory Consultation Authorities are:
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA);
 - NatureScot; and
 - Historic Environment Scotland (HES).
- 4.1.3 The SEA Scoping Report, Environmental Report and SEA Post Adoption Statement will all be consulted on via the SEA Gateway and published on the Transport Scotland website: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a83-access-to-argyll-and-bute/>
- 4.1.4 Consultation with the wider public is also undertaken at different stages in the SEA and is crucial for ensuring transparency in the SEA decision-making process.
- 4.1.5 An Environmental Steering Group has been established for the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project. Steering Group members comprise the following organisations:
- Transport Scotland;
 - Jacobs/AECOM;
 - SEA Statutory Consultation Authorities (NatureScot, HES, SEPA);
 - Argyll & Bute Council, Inverclyde Council, North Ayrshire Council, Stirling Council;
 - Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority;
 - Marine Scotland; and
 - Scottish Forestry.
- 4.1.6 Typically, there are monthly calls with the Environmental Steering Group to discuss updates and pertinent environmental and project-related issues. It is expected that this collaboration will continue into future project stages, to ensure robust consultee engagement and input as the project design progresses.

5. Project Description

5.1.1 The assessment for the SEA has been carried out in two stages:

- Preliminary Assessment – an initial assessment considering 11 route corridors and 4 additional corridors suggested as part of public consultation in Autumn 2020, with the objective of identifying if corridors can be removed from further consideration at this stage and if necessary any further assessment necessary to allow a recommendation on the preferred corridor to be made.
- Detailed Assessment – detailed assessment of the residual corridor options remaining following the Preliminary Assessment (in this case only corridor 1 – Glen Croe remaining) undertaken in line with the SEA Directive and appropriate guidance documents, considering environmental aspects.

5.1.2 The 11 original route corridors were named as follows:

- Corridor 1 – Glen Croe (Existing A83)
- Corridor 2 – Glen Kinglas
- Corridor 3 – Glen Fyne
- Corridor 4 – A82 – Cowal - Cairndow
- Corridor 5 – A82 – Cowal - Lochgilphead
- Corridor 6 – Inverclyde – Cowal - Cairndow
- Corridor 7 - Inverclyde – Cowal - Lochgilphead
- Corridor 8a – North Ayrshire – Cairndow via Colintrave
- Corridor 8b – North Ayrshire – Cairndow via Dunoon
- Corridor 9 – North Ayrshire – Cowal - Lochgilphead
- Corridor 10 – Helensburgh – Cowal - Cairndow
- Corridor 11 - Helensburgh – Cowal – Lochgilphead

5.1.3 The four additional route corridors that arose from public consultation are all variants of corridor 1, as follows:

- Corridor 12 – A82 Inveruglas to A83 Butterbridge
- Corridor 13 – Glen Loin
- Corridor 14 – Coilessan Glen
- Corridor 15 – Arrochar to Butterbridge

5.1.4 Following the initial assessment work, the emerging recommendation was to retain route corridor 1 as the preferred route corridor, for the following reasons:

- The environmental impacts within corridor 1 will be significantly less.

- Scheme objectives show some benefit, although other route corridors may perform better except in relation to environmental benefits.
- Traffic and safety benefits are not significant overall, but improved resilience is noted.
- It is likely that a solution can be delivered most quickly and cost effectively.
- There are some engineering complexities, particularly geotechnical and structural but potentially less and different than other route corridors which have major challenges with bridges at the upper limits of technology and longer tunnels.

5.1.5 The recommended corridor, corridor 1, generally follows the existing A83 Trunk Road, starting just south east of the junction between the A83 Trunk Road and the Old Military Road. It typically follows the route of the existing A83 Trunk Road as it rises through Glen Croe and then past Loch Restil. The corridor ends where the A83 Trunk Road passes by the south west end of Glen Kinglas. The corridor is approximately 6 km long and is shown in Images 5.1 and 5.2.



Image 5.1: Existing A83 Trunk Road within the Glen Croe Corridor (© Alan O' Dowd / cc-by-sa/2.0)



Image 5.2: The Glen Croe Corridor from the Rest and Be Thankful Viewpoint (© Euan Nelson / cc-by-sa/2.0)

- 5.1.6 The location and extents of corridor 1 are shown on the adjacent map, and five possible route options currently being considered are shown within the corridor. The possible route options are shown on Figure 1.2 and have been given colours, as follows: Brown, Green, Pink, Purple and Yellow.
- 5.1.7 The Brown, Green, Purple and Yellow route options include proposed viaducts, with the Yellow route option having the longest viaduct, at 1.8km long. The Pink and Purple route options propose the use of tunnels. The tunnel for the Pink route option would pass beneath Croe Water and the A83 Trunk Road, and would emerge next to the junction between the A83 Trunk Road and an existing access road north of Loch Restil before re-joining the A83 Trunk Road. The tunnel for the Purple route option would be approximately 1.2km long, and would pass under the Old Military Road and the A83 Trunk Road near High Glen Croe. The tunnel would climb from High Glen Croe and the road would re-emerge next to the junction between the A83 Trunk Road and an existing access track north of Loch Restil, before re-joining the existing A83 Trunk Road.

6. SEA Methods

- 6.1.1 Following confirmation through a screening exercise that an SEA would be undertaken, the next stage in the process was scoping. The purpose of the scoping stage was to describe the environmental context, by establishing the relevant baseline information, reviewing other relevant plans, policies and strategies and identifying environmental problems and opportunities, and propose a methodology to be used for assessing potential environmental effects. The output of the scoping stage was an SEA Scoping Report. The SEA Scoping Report was informed by environmental workshops and engagement with the Environmental Steering Group.
- 6.1.2 For the Environmental Report stage of the SEA, a desk-based assessment approach was used for all SEA topics, focussed on the 2km-wide route corridor area. An interactive mapping tool was used to show the SEA team where the environmental constraints, such as designated and undesignated sites, were located. The data which fed into the map were gathered from publicly available sources and through consultation with the Environmental Steering Group. The constraints and opportunities are listed in Section 7.
- 6.1.3 The SEA has utilised a set of SEA objectives that cover each of the environmental topics scoped into the assessment, as outlined in Table 1. The SEA objectives were developed to reflect the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) context. Baseline data was collected for each of the SEA topics listed in Table 6.1, and the SEA objectives were developed following a comprehensive review of the baseline issues and policy requirements. They also respond to feedback received from the Environmental Steering Group.
- 6.1.4 The SEA objectives, the Scottish Government's SEA guidance (2013), and other topic-specific guidance was used for the assessment to identify the potential for likely significant effects as a result of the project.

Table 6.1: SEA Objectives

SEA Topic	SEA Objective
Climatic Factors	Reduce emissions from Scotland's transport sector by reducing the need to travel and encouraging modal shift and help meet Scotland's wider targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
	Adapt the transport network to the predicted effects of climate change
Air Quality	Reduce all forms of transport-related air pollution and improve air quality
Population and Human Health	Improve quality of life and human health and increase sustainable access to essential services, employment, recreation and the natural environment
	Reduce noise and vibration associated with the transport network
	Promote, invest in, build and maintain infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places
	Improve safety on the transport network
Material Assets	Promote and improve the sustainable use of the transport network
	Reduce use of natural resources
Water Environment	Protect, maintain and improve the quality of water bodies, wetlands and the marine environment from any direct or indirect impacts from the project, and protect against the risk of flooding
Biodiversity	Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services, avoiding damage to or loss of designated and undesignated wildlife or geological sites.

SEA Topic	SEA Objective
Soils	Safeguard and improve soil quality in Scotland, particularly high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soil
Cultural Heritage	Protect and enhance (where appropriate) cultural heritage resources ¹ and their settings.
Landscape and Visual Amenity	Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape, areas of valuable landscape

¹ A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.

7. Environmental Constraints, Opportunities and Recommendations

7.1 Climatic Factors

Constraints / Opportunities

- Loss of forestry and peat lands during construction and operation has the potential for permanent, minor negative or uncertain effects on the climate. Manufacture of materials and construction activities would release emissions which would add to the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases.
- Mitigation could be successful in carbon off-setting, but this would be considered in further assessment. This mitigation could include the choice of materials used to construct the project, considering sustainably sources and low carbon materials, as well as considering the location of suppliers to minimise transport distances. The project should also avoid areas of nationally important peat and areas of existing and future forestry where practicable.
- Construction of the project would improve the resilience of the A83 to the anticipated impacts of climate change and reduce the need for closures during bad weather, resulting in long-term, minor positive effects during operation.

7.2 Air Quality

Constraints / Opportunities

- There is potential for a future increase in traffic volumes during operation of the project, as a result of improved connectivity and resilience, though this is unlikely to have a significant effect on air quality in the corridor and in the Argyll and Bute region as a whole.
- There are opportunities to explore integration of green infrastructure in project design to remove air pollution, though any effects this would have on air quality would be unlikely to be significant.
- There is potential for short-term, minor negative air quality effects during construction where works occur near to sensitive receptors, such as houses, walkers or cyclists. However, these effects would be largely mitigated through construction best practice. During operation a minor negative or uncertain effect is anticipated.
- Methods to mitigate air quality effects include the adoption of construction and traffic management, reducing dust and pollutant emissions as far as practicable.

7.3 Population and Human Health

Constraints / Opportunities

- There is potential for a slight increase in traffic levels during operation of the project, which could result in an increase in noise and vibration and air quality effects at a localised level.
- It is expected that the project would generally improve quality of life and increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural environment within the corridor through improved resilience of the A83, more reliable and frequent public transport services, and the provision of enhanced facilities, including links to walking and cycling routes.

- It is also anticipated that the corridor would generally improve connectivity between the central belt and Argyll and Bute, and provide greater accessibility to active travel routes, including the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park core path network in and around the area, and hill walking routes such as The Cobbler.
- There is potential that the project could result in short-term, minor negative or uncertain effects on air quality and noise and vibration for local residents resulting from traffic and construction activities. Short-term negative effects on access to and the amenity of walking and cycling routes within the corridor could also result from increases in noise levels, dust and emissions, and temporary changes to views during the construction phase. However, mitigation is anticipated to reduce these effects to become non-significant.
- Recommended mitigation measures include the implementation of a communications strategy to keep local communities informed, which could be complimented by appointing a community liaison officer. It is also recommended to consult with the LLTNPA during construction of the project to ensure that any effects on the normal operations of the Park are minimised as far as practicable.
- Other mitigation methods include controlling the timing of construction activities to minimise noise impacts on the local population and maintaining access for road users and non-motorised users during construction periods. This information would be included in a Construction Traffic Management Plan.
- During operation, a permanent, minor positive effect is anticipated on population and human health.

7.4 Material Assets

7.4.1 The Material Assets topic considers the potential effect of the project on the following assets:

- Natural assets: watercourses, forestry and woodlands, soils, and agricultural land; and
- Built Assets: infrastructure relating to energy / heat generation and distribution, waste management and transport

Constraints / Opportunities

- Loss of forestry and peat during construction and operation has the potential for permanent, long-term, minor negative or uncertain effects on natural material assets. Land-use within the corridor would change as a result of the project.
- The scale of these effects would be determined by the footprint of the project and the success of mitigation. Recommended mitigation measures include consideration of the construction materials to be used and producing a waste management strategy to ensure the waste hierarchy is adhered to.
- Construction of the project would consume energy and finite resources, as well as generate demolition and construction waste, resulting in long-term, minor negative or uncertain effects on built material assets.
- Provision of resilient infrastructure would positively contribute towards adapting the road network to climate change impacts, resulting in a permanent, minor positive effect on built material assets.

7.5 Biodiversity

Constraints / Opportunities

- There is potential for significant negative effects on designated sites during construction, as a result of disturbance and generation of dust and airborne pollutants from construction activities. Negative effects as a result of habitat loss or alteration during construction and operation could also occur. Refinement of the project design and implementation of appropriate mitigation could reduce these effects, but it is not possible to determine whether all negative effects can be mitigated at this stage.
- There is potential for minor negative and significant negative effects on habitats and species of conservation interest as a result of habitat loss or alteration during construction and operation of the project. Minor negative and significant negative effects as a result of construction activities are expected to be reduced through implementation of best practice construction methods, including scheduling construction activities to reduce disturbance to species of conservation interest, for example considering seasonal restrictions.
- Recommended mitigation methods relating to effects on biodiversity include avoiding sites designated for their biological interest and reducing land-take, where practicable. If the project requires loss of habitat then bespoke mitigation or compensation could be required. The project should also seek to ensure permeability for wildlife, which could include the provision of mammal crossings or fish passage through culverts.
- There may be opportunities for improving biodiversity in the long-term, with adoption of the principle of securing positive effects for biodiversity throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that functional ecosystems are maintained and compliance with government policy and project guidance.

7.6 Water Environment

Constraints / Opportunities

- There is potential for negative effects on surface water bodies during construction and operation of the project, due to changes in water quality, hydrology (e.g. water flow) or their physical processes and attributes. Through the implementation of appropriate mitigation, it is considered unlikely these effects will be significant. However, at this stage it is not possible to determine whether all these negative effects can be mitigated.
- There is potential for negative effects on groundwater bodies during construction and operation due to potential changes in groundwater quality, flows or levels. These effects are likely to be localised and temporary during construction, however there is potential for longer term effects during operation, dependent on project design. Effects on groundwater bodies are dependent on existing groundwater levels, which are not known at this stage.
- There is potential for the project to have negative effects on flood risk to existing receptors and the construction site or carriageway during operation. It is anticipated any negative effects would be addressed through appropriate design and/or mitigation and are unlikely to be significant. Recommended mitigation to reduce potential effects on the water environment include appropriate pollution control measures construction, undertaking site specific flood risk assessments, and incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into the design to minimise impacts on water quality.
- Opportunities may exist to improve water quality in surface water and groundwater bodies, through upgrading existing drainage networks in line with current standards. There may also be opportunities to improve watercourse channels where they have existing modifications and reduce the likelihood of fluvial flooding through upgrading watercourse crossings to improve conveyance.

7.7 Soils

Constraints / Opportunities

- There is potential for the project to result in reversible and irreversible, minor negative or uncertain effect on soils. This recognises the potential irreversible loss and disturbance of superficial and bedrock geology and the potential irreversible 'sealing' of soils (i.e. covering soils with an impermeable artificial material) and reversible medium-term disturbance to soils (including carbon-rich soils), peat, land capable of use for agriculture and land capable of use for forestry.
- Mitigation and enhancement opportunities have been identified that have the potential to reduce effects on soils. These include reducing irreversible soil sealing through design development, reducing reversible disturbance of peat and carbon-rich soils through development of a Peat Management Plan, and considering opportunities for peatland habitat restoration and enhancement.

7.8 Cultural Heritage

Constraints / Opportunities

- No positive or significant negative effects on cultural heritage have been predicted as a result of the construction and operation of the project. Minor negative or uncertain effects on cultural heritage were predicted.
- There is potential for construction of the project to alter the setting of the 'Rest and be Thankful' Memorial Stone during construction, including construction activities associated with the Rest and be Thankful car park. There will also be a potential change to its setting during operation, due to the presence of new infrastructure.
- To mitigate potential effects on cultural heritage receptors, it has been recommended to develop cultural heritage design objective for the project in accordance with national, regional and local policies. The objectives should consider both undesignated and designated cultural heritage resources, and also consider enhancement opportunities. Another mitigation method is to ensure (as far as practicable) road alignment avoid direct impacts on cultural heritage resources and their setting.

7.9 Landscape and Visual Amenity

Constraints / Opportunities

- There is potential for significant negative effects on the landscape character of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, the National Park core wilderness areas around the summits of The Cobbler and Beinn Luibhean, the Upland Glens and Highland Summits and local landscape elements and features such as Loch Restil, woodland, forestry and distinct landform.
- There is also potential for significant negative effects on views at nearby residences, the Rest and Be Thankful viewpoint, nearby hill walking routes, core paths and the Old Military Road.
- There is potential for minor negative or uncertain, or positive effects on views for the people travelling along the Argyll Coastal Route within the corridor, depending on the route alignment and design of structures.
- Mitigation measures recommended to reduce potential landscape and visual effects include embedding landscape mitigation planting in the design where practicable and minimising the loss of existing vegetation where practicable. It has also been recommended to preserve key focal points from key viewpoints and maintain or enhance the narrative of existing scenic routes.

- There is potential for delivering high-quality design and placemaking within the corridor, and details would be explored further at future stages of design development.

8. Project Assessment

8.1.1 The SEA has reported that the project is not likely to have any significant effects on the following SEA topics at this strategic level:

- Climatic Factors;
- Material Assets
- Air Quality;
- Population and Human Health;
- Soils; and
- Cultural Heritage.

8.1.2 The SEA reported that there would be likely significant (negative) environmental effects for the following SEA topics and sub-topics:

- Biodiversity (designated sites, other habitats, species of conservation interest).
- Water Environment; and
- Landscape and Visual Amenity (Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, landscape character and viewpoints).

8.1.3 There are also potential cumulative environmental effects when other plans and projects are considered to act in-combination with the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project. These are described in Section 9.

9. Inter-relationships and Cumulative Effects

- 9.1.1 As set out in the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance (2013), the inter-relationship of environmental effects between the topics has been considered within the SEA. Some inter-relationships have the potential to result in a cumulative effect.
- 9.1.2 Cumulative effects arise, for instance, where several developments each have insignificant effects but together have a significant effect; or where several individual effects of the plan (e.g. noise, dust and visual) have a combined effect.
- 9.1.3 In terms of 'several individual effects' of the A83 project having a combined effect, the following were identified:
- Cumulative effect for population as a result of effects associated with construction activities such as dust, noise and vibration, visual impacts and journey disruption and delays for vehicle travellers and non-motorised users.
 - Cumulative effects for forestry and peat reported across biodiversity, soils, landscape, climatic factors and material assets assessments.
 - Cumulative effects predicted for species of conservation interest and habitats from construction impacts, habitat loss and fragmentation, and impacts from changes to soil, water and air quality.
 - Cumulative effects predicted for National Park due to changes to landscape and visual amenity, biodiversity, and accessibility, and potential for indirect effects on tourism to the Park.
- 9.1.4 Additionally, known and expected projects with the potential for cumulative effects with the A83 project by virtue of their characteristics, scale, location, or timing were identified and considered. The following potential cumulative effects were identified:
- Significant negative cumulative effects were predicted for the Climatic Factors and Landscape & Visual Amenity due to effects on these topics across multiple schemes such as A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan, in combination with the A83 project.
 - Potential for a cumulative significant effect on Soils and the Water Environment with the A83 project acting in combination with other A83 improvement works.
 - Other major infrastructure works planned in Scotland have the potential to combine with the A83 project to result in a cumulative effect on Climatic Factors, Material Assets and Biodiversity.
- 9.1.5 Monitoring of potential cumulative effects identified in the SEA is recommended throughout design development in future DMRB stages. The mitigation and enhancement recommendations outlined in the SEA will also be further developed to reduce effects from the A83 project.

10. SEA Monitoring and Mitigation

- 10.1.1 A framework of mitigation, monitoring and enhancement recommendations for each SEA topic are provided in the Environmental Report. The framework is an example only at this stage and will be subject to review following feedback from the public consultation on the Environmental Report. The final framework will be included in the SEA Post Adoption Statement. This will include recommendations for environmental protection and enhancement at all future project stages.

11. Next Steps

- 11.1.1 The SEA Scoping Report, Draft Environmental Report and SEA Post Adoption Statement will each be placed on Transport Scotland's website for public consultation. They will also be placed on Scotland's SEA Gateway website:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/environmental-assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/>

12. References

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

European Community SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)

Scottish Government (2013). Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidance

Scottish Government (2014). National Planning Framework 3

Scottish Government (2020a) Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 – update

Scottish Government (2020b) A National Mission with Local Impact - draft infrastructure investment plan 2021-2022 to 2025-2026: consultation

Transport Scotland (2020). National Transport Strategy 2

Transport Scotland (2020) Project Corridor Options – Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) [Online] Available from www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-corridor-options-access-to-argyll-and-bute-a83/ [Accessed 15 February 2021].