Scottish Government Letter of 14 December 2016

Thank you for your letter of the 29 November asking for confirmation of the timing of the update of the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), in connection with the considerations of potential upgrades to the A75.

We are committed to a collaborative review of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) and of the STPR within the current parliament by giving stakeholders and communities across Scotland, a greater say in influencing the development of transport policy and services at local, regional and national level. To undertake the review of STPR, there needs to be clearly defined set of strategic transport objectives; these will be assessed and defined as part of the above NTS review.

We are in the process of establishing plans for how we propose to work with and engage stakeholders as we take forward the NTS review building on the work of the 2015 refresh. We are keen that organisations and the public have a number of opportunities to engage in the NTS review throughout the process. We propose to take forward some early engagement between now and spring 2017 and to build on this with wider engagement in the latter half of 2017 and into 2018. This will feed into formal consultation likely to take place in 2018. Our early engagement will be focused on seeking information and responses on stakeholders’ views of the overarching issues and aspirations for transport as we look forward for the next 20 years or so.

The first part of this early engagement was the Dumfries & Galloway transport summit, following which a draft report on the proceedings was published on the 19 September. Transport Scotland are currently considering the responses to the draft report and the final report is scheduled for publication by the end of this year. The draft report contains a list of 13 action points, two of which relate to the A75, the first “Transport Scotland will prepare a Springholm and Crocketford village traffic management study (the A75 passes through both of these villages”). The study report is currently under consideration by Transport Scotland and it will be shared with the local communities in January 2017. The study will explore what can be done to further improve driver behaviour for the people living there, building on the previous work which has had a positive impact in reducing vehicle speeds in the villages.

The second is, “Progress on key road improvements, including improvements to the A77 south of Girvan, linking to Caimryan 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”. The final Dumfries & Galloway summit report will form part of the evidence base needed to support both reviews.

Work on the review of STPR is currently in the early stages of planning and it is not possible to give a firm date for conclusion of this work at this point in time. However, once an outline timetable for STPR development is available I would happy to provide an update to the committee.