

PE1657/YY: A77 Upgrade and PE1610/BBB: Upgrade the A75

Petitioner written submission, 14 December 2025

This is my response to the Cabinet Secretary's latest response to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee. The South West Scotland is feeling like it's the forgotten, ignored, neglected, deprived corner of Scotland. This is despite the STPR2 hints to improve the South West trunk road network. This framework has been extremely slow to deliver, sat on or held back by almost as many Transport Ministers as bypasses the A77 needs.

Action has been watered down by total ineptitude, and diluted further by total waffle and inaction by successive Cabinet Secretaries and First Ministers since the petition was lodged in 2017. It's not a 1950s Bewitched sitcom where Endora can click a finger and it's all gone away, we in the very South West get that. Then they all try to use the desperately needed bypass at Maybole that was first designed in the 1930s. That action was just the sticky plaster when open heart surgery is required on the A77.

The A77 is important to the Scottish economy. All goods totalling circa £10m per day from Scotland to Northern Ireland from the M8 industrial corridor have to travel on the A77 to the Ferry Ports at Cairnryan. This makes the A77 one of the most important trunk roads in Scotland for goods travelling to and from Northern Ireland. The A77 also links 4 major cities - Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast and onward to Dublin making the A77 the most important connectivity between Scotland and Northern Ireland for all aspects of the transport of goods and tourism.

The data we have is from the ferry companies and South West Transport Alliance indicates that around 1.75m passengers, almost 500,000 cars, and 400,000* freight vehicles on an annual basis go through the North Channel ferry routes.

*This is five times more than CalMac handles across all its routes. Does anyone in Scotland need a gentle reminder of that ferry fiasco? When Transport Scotland was involved in that, it was producing STPR2. The question is, can the Scottish taxpayer trust its robustness or reliability to do the STPR2 properly, considering it could squander so much of taxpayers' money on the commissioning of new ferries for Calmac, without robust questioning and checking? I would seriously ask the Committee to bring that into the consideration process going forward.

So the A77 road should be a Scottish Government priority, you would think! But it clearly is not. No allocation of budget, or any clear plan to ask the UK Government for additional funds to improve connectivity with other parts of the United Kingdom. At one time these projects on the road could qualify for European help with funding. So the Scottish Government has the civic duty to ask the UK Government to seek funding for such a strategic infrastructure. This road serves not only serves Scotland and Northern Ireland but also the ROI thus the European Union.

Since the dawn of the Scottish Parliament the ferry operators P&O and Stena Line have invested in the routes from Cairnryan roughly to the tune of £422m. On the other hand, the Scottish Government in the two roads that service the ports at Cairnryan investment has been a paltry £83m. The UK Government has given the Scottish Government an additional £5m to do a feasibility study for the last two villages on the other road that goes to England while the A77 from Ayr to Stranraer, a largely un-engineered road, is left to crumble. The layout can go back to the 1700s, it is not fit for the 21st century, so not designed to withstand 44 tonne HGVs pounding it.

In 2011 the late Alex Salmond, when First Minister, opened Stena Line's new state-of-the-art port facility and boldly promised in front of Northern Ireland's First Minister that this project deserved the 3 Rs Rail, Road, and Regeneration. , This was all while Northern Ireland's First Minister had already delivered to the North Irish Ports at least dual carriageways. In the A77's case within it first 28 miles it has been down to a single lane under traffic control lights for more than 3000 plus days and counting. For the last ten years the A77 has had traffic control at various sites between Cairnryan and Girvan that have been there because of landslides or there are risks of landslides happening. However it doesn't get highlighted like the A83 Rest N' Be Thankful by the media. The local users have christened the A77 The Patch-It and be bloomin' grateful! The A77 is the shortest route to our European colleagues in the Republic of Ireland from Scotland and is one of the most modern ferry ports in Europe. We understand that he the current problem site is set to go into 2025 before the carriageway is a proper single carriageway again.

The A77 is the slowest trunk road in Scotland with the average speed from Ayr where the dual carriageway stops and a road for donkeys begins to go towards the port is 37.8 miles per hour. It's no wonder because you have 6 villages and a town to go through with urban speed limits. That's travelling south in the space of 56 miles. When travelling north from the village of Minishant, the last urban limit to the next village on the A9 before another urban speed restriction in 266 miles.

Road closures by year:

- 19 - 2020
- 67 - 2021
- 66 – 2022
- 50 – 2023
- 167 – 2024 (up to September)

No action from Scotland's Government and no detailed plan for the future, just a vaguely half hearted Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 plans that's been sat on by various Cabinet Secretaries or held back. The Economy of Scotland is being held back!

Capital infrastructure investment in the South West of Scotland's trunk roads over the past decade has been insufficient and the A77 has been reduced to a single lane carriageway for 3000 days out of the possible 3652 days of those years.

I ask the Committee to travel the A77 in a larger vehicle from Ayr to Stranraer, preferably a ride in a 44tonne wagon, to appreciate the ask and the urgency of the petition. Bring the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister with you I know enough coach companies or haulage companies who would be very eager to assist you with that!