Further to your letter regarding Petition PE1610, which is before the Committee I would like to offer the following response to the points raised.

The petition calls for dualling of the A75 along its whole length from the A74(M) to Stranraer and I would firstly like to set-out a few details in connection with the current status of the A75. The A75 is approximately 159 kms (of which approx. 8 kms are existing dual carriageway with a similar length which offers two lanes in one direction to allow overtaking.

The trunk road links the A74(M) at Gretna with Stranraer and the ports on Loch Ryan (via the A751) from which ferry services operate to Northern Ireland. Traffic Flows vary along the route between the A74(M) and Loch Ryan, and typically range from 14,000 - 16,000 vehicles per day between A74(M) and Dumfries to 6,500-7,500 vehicle per day on the A75 Southeast of A751.

Since 2008 accidents on the A75 corridor have continued to reduce, except for a slight rise in the 2013 and 2014, of which 34% were involving a Goods Vehicle. This is higher than the national average of 21% and reflects the use of the A75 by HGV traffic to the ports at Loch Ryan. The committee may also wish to note that the A75 is also part of the European route E18 which runs from Craigavon in Northern Ireland to Saint Petersburg in Russia.

The Scottish Government recognises the important part that the A75 plays in the road hierarchy in Dumfries & Galloway and through Transport Scotland it has maintained and safely operated the A75, this is demonstrated by the investment of £50 million in six new roads schemes and a spend of £60 million on road maintenance, since 2007. Transport Scotland also continually monitors the performance of the trunk road network and identifies where accidents occur, with a view to targeting road improvements where they are most likely to address safety issues. The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) published in 2008, gave thorough consideration to the strategic transport infrastructure needs of Dumfries and Galloway. STPR was the first nationwide, multi-modal, objective led and evidence based review of the existing performance and future requirements of Scotland’s national strategic transport networks. It examined the issues and the future performance of the route and recommended an on-going programme of localised improvements along the A75 corridor and with the connection (A751) to the Ports at Cairnryan, rather than full dualling of the route.

As noted in your letter the Dumfries & Galloway Transport Summit was held on the 22 August. Together with Deputy First Minister John Swinney and Transport Minister Humza Yousaf, attendees included local politicians and members of Dumfries & Galloway Council, along with representatives from transport and port operators, business groups, the Scottish Rural Parliament, the Third Sector and other local stakeholders. This ensured a focussed discussion took place about the role of transport and associated infrastructure to support the economy and communities in Dumfries & Galloway. The Transport Minister also took opportunity to meet representatives from “Dual the A75” with which I believe the petitioner is affiliated,
immediately prior to the summit during which they put forward their concerns and proposals. The meeting was a productive one and the representatives also attended the summit that followed and were able to contribute to the wider discussion.

At the end of the summit, the Minister for Transport and the Islands confirmed that a draft report on the proceedings of the summit would be published. It is available on the Transport Scotland website. I have provided a link to the report: [http://www.transport.gov.scot/report/dumfries-galloway-transport-summit-aug-2016-draft-report-9281](http://www.transport.gov.scot/report/dumfries-galloway-transport-summit-aug-2016-draft-report-9281)

We are now looking for further comments from members of the public and other stakeholders across Dumfries & Galloway and the rest of Scotland, into the transport issues affecting the region, with a final version of the report scheduled for publication by the end of the year. The draft report, lists a number of comments raised during the summit related to the A75. The final section concludes with a list of 13 action points, two of which are directly connected to the A75, these are:

1. Transport Scotland will prepare a Springholm and Crocketford village traffic management study (the A75 passes through both of these villages); and

2. Progress on key road improvements, including improvements to the A77 south of Girvan, linking to Cairnryan Ferry hub and the A75 and improvements to connect Dumfries and the A74(M), will be considered in the forthcoming reviews of the National Transport Strategy and the Strategic Transport Projects Review.

While attending the summit on the 22 August, that Mr Yousaf announced that Transport Scotland will further assess recommendations for strategic transport infrastructure priorities in Dumfries and Galloway and the rest of Scotland as part of an update to the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR). This will follow the review of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) and allow consideration of how to better connect Dumfries and Galloway with its links north and south through a variety of road and rail interventions.

To conclude, the “Dual the A75” campaigners have raised their concerns directly with the Transport Minister and have the opportunity to raise their views as part of the Dumfries Transport Summit engagement process. In response, Mr Yousaf announced a review of the STPR and Transport Scotland will consider the options for the A75 corridor as part of that review. As both reviews of the NTS and STPR are currently in the early stages of planning it is not possible to give a firm date for conclusion of this work at this point in time. However I am happy to provide an update on the timetable for the reviews once they are available.

I hope that the Committee will find this response helpful in their further consideration of the Petition.

Yours sincerely

Alison Irvine

Head of Strategic Transport Planning