



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA



**ACCESS  
ARGYLL  
& BUTE  
[A83]**

# Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)

Preferred route exhibition for  
permanent, long-term solution

Spring 2023

[transport.gov.scot/projects/a83-access-to-argyll-and-bute](https://transport.gov.scot/projects/a83-access-to-argyll-and-bute)



# Introduction

**Transport Scotland has been taking forward option assessment work for the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project.**

This leaflet provides an overview of the preferred route that has been selected as the permanent, long-term solution to the challenges at the Rest and Be Thankful. It also summarises the detailed assessment work that is being carried out as part of the ongoing design development.

A feedback form is available at the public exhibition and online via the virtual exhibition room.

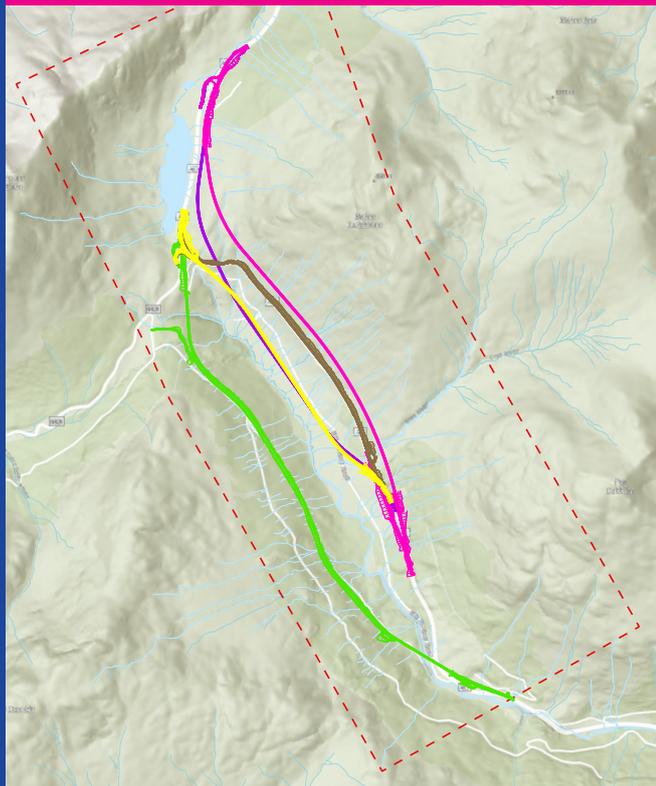


View of Glen Croe looking east towards the Cobbler

## Background

**The Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) project team has been commissioned with developing a safe and resilient road to Argyll and Bute to address the landslide issues at the Rest and Be Thankful.**

Glen Croe corridor with options selected for DMRB Stage 2 assessment



The A83 is one of the two east-west strategic trunk road network connections between Argyll and Bute and the Central Belt. The section through the Rest and Be Thankful (Glen Croe) is increasingly affected by landslides, with the most significant recorded landslides occurring in August and September 2020. Following these unprecedented events, the former Cabinet Secretary instructed Transport Scotland to look at a long-term, resilient, and sustainable solution to the problem of landslides in Glen Croe.

### Timeline of actions to date:

#### October 2020

Public consultation on the 11 proposed route corridor options

#### March 2021

Glen Croe corridor identified as the preferred route corridor and initial feedback obtained on the five route options

#### April 2021

Publication of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report

#### September 2022

Atkins WSP Joint Venture (AWJV) appointed to take forward next stages of design for both the medium and long-term solutions

#### December 2022

Improvements to the existing Old Military Road identified as the preferred option for the medium-term solution

#### Spring 2023

Preferred route for permanent, long-term solution announced

#### June 2023

Preferred route exhibitions

#### Throughout

A83 Story Map updates

# Scheme objectives

The design and assessment considers the performance of options against the scheme objectives, and the Scottish Government's five appraisal criteria, namely; environment, safety, economy, integration and accessibility and social inclusion.

The scheme objectives can be summarised as;

<b>Resilience</b>	Reduce the impact of travel disruption	<b>Sustainable travel</b>	Facilitate bus and active travel choices
<b>Safety</b>	Positively contribute toward the Scottish Government's Vision Zero road safety target	<b>Environment</b>	Protect the environment, including the benefits local communities and visitors obtain from natural environment and landscape
<b>Economy</b>	Reduce geographic and economic inequalities through improved connectivity		

# Scheme assessment process

The preparation and development of trunk road projects follows the assessment process set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This is considered standard good practice and used throughout the UK.

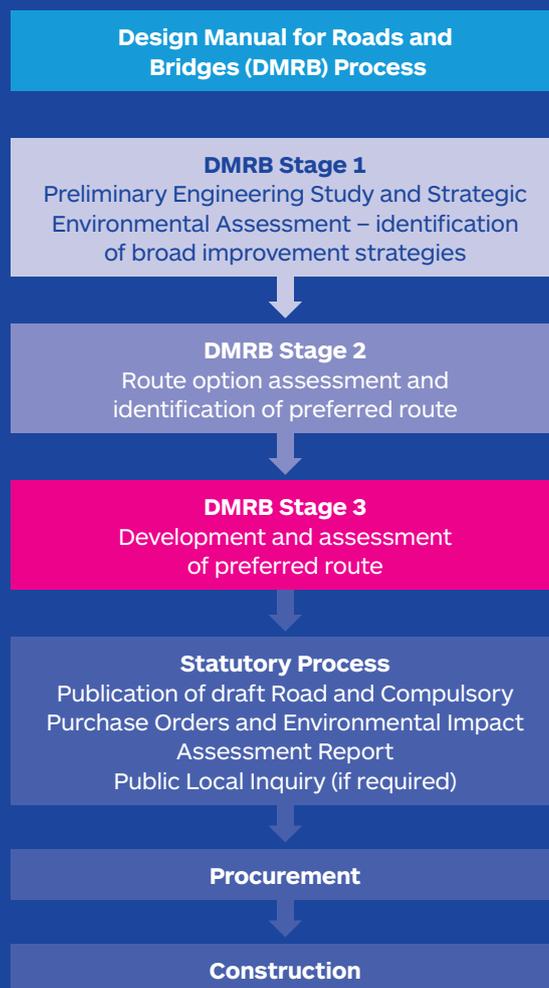
This three-stage assessment process considers engineering, environment, traffic and economic criteria.

Throughout this process, Transport Scotland has and will continue to consult with a diverse range of stakeholders, local communities and interested parties, including, environmental, public transport and active travel groups.

The DMRB Stage 1 assessment of the Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) scheme was completed in April 2021.

The preferred route for the permanent, long-term solution was announced in Spring 2023. The preferred route announcement marks the conclusion of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment process.

The next step is to progress the DMRB Stage 3 assessment of the preferred route, which is now underway.



# Scheme options



The **Green Option** is located on the western side of Glen Croe, opposite to the existing A83, on the lower slopes of Ben Donich.

Due to landslip risks on the lower and upper Ben Donich slopes, a debris flow shelter with catch pit has been included along the majority of the **Green Option** to protect road users from future debris flow and landslides. The total route is 4.35km long with two viaduct structures to cross the Croe Water and the steep ravine.

The **Yellow Option** is predominantly situated away from the existing A83 on the lower slopes of Beinn Luibhean, below the existing A83 and the Old Military Road.

The route is 2.5km long, with 1.8km of the route on a viaduct up to 90m above the ground. The remaining lengths are on an embankment. The **Yellow Option** has been moved to the lower lying ground below the Old Military Road following design refinement.



The **Brown Option** is generally located on the existing A83 and is 2.4km long. To protect road users from debris flows and landslides, a structure known as a debris flow shelter is required to cover part of the road considered to be at higher risk.

The **Brown Option** has evolved to include a catch pit on the uphill side of the flow shelter structure to channel landslip material safely away from the road.

The **Purple Option** is predominantly situated away from the existing A83 on the lower slopes of Beinn Luibhean, below the existing A83 and the Old Military Road.

The **Purple Option** is 3.7km long, with around 1.48km of the route on a viaduct up to 52m above the ground. There is also a 1.2km tunnel located beneath the Old Military Road, existing A83 and slopes of Beinn Luibhean. A new junction at the B828 would be required.



The **Pink Option** is located mostly away from the existing A83. The route is 3.94km long, located to the east of the existing A83 road, beneath the western slopes of Beinn Luibhean. The route includes a tunnel which is 3km long.

Similar to the **Purple Option**, the **Pink Option** will require a new junction to maintain access at the B828.

# Assessment

Environmental, engineering and traffic impacts of the Scheme Options have been assessed as part of **DMRB Stage 2**, which has now been completed. Environmental, engineering, traffic and economic assessments will also inform the development of the preferred route at **DMRB Stage 3**, which will be reported in an **Environmental Impact Assessment Report** and other **Stage 3 Reports**.

## Environmental assessment

The **environmental assessment** considers, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- **Air quality:** Traffic-related changes at sensitive receptors.
- **Noise and vibration:** Traffic-related changes at sensitive receptors.
- **Population and human health:** Land-use changes, agriculture and forestry effects, walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and severance of routes used by the community. Travellers using the new road.
- **Materials assets and waste:** Material resources and waste management.
- **Cultural heritage:** Archaeological remains, battlefields, landscapes and historic buildings.
- **Landscape and visual:** Landscape character (including designated areas).



## Engineering assessment

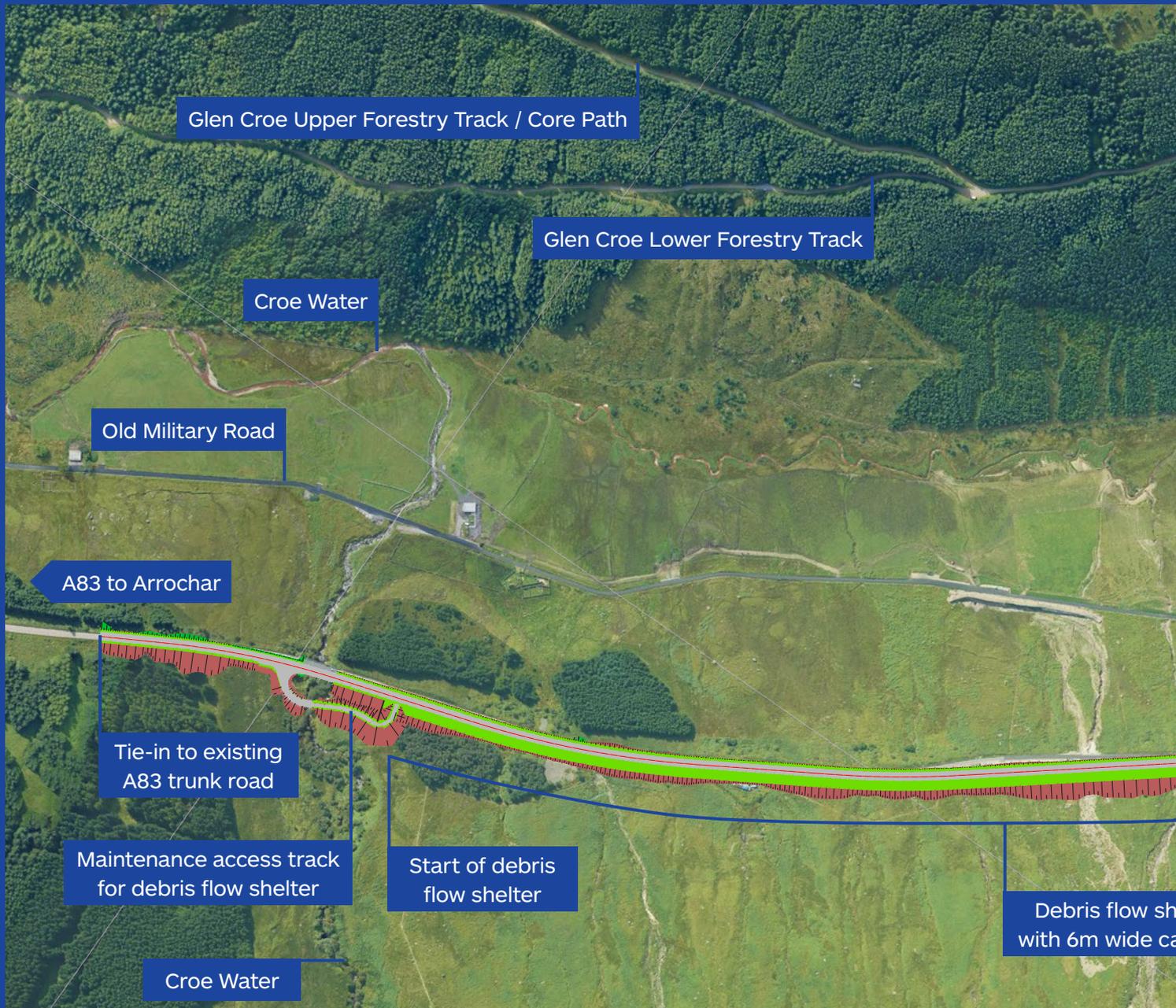
The **engineering assessment** considers, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- **Local roads and accesses:** The impact on local roads and accesses which connect directly with the A83 carriageway or alternatively run adjacent to the A83 carriageway.
- **Construction duration:** The length of time taken to construct each of the Scheme Options.
- **Resilience:** Events on Beinn Luibhean slope: Resilience relates to the closure of the A83 resulting in diversions for road users.
- **Alignment with standards:** Considers the alignment of the design with the relevant engineering standards.
- **Topography and land use:** Within the corridor the existing topography and land use varies considerably over the project extents.
- **Geotechnics and earthworks:** Complexity and extent of geotechnical works.

## Traffic and economic assessment

The **traffic and economic assessment** considers the traffic and economic performance of the Scheme Options, including consideration of the ways the options improve the resilience, safety and operation of the route.

The A83 is considered key infrastructure in supporting the wider national economy through; connecting businesses and communities, facilitating access to essential services, and supporting jobs and activities in industries such as healthcare, education, aquaculture, forestry, tourism, energy and renewables. Therefore, consideration of the **wider economic benefits** also forms a key part of the assessment.



## Preferred route

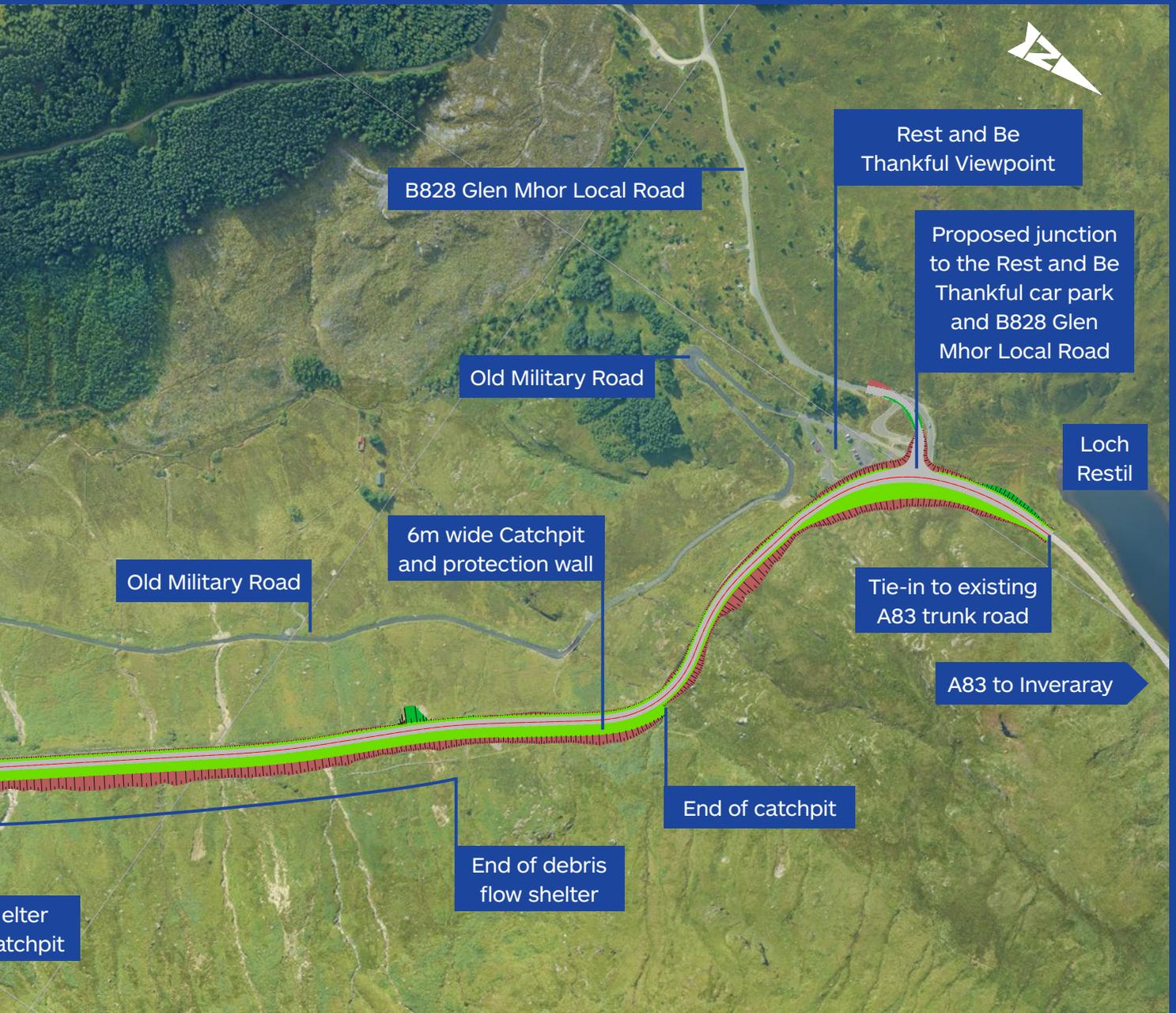
The preferred route for the permanent, long-term solution at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful is the **Brown Option** and is shown above.

The new A83 Rest and Be Thankful will provide:

- Improved resilience and operational safety of the trunk road network by reducing the impact of disruption for travel to, from and between Argyll and Bute and the Central Belt of Scotland.
- The most favourable performance across a broad range of environmental criteria.

- The greatest potential to be delivered quickly as well as providing an opportunity to encourage sustainable travel.

The preferred route will be subject to further design and development as the scheme progresses, with particular focus on minimising disruption to road users during construction. Environmental mitigation and sustainable travel facilities, which will include bus and active travel, will also be incorporated into the design as part of the **DMRB Stage 3** assessment.



## Medium-term solution

Recognising the frustration to local communities and businesses of landslides at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful, in March 2021 Transport Scotland committed to developing a **medium-term solution** to address the urgency of the issue.

The purpose of the **medium-term solution** is to deliver a **safe, proportionate** and **more resilient** diversion route when the A83 is closed until the permanent, long-term solution is constructed.

On 23 December 2022, the former Minister for Transport announced that the **medium-term solution** would consist of a programme of improvements to the **Old Military Road**.

These improvements will provide an improved Old Military Road by:

- Reducing journey times by increasing the extent of two-way operation.
- Improving the safety and resilience of the Old Military Road by including landslide protection measures such as bunds and fences.

These interventions will be in place prior to construction of the permanent, long-term solution to reduce the disruption to road users during the construction period. We are working at pace to ensure the medium-term improvements will start on site before the end of the year.

# What happens next?

**Transport Scotland and their consultant AWJV will continue to develop the preferred route and look for opportunities to deliver the permanent, long-term solution as quickly as possible.**

The next stage of the assessment process will include:

- Further detailed ground investigation.
- Design development and refinement of the preferred route, including opportunities to reduce disruption during construction.
- Further consultation with affected parties, statutory bodies, the A83 Taskforce, community councils and other relevant interest groups.
- Design development of sustainable travel facilities including bus, walking, cycling, wheeling and horse-riding facilities.
- Environmental surveys.
- Identification of the land required for the scheme and preparation of draft Orders.

The **DMRB Stage 3** assessment will conclude with the publication of **draft Road Orders** and an **Environmental Impact Assessment Report**.

The **Road Orders** provide the statutory authority to construct new roads and to improve and maintain Scotland's roads. The **Compulsory Purchase Order** will define the extent of land required to construct, operate and maintain the scheme.

## Comments and feedback

Transport Scotland welcomes your comments and feedback on the preferred route.

Comments can be made via the online feedback form.

Comments can also be sent via email to: [a83@transport.gov.uk](mailto:a83@transport.gov.uk)

Alternatively post to:

**A83 Access to Argyll and Bute Team**,  
Transport Scotland, George House,  
2nd Floor, 26 Hanover Street,  
Glasgow, G1 1AD



## Further information

If you would like to contact AWJV, details for their stakeholder team are:

**Tel:** 0131 316 8293    **Email:** [A83@wsp.com](mailto:A83@wsp.com)

**By post:** Atkins WSP Joint Venture, 110 Queen St, Glasgow G1 3BX

All of the information presented in this leaflet is available on the virtual exhibition room:

[pinpointcloud.co.uk/  
accesstoargyllandbuteA83](https://pinpointcloud.co.uk/accesstoargyllandbuteA83)

Transport Scotland will consider your comments and feedback to help inform the development and assessment of the preferred route, and all submissions will be shared with our consultant as required. We may also use your submission to inform future reports or public documents related to this activity.

If you choose to provide contact details with your submission, Transport Scotland will only use these details to keep you updated with the progress of this project. Your personal data will be deleted in line with our records retention and disposal policy (available at [gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-records-management-plan-2/](https://gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-records-management-plan-2/)). You can opt out of receiving updates from Transport Scotland at any time by contacting the project team using the above contact details.

The provision of contact details is optional and your comments will still be considered if provided anonymously. However, Transport Scotland will be unable to respond to your submission if you choose not to provide these details.

If you want to make a complaint about how we have handled your personal data or exercise any of your rights under the UK GDPR, please contact [dpa@transport.gov.scot](mailto:dpa@transport.gov.scot).



Please take the time to consider the information presented and provide any comments you may have as soon as possible and by 28 July 2023.