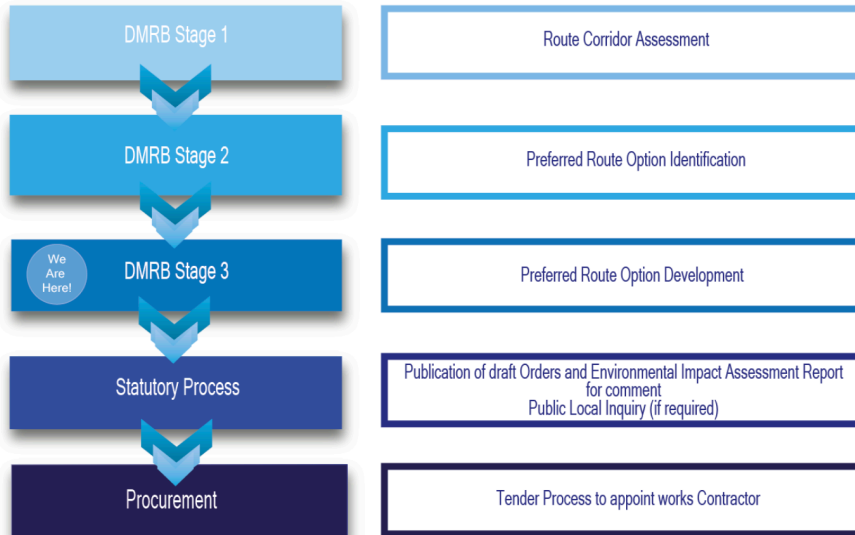


route option for this vital section of the Trunk Road network which serves as the principal artery for much of the North and West Highlands and Islands.

In October 2021, Transport Scotland published details of their proposals for upgrading this section of the A82 via an online Story Map. The proposals are at Stage 3 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) assessment process which involves the detailed design of the preferred route.



A82 Tarbet – Inverarnan: Stages of Scheme Development

HITRANS Response

HITRANS welcomes the Transport Ministers' recent commitment to upgrading this key strategic route and delivering the improved journey times, road safety and resilience of the strategic network that the upgrade will deliver.

Following completion of the DMRB Stage 3, it is hoped that Transport Scotland will be in a position to commence the statutory processes as soon as possible with the publication of the draft orders through to procurement and then implementation.

Due to the constraints of the local topography, the preferred route largely follows the line of the existing road corridor though to help improve the alignment the scheme moves away from the existing A82 at a number of locations.

Recognising the challenges and cost of undertaking improvements on this section, HITRANS and its member Local Authorities have previously stressed the need for the proposed upgrade of the section between Tarbet and Inverarnan to be fit for purpose for the next generation if not beyond. We therefore welcome that the design standard adopted for the final design is for a 7.3m carriageway plus hardstrips and a segregated cycleway on the shoreside of the trunk road. It is essential that the final scheme progressed reflects the nationally strategic function of this route.

A link to the StoryMap supporting the consultation can be found at the following link. <https://bit.ly/3E1W0fc>. In the absence of physical public consultations, this online overview of the project provides an excellent user friendly illustration of both the assessment process and the final proposed design including a video fly through and more detailed continuous plan of the full 17km corridor.

In responding to the consultation, we are proposing to submit a copy of the letter attached in **Appendix A** of this report. This response answers those questions of relevance to our Organisation but also highlights seeks to highlight our key priorities in relation to the scheme.

RTS Delivery

RTS Delivery
Impact - Positive

Comment – This work supports RTS Strategic priority enhance regional connectivity.

Policy
Impact - Positive

Comment –

Financial
Impact – Neutral

Comment - There are no direct funding implications for HITRANS resulting from this report.

Equality
Impact –neutral

Recommendation

1. Members are invited to approve the HITRANS response to Transport Scotland's consultation on the Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme attached in Appendix A to this report.

Report by: Neil MacRae
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 12th November 2021

Appendix A



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4 November 2021

Dear Sir / Madam,

HITRANS RESPONSE TO A82 TARBET TO INVERARNAN – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the proposals for the A82 Tarbet and Inverarnan scheme.

We welcome both the Transport Ministers recent commitment to upgrading this key strategic route and the online proposals for the final scheme. The information provided within the consultation highlights the urgent need to upgrade this most constrained 17km section of the A82 which serves as the primary corridor serving much of the North and West Highlands of Scotland.

These communities rely on the A82 for almost every aspect of their economy, be it the transportation of freight, public transport, visitors and their own local access to key services as well as Scotlands largest city. This section which is only 40 miles from the centre of Glasgow is currently not fit for purpose with hgv's or coaches unable to pass each other without mounting the verge at several locations.

We therefore welcome the proposals for the final scheme included within the consultation. The proposed solution for a 7.3 m carriageway plus hardstrips together with a segregated active travel route on the shores of Loch Lomond present an opportunity to deliver a transformational improvement for all users.

These proposals will help tackle the documented road safety issues affecting this section. They will also help address multiple other issues affecting the route including; dramatically improving journey times and journey time reliability; significantly reducing driver frustration; improving the resilience of the trunk road network on the West Coast by reducing the impact of enforced closures from poor drainage, vegetation and flooding which currently affect the route which itself is the diversion for the A83 Trunk Road when the Rest and Be Thankful is impassable.

The online proposals which underlay the existing A82 corridor on the plan for the proposed upgrade illustrate how much the alignment of the corridor will be improved, in particular at the constrained sections at the 'seven bends' section North of Inveruglas. In addition the new accommodation of a segregated active travel corridor on the

shores of Loch Lomond will open up the area to walkers and cyclists for the first time. This obviously raises the issue that the active travel route will come to an abrupt end at the scheme extents but we recognise the need to start somewhere and we will support efforts to extend the route at either end so it forms a continuous safe active travel network.

We also welcome the improved connectivity to public transport the scheme will offer at Ardlui with improved access to the rail station and bus laybys at Tarbet. It is difficult to identify the exact detail of other layby provision from the online plans but we feel there should be additional bus laybys next to existing development at Inveruglas and Loch Lomond Holiday Park.

HITRANS also commends the sympathetic approach taken in designing the scheme given the topographical constraints. While this section of the A82 follows one of Scotlands most scenic stretches of trunk road there are very few opportunities for road users to enjoy the surrounding environment regardless of mode. The proposals for new laybys will offer welcome viewpoints and stopping locations for HGV's and the new layout and alignment will dramatically improve vistas over Loch Lomond.

The consultation seeks views on the timescales for delivering the scheme given its interrelationship with the A83 and also how the phasing of the 17km upgrade should be prioritised. HITRANS is of the view that Transport Scotland should ensure that there is a single governance structure overseeing the delivery of both the A82 and A83 upgrades. This will help ensure that the phasing of the two projects are complimentary and any conflicts between the implementation programmes for the two scheme are resolved.

HITRANS would support the commencement of the statutory processes for the A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme at the earliest opportunity.

We recognise the significant challenges in delivering the project given the length of any diversion routes. We support the principle of restricting construction where possible to Oct-Easter period. We also support overnight closures as a means of extending the construction period and reducing the project delivery timescales and think that as with Pulpit Rock scheme the public will recognise the short-term impact for long term gain. Good communication as with previous schemes will ensure that this support is maintained.

Identifying the sections which should be prioritised within the programme is challenging. Having reviewed the most recent proposals we feel there is a strong argument to support progressing those less challenging sections first so that the length of route where delays are experienced can be reduced more quickly by progressing the easier to deliver sections first.