

PE1657/D

Stena Line submission of 19 September 2017

Stena Line is one of Europe's leading ferry companies with 36 vessels and 20 routes in Northern Europe. Stena Line is an important part of the European logistics network and develops new intermodal freight solutions by combining transport by rail, road and sea. Stena Line also plays an important role for tourism in Europe with its extensive passenger operations. The company is family-owned, was founded in 1962 and is headquartered in Gothenburg. Stena Line is part of Stena AB, which has about 15 000 employees and an annual turnover of over £3.5 billion.

Stena Line is the largest ferry operator on the Irish Sea, offering the biggest fleet and the widest choice of routes between Britain to Ireland including Belfast to Liverpool and Heysham, Belfast to Cairnryan, Dublin to Holyhead and Rosslare to Fishguard routes, a total of 228 weekly sailing options between Britain and Ireland. Stena Line also offers a direct service from Rosslare to Cherbourg with three return crossings a week.

Stena Line has been able to play its part in helping to maintain a connection between Scotland and Northern Ireland which goes back over 150 years. In 2011, Stena Line invested £80m in the development of a new port and terminal building at Loch Ryan Port (Cairnryan) and as such plays an important role within the Loch Ryan area not only as the owner/operator of the UK's third largest passenger gateway at Loch Ryan Port but as one of the largest employers in the region. The 27-acre port is one of the most modern port facilities in the UK and heralded the start of a new route between Scotland and Northern Ireland, which will be serviced by two new ships, Stena Superfast VII and Stena Superfast VIII, the largest ferries ever to sail between the two countries.

Stena Line has been lobbying successive Scottish Governments over recent years for road improvements in the area and while there has been some progress over the years more needs to be done if the infrastructure investments such as Loch Ryan Port are to realise their full potential which is why projects like the A77 are so important.

If one looks around at other ports in the UK that have attracted significant investment to help their road accessibility, there are obvious examples of this including £125m M6 Link Road at Heysham and the £500m A55 upgrade for Holyhead Port, the results have been impressive in terms of volumes, overall travel time and road safety. The concern is that over time, there is the real prospect that more and more freight trade in particular will gravitate to these and other ports at the expense of Loch Ryan if the current poor road infrastructure situation remains unresolved. Stena Line is therefore resolute in its call to have the A77 upgraded as well as consideration being given to the A75. A relatively 'low cost' improvement here could for example be the introduction of a 50mph speed limit for HGV's, similar to the project which is currently being trialled on the A9. These main arterial routes to and from Loch Ryan are crucial to the current and future well-being of the people and economy of South West Scotland. With the completion of other major Scottish infrastructure projects, it's now time the A77 (and A75) become THE priority.