



Report to Partnership Meeting –4th February 2011

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A82 UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update to Members on developments regarding improvement of the A82 corridor, and to facilitate discussion and agreement on how the critical improvements to the West Highland and Islands economy can best be enabled by appropriate actions to upgrade the A82 Trunk Road between Tarbet and Fort William.

BACKGROUND

The Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands 2008 – 2022 and related Draft Delivery Plan identifies the A82 between Glasgow, Fort William and Inverness as one of the Partnership area's 3 strategic road corridors, and one which needs significant investment to allow it to fulfil its function as the strategic transport link serving much of the West Highlands and islands.

The HITRANS voluntary Partnership in 2005 commissioned an Economic Appraisal of the route, to quantify the economic benefits that could arise in the West Highlands and Islands as a result of improvements between Tarbet on Loch Lomond and Fort William. This study identified that investment on major improvements over this length of the A82 would realise additional income to the West Highland and Island economy of £463m (discounted) between 2010 and 2039, but a much reduced benefit of £92m (discounted) over the same period for the moderate, or limited, investment option. The Study therefore concluded that the full investment scenario would be the path to follow as it yields substantial economic benefits to the West Highlands and Islands in a cost effective manner.

In parallel with this study Transport Scotland undertook a Route Action Plan for the A82 between Tarbet and Fort William which identified a number of necessary actions including significant investment on specific sections of the route and particularly between Tarbet and Crianlarich, and Corran Ferry and Fort William. These proposals fell some way short of the 'full investment' option as they did not cover the full length of these sections, but did represent a significant commitment beyond the 'moderate' alternative.

A commitment was made by the then Transport Minister, Tavish Scott MSP, in late 2006 to promote two initial schemes on the A82, the Crianlarich Bypass and the Pulpit Rock Improvement looking towards a start on site in 2009/10, following publication of Trunk Road orders in 2008/09.

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) in 2008 subsequently confirmed Governments intention to implement the findings of Transport Scotland 'Route Action Plan' although with no firm additional programme commitment by Ministers beyond that previously made to complete

Crianlarich Bypass and Pulpit Rock in the programme up to 2012, prior to the period covered by the STPR.

Trunk Road Orders were issued for the Crianlarich Bypass in September 2009 and for Pulpit Rock in September 2010. It is understood that a number of Objections have been raised on each of the proposals, and in particular, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, as the local Planning Authority has raised an objection to Pulpit Rock.

HITRANS has continued to work with all stakeholders towards the development of an integrated and strategic approach to improving the A82 and in particular towards ensuring that all planned works on the A82 over the period covered by the STPR are co-ordinated and form part of the eventual outcome, to endeavour to ensure optimum use of resources in delivering a fit for purpose outcome to which all stakeholders can commit.

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