



A82 Management Strategy

Background

Following the successful consultation exercise carried out on the A82 Management Strategy over the summer months with key stakeholders a series of public “drop in” events was organised in a number of communities in the Great Glen. These were planned following advice taken from Highland Councillors and Northern Constabulary with the main aims of these events being to:

- aid widespread awareness and understanding of the timber harvesting operations required within the A82 corridor within the Great Glen.
- outline the constraints and complexities that make the A82 Project a significant challenge and undertaking.
- raise public awareness of the need for traffic management during timber harvesting operations.
- raise public awareness of the opportunity to comment about the long term harvesting plans within the A82 corridor.
- raise public awareness (particularly in Lochaber) of the forthcoming harvesting at Glen Righ and the likely increase in traffic disruption.

The Events

The events were held in Ballachulish, Fort William, Invergarry, Fort Augustus, Invermoriston and Drumnadrochit and run by Alex Macleod (A82 Project Officer). These events had displays which included maps of the forest areas, photographs showing the harvesting challenges and work methods. There was also a display which included photographs of work completed to date at Glen Righ; this display included images of the work undertaken to remove the boulder (RC4) in December 2011. Visitors were offered copies of the A82 Management Strategy and the consultation response and also asked if they would sign a “visitors book” and leave some comments and feedback.

A number of staff were on hand to talk to the people about the A82 Project and how the work might impact upon them and to that end Alex Macleod was assisted by staff from Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District (FD), Lochaber FD and also Transport Scotland and Scotland Transerv. The support shown by Transport Scotland and Highland Councillors during the preparation and running of the events was much appreciated.

The events were publicised in several Forestry Commission (FC) press releases, A82 Operations Website & Twitter account, advertised in articles in the Press & Journal, Lochaber News and Oban Times and posters were given to each affected community council for placement in their area.

A82 Drop In Events Report

The Feedback Received

The events were reasonably well attended in comparison to public events of a similar nature run by the FC. Feedback was generally positive with the vast majority of visitors understanding the need to carry out harvesting, the challenges involved with the work and that a degree of traffic disruption was inevitable as a result.

Actual comments received included:

"A sensible long term plan for a serious problem"

"Pleased to have the opportunity to hear of the work programmes"

"Informative maps – thanks"

"Very informative – we agree the work must be carried out"

Other useful feedback was more specific and raises issues that the FC should aim to address during the delivery of the work:

"Local notifications of road closures please"

"Concerned about the visual impact of clearfelling along tourist route"

"Traffic, water supplies, landslip & erosion all seem to be in hand but please keep us informed"

"Harvesting warning signs are sometimes left up long after your operations have finished"

Summary and Next Steps

In summary the public engagement exercise can be considered a success and the "drop in" events have achieved what they set out to do. Local communities have been given the opportunity to look at and to comment on the harvesting plans and general public awareness of the forthcoming harvesting has been raised. The events were also attended by a number of both Highland and local councillors who have been positive and supportive throughout.

However the recent community engagement must be looked at in the context of the long term nature of the A82 Project and of the past years work at Glen Righ which has not brought about sustained periods of intensive Traffic Management. To that end the recent exercise should be considered as the initial part of what will be an ongoing and long term process of communicating with local communities and business the specific operational plans for the A82 work. It may also be worthwhile to hold a couple of public "wash-up" meetings upon conclusion of the Glen Righ works in 2015/16 to canvass public views and to consider lessons learnt which can be taken forward into future communication exercises.

A82 Drop In Events Report

Appendix A – Locations and Dates of the “Drop In” Events

Invermoriston Hotel, Invermoriston
Thursday 25th October 12 noon to 5.00pm

Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus
Thursday 25th October 5.30pm to 7.30pm

Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry
Monday 5th November 12 noon to 7.30pm

Ballachulish Village Hall, West Laroach, Ballachulish
Tuesday 6th November 10.00am to 7.30pm

Alexandra Hotel, The Parade, Fort William
Thursday 15th November 12 noon to 7.00pm

Glen Urquhart Public Hall, Blairbeg, Drumnadrochit
Monday 26th November 12 noon to 8.00pm

A82 Drop In Events Report
