While welcoming the Scottish Government's review of the National Transport Strategy, there are a few points in regards to the A 75 which I feel need to be addressed.

Although I myself was unable to attend the Transport Summit held in Dumfries, having spoken to many who were in attendance, the general consensus was that nothing new was offered and in fact the same statements regarding the A75 were made which have been being made by successive administrations over many years. The timescale being talked about ,where we will be in late 2018 at the earliest before we hear what, if anything, the new National Transport Strategy has to offer, may be an attempt to once more put the issues of the poor transport infrastructure of the South West into "the long grass". The concerns of the populace of Dumfries and Galloway is clear, with a growing movement of several campaign groups on the issue of transport infrastructure. With regard to the Dumfries - A 74(M) link, SWestrans made a case for and detailed plans to dual the A 75 from Dumfries to the M74 at Gretna in 2009, plans which were summarily dismissed by Transport Scotland at the time. A Southern Dumfries bypass was also dismissed in the past in favour of the current northern route which is now close to capacity and will be even more congested when the new Dumfries & Galloway Infirmary opens at the end of this year. The new hospital will also bring increased traffic from the west with the inevitable centralisation of more services.

As is becoming more apparent the Loch Ryan ports are facing increasing competition with figures showing that Cairnryan may have already lost its position as the UK's second busiest port (after Dover) to Holyhead and with the recent news that the Seatruck service from Heysham to Ireland has encountered the biggest increase in Ferry Traffic of any of the UK-Ireland ports following the opening of the new link from Heysham to the M6. This news brings into focus the urgency of the situation that the Scottish Government report and timeline seems not to take into account.

Another thing that does not seem to be taken into account is the unique nature of the A 75 when it comes to eligibility criteria. The very nature of the A75 belies its importance. When seen on a map the A 75 is a route between Stranraer and Gretna, neither of which are large population centres.

However in reality the A 75 is not only the main arterial route for the majority of Dumfries & Galloway, it is the road connecting Belfast to the rest of the UK and indeed is a major connection between 3 of the nations of the UK. As such the feeling is that it deserves to be treated as such and be a connection fit for purpose and fit for the 21 st century.

The other thing that the response does not take into account is the socio-economic, aspirational and visionary aspect, where at present there is dire need for regeneration in the west of the region; A forward thinking plan for upgrading the A 75 to a modern transport link would be the best way to attract business and investment to the area and to promote an increase in tourism that could drive further regeneration and job creation. Previous examples such as the M77 extension to
Kilmarnock. The Borders Railway, the aforementioned Heysham-M6link and the upgrade of the M62 in England would appear to back this up.

In closing I feel that the response from the Scottish Government offers nothing substantive and has no sense of urgency towards the developing situation in the South West of Scotland when it comes to badly outdated transport links and the opportunities that could arise from the modernisation of the A75 route.