

# **DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL AND THE SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**

## **WRITTEN SUBMISSION**

This response is submitted on behalf of Dumfries and Galloway Council and the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership. SWestrans published the Regional Transport Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway in 2008, with significant input from partners including Dumfries and Galloway Council.

The Council and SWestrans would endorse the general comments made by the Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships, responding to this consultation, in respect of the main infrastructure and policy obstacles to the free flow of freight in Scotland, improvements to grant schemes, and EU initiatives.

In terms of improvements to rail, road, air and sea freight routes, we believe that the following projects included within the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan would be of specific benefit within Dumfries and Galloway:

- Construction of a new road between Dumfries and Lockerbie to offer enhanced connectivity to Central Scotland
- Undertake further study to review possible extension of railway line to Cairnryan

We are also keen to see further improvements to the A75 and A77 to maintain competitiveness of the freight routes from Cairnryan to Northern Ireland in comparison with routes from English and Welsh Irish Sea ferry ports. There is poor road access to the ports of Cairnryan and Loch Ryan Port, particularly on the A75 and A77, recognised in the inclusion of a targeted programme of measures to improve links to the Loch Ryan Port Facilities from the Trans European Network within the Scottish Government's 2008 Strategic Transport Projects Review.

Given that the ports are in competition with Heysham, Fleetwood and Holyhead for Irish Sea traffic, there is concern that freight traffic, particularly from the North of England, may choose to use more southerly ports, resulting in reduced workload for the Loch Ryan ports.

Projects identified within the STPR include physical works aimed at providing safer overtaking opportunities such as 2+1 sections, climbing lanes and overtaking lay-bys and improvements to the operation of junctions around Dumfries. We recognise the progress in recent years with construction of the Dunragit Bypass and improvements at Hardgrove / Kinmount. In addition, the villages at Crocketford and Springholm, with speed limits of 30mph are now the only communities on the "Euroroute" between Cairnryan and the English Channel ports, requiring freight traffic to reduce speed for a distance of 3 miles. As these roads comprise elements of international routes (land and sea) between Ireland and Europe, they should be eligible for funding from any relevant European funding streams,

Dumfries and Galloway Council and SWestrans are currently working with East Ayrshire Council and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport on reviewing the capacity and constraints on the A76 Corridor, with a report anticipated by the end of the 2014/15 financial year, which may highlight further opportunities for improving the flow of freight from, to and through our areas. The existing A76 5 Point Action Plan concludes:

Further upgrading of the A76 is needed to:

- Improve overtaking opportunities.
- Improve the reliability of journey times.
- Reduce the number and severity of crashes.
- Reduce the environmental impact of traffic on communities.
- Promote tourism, social and economic growth.
- Improve strategic transport links to the Former Coalfield Regeneration Area.

The action strategy would improve connectivity to:

- The major housing development areas in Mauchline, Cumnock and Nithsdale.
- The Cumnock town centre regeneration area.
- Upper Nithsdale.
- Tourism opportunities at Drumlanrig Castle, Ellisland Farm, Dumfries House, Barony A Frame and Crawick Artland and enhance job opportunities and economic growth in the Former Coalfield Regeneration Area.

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