The A75 is an absolutely vital trunk road for the economy of Dumfries and Galloway and is long, long overdue being upgraded so that it is a route that it is fit for purpose.

Stretching from Stranraer to Gretna, the route serves thousands of passengers every day but all too often these journeys for our locals, visitors and businesses are ponderous and slow due to a lack of dualling over the course of the A75.

The lack of upgrading is strangling the potential huge investment that would be open to Dumfries and Galloway from businesses if the transport links were significantly better than they currently are.

At the moment, the journey times are simply far too long for businesses wishing to maximise the potential of our stunning region due to vehicles being involved in traffic jams or travelling at slow speeds along the A75.

While vehicle usage is going to increase, having a dualled route would have a very positive effect on cutting journey times which is what people are looking for on modern roads. Being caught in traffic jams is also a problem when people are looking to use our emergency services, in particular our hospitals with people ending up late for appointments or being stuck behind ferry traffic on their way to Accident and Emergency.

It is astonishing that a route which serves the vital port of Cairnryan which brings millions into our economy through links with Belfast and Northern Ireland hasn’t yet been dualled when it is common place to have ports and capital cities linked by dual carriageway roads.

The Scottish Government are also investing heavily into dualling the major A9 route and while that is welcome, it isn’t fair that Dumfries and Galloway could yet again miss out on having one of its vital routes dualled in favour of a city scheme, especially when £800m of extra capital funding is going to be given to the Scottish Government over the next five years.

Our transport network is facing huge challenges across the region whether it be rail, road or otherwise in the coming years and decades. By dualling the A75 we open up new possibilities for businesses and tourism which is so vital to the rural economy.

It could well be the catalyst for other major road improvements in the area which would help businesses, including the M74 corridor.

The case for dualling the A75 is overwhelming and the petitioner’s campaign has been hugely admirable.

I hope that the loud voice from the community and out with the area on the petition will be heard and that plans to dual the A75 will be pressed ahead as a matter of urgency.