

PE1657/R and PE1610/S

Petitioner (PE1657) submission of 18 September 2018

We have found the information returned from Transport Scotland (TS) to have three key flaws.

Firstly, the basis of the methodology, while we are unable to respond to the data used as we are unable to source the data used by TS. The NRTF information used by TS contains growth factors which differentiates between cars, light goods vehicles or heavy goods vehicles. In its own submission, TS recognises the uncertainty of this information. The 'Historic Traffic data' used the scenario that the NRTF data which best fits, is the low growth model.

We are asking for greater clarity about the information used to determine this statement, in that it is not so much about volume of traffic but the amount of HGV's using the route. We note that a 4.8% growth was accepted for the period of March 2012 to March 2018. This growth reflects the information provided by the two ferry operators on the Irish Sea corridor in respect of the methodology used. We would ask if TS has any comparisons that they could draw upon between the A77 Maybole bypass and the A737 Dalry bypass, as we see this as of significant importance. The statement issued by TS says:

"The new road will be a key driver in improving economic and employment opportunities in the area by providing better journey time reliability and enhancing connectivity. It will also improve safety by taking traffic away from unsuitable roads" 5 July 2017¹.

These are the key features we submitted in our original Petition and would have expected these to be factored in to the methodology used for assessing the A77 as was for the A737? Indeed, the previous Transport Minister, Humza Yousef is on record stating on the 22 May 2018, and we quote:

"The A737 Dalry Bypass, which is being constructed by contractor Farrans Roadbridge Joint Venture will encourage, improved economic and employment opportunities through more reliable journey times for motorists and businesses along the length of the A737. In addition, the Dalry Bypass will help separate local and strategic traffic, leading to improved safety for both rural road users and communities"²

As we put to the then Transport Minister at our meeting in November 2017, we consider that the design for the Maybole Bypass is flawed and given the safety concerns, that the project could lead to accidents. We have asked at subsequent meetings with TS and through emails to them that they reconsider the design. To date, they have not responded.

¹ <https://planetradio.co.uk/west/local/news/four-bidders-invited-tender-dalry-bypass>

² <https://news.gov.scot/news/charging-ahead-with-dalry-bypass>

Furthermore, from TS publication on 5 July 2016, they further recognised the need for improvements to the economic and employment opportunities, better journey time reliability and enhanced connectivity to support the A737 Dalry Bypass, and we quote from the TS publication:

*“The new road will be a key driver in improving economic and employment opportunities in the area by providing better journey time reliability and enhancing connectivity. It will also improve safety by taking traffic away from unsuitable roads”*³

Yet, there is no comparable statistics or survey that would backup similar improvements to the A77 carried out by TS. We would go further and draw attention of the Petitions Committee to the A96 Hardmuir to Fochabers scheme which is of comparable structure and distance between Ayr and Stranraer on the A77 where the Cabinet Secretary Keith Brown said:

*“The Scottish Government has given a clear commitment to dual the A96 which will see delivery of around 88 miles of upgraded road between Inverness and Aberdeen, a huge task but one which we are relishing. Duelling the A96 requires careful, in-depth planning and design so that we can deliver the right scheme and help tackle congestion, make journey times more reliable and, crucially improve road safety”*⁴

We again would draw parallels between the A9 and the A77 :

*“The A9 dualling programme will upgrade 80 miles (129 Kilometres) of road from single to dual carriageway. Transport Scotland’s £3billion programme is designed to deliver economic growth through improved road safety and reliable and quicker journey times, as well as better links to pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities”*⁵

Whilst we would not compare the A77 with the Aberdeen Western peripheral route or the A8/M73/M74 improvements, we do have **similar objectives in that we want improved journey times, reliability, access to markets and improved connectivity**, as is identified in the AWPR press release document. ‘Big Weekend draws to a close’^{6 7}

All of the above highlight the fact that we are the ‘Ignored’ and the ‘Forgotten Corner of Scotland’. This is even more apparent when we read the Scottish Draft Budget-Infrastructure, Investment and Cities document dated 2013-14 which clearly demonstrates that the only outstanding project from a list of 10 is the Maybole bypass on the A77⁸. More up to date spending on strategic roads currently show as:

³ <https://planetradio.co.uk/west/local/news/four-bidders-invited-tender-dalry-bypass>

⁴ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/updated-options-for-a96-hardmuir-to-fochabers-scheme-to-go-on-public-display/>

⁵ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/programme-details/>

⁶ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/awpr-s-big-weekend-draws-to-a-close/> And

⁷ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/m8-m73-m74-motorway-improvements/projects-details/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2012/09/7829/2>

-A737 'The Den' £5million, now updated to £9million

This is further highlighted by the report from The Audit Commission-Annual Report 2015⁹

What compounds this matter further, in an A77 Maybole bypass Progress Statement from The Scottish Government, the then Transport Minister stated:

*“Following award of the construction contract, work is expected to get underway on the main construction by the end of 2018. This announcement marks another significant milestone towards delivering a bypass for the town of Maybole and comes hot on the heels of ground investigation work which got underway earlier this month. The Scottish Government remains committed to the Maybole Bypass and recent works will enable work to press ahead in the New Year to bring much needed relief to the Maybole community as well as improving journey time for long distance road users.”*¹⁰

All these delays and prevarications are further exacerbated by the fact that the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon did not include the A77 South of Ayr in the recent 'Plan for Government Announcement' despite it being included in the SNP Manifesto for road investments for the South of Girvan.¹¹ The First Minister's actions do not reflect the question asked by Adam Ingram, MSP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley-SNP, *“To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will list the road improvement schemes on the a77 south of ayr and their completion costs since 1999”* and subsequent answer from 21 June 2011.

Regarding our previous point where we have referred to The South West Scotland Transport Study, this appears to have been further delayed, as the previous Transport Minister told the petitioner that the study would start in April 2018, to complete and publish by the end of 2018. Despite continued assurances from T.S., there have been no approaches or communication of when the petitioner could meet with the AECOM group staff. Again, it is my view that this reinforces the view that we are the 'Forgotten corner of Scotland'¹²

I have been continually frustrated by the process of seeking and securing meetings or responses from TS this has meant putting significant time and resources into researching the information used in this response. as highlighted in the 'National Transport Strategy Refresh-Table of delivery against 2006 NTS commitments which gives important information about progress. It would have been useful to have a similar quality of information to assist with the petition as it moves ahead.¹³

⁹ AUDIT SCOTLAND-PROJECTS

¹⁰ [HTTPS://NEWS.GOV.SCOT/NEWS/A77-MAYBOLE-BYPASS-PROGRESS](https://news.gov.scot/news/a77-maybole-bypass-progress)

¹¹ SNP MANIFESTO

¹² [HTTPS://WWW.TRANSPORT.GOV.SCOT/MEDIA/10213/NATIONAL-TRANSPORT-STRATEGY-REFRESH-TABLE-OF-DELIVERY-AGAINST-2006-NTS-COMMITMENTS- 0.PDF](https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/10213/national-transport-strategy-refresh-table-of-delivery-against-2006-nts-commitments-0.pdf)

¹³ [HTTPS://WWW.TRANSPORT.GOV.SCOT/PUBLICATION/NATIONAL-TRANSPORT-STRATEGY-NTS/](https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-nts/)