

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

13th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Wednesday
28 September 2022

PE1610: Upgrade the A75 and PE1657: A77
upgrade

Note by the Clerk

PE1610: Upgrade the A75

Lodged	13 July 2016
Petitioner	Matt Halliday
Petition summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to upgrade the A75 Euro-route to dual carriageway for its entirety as soon as possible.
Webpage	petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1610

PE1657: A77 upgrade

Lodged	19 June 2017
Petitioner	Donald McHarrie on behalf of A77 Action Group
Petition summary	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to dual the A77 from Ayr Whittlett's Roundabout south to the two ferry ports located at Cairnryan, including the point at which the A77 connects with the A75.
Webpage	petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1657

Introduction

1. The Committee last considered the petitions at its meeting on [8 September 2021](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport.
2. The petition summaries are included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of these petitions is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received new responses from the Scottish Government, the petitioner for PE1657, Donald McHarrie, the petitioner for PE1610, Matt Halliday and Finlay Carson MSP at **Annexe C**.
4. Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition webpages ([PE1610](#) and [PE1657](#)). All written submissions received on the petitions before May 2021 can be viewed on the on the archive webpages ([PE1610](#) and [PE1657](#)).
5. Further background information about the petitions can be found in the SPICe briefings.
6. The Scottish Government's initial position on these petitions can be found on the petition archive webpages ([PE1610](#) and [PE1657](#)).

Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe A

PE1610: Upgrade the A75

Petitioner

Matt Halliday

Date lodged

13 July 2016

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to upgrade the A75 Euro-route to dual carriageway for its entirety as soon as possible.

Previous action

A previous petition was running on Change.Org and an action group has been set up on social media to fight for this cause. A meeting was arranged with Joan McAlpine MSP who recommended lodging a petition with the Scottish Parliament.

Background information

The A75 is not only the road to Stranraer and the ferry ports of Cairnryan but, as such, is also the road to Belfast, one of the UK's capital cities.

Due to the current design of the road and previous fact, it is a road where many differing vehicle types are thrown together often at highly differential speeds. The volume of HGVs in convoy travelling east when the ferries dock combined with the 40mph limit for those vehicles causes very high level of congestion upon the A75, a volume of traffic that was never envisioned when the current road was designed.

Throw in even slower moving agricultural vehicles, faster moving traffic, such as cars and motorcycles, and a large amount of tourist traffic unfamiliar with the vagaries of the A75, and it is easy to see how frustration can brew carelessness on the road. A change to dual carriageway would help negate the causes of this while also preventing a conflict between vehicles travelling east with those travelling west.

For the same reasons, the local economy would benefit by being more accessible to tourists, commerce and improved links with Northern Ireland and England. This is not to mention the benefits to the local populace in improved safety and reduced journey times, especially when there is more centralisation of health services to Dumfries resulting in journeys of up to 90 miles for some in the west of Dumfries & Galloway.

I have come to these conclusions as a regular user of the A75 and I know for a fact that I am not alone in holding these opinions.

PE1657: A77 upgrade

Petitioner

Donald McHarrie on behalf of A77 Action Group

Date lodged

19 June 2017

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to dual the A77 from Ayr Whitlett's Roundabout south to the two ferry ports located at Cairnryan, including the point at which the A77 connects with the A75.

Previous action

The A77 Action Group has been formed on Facebook and we have now had a number of public meetings. The group has contacted Mr Brian Whittle MSP for advice on how to go forward with a petition.

Background information

The A77 is the main arterial route from the central belt to the south west of Scotland. On the way it also provides connections to a number of towns and villages. It also provides the road connection between our capital city Edinburgh via Glasgow to Northern Ireland's capital city Belfast and the Republic of Ireland's capital city Dublin beyond that. So from an economic perspective, as well as a cultural view point, the A77 is a strategic road, nationally and internationally.

The line of the road often reflects its design history harking back centuries to the days of coach and horses. From Edinburgh to the notorious Whitlett's roundabout at Ayr the journey is relatively straight forward on motorway or dual carriageway. From this point south the road not only narrows to a single carriageway, it also passes through eight communities all with urban speed limits ranging from 40mph to 20mph. It has very few dedicated safe passing places to overtake slower moving vehicle types that use this road.

We as a country need to build on the investments already implemented in the area, such as the £77 million, spent on the A77 & A75 from 2008 (the A77 improvements being the Symington and Bogend Toll improvements relating to safety improvements and on sections of dual carriageway north of Ayr). The design work and planning of Maybole's bypass that is scheduled to commence August 2018 is also included in this figure.

Existing pressure on the road

- The pulse of vehicle numbers associated with the HGV traffic coming off the ferries results in long convoyed queues in a platoon effect travelling along the road, making passing these vehicles dangerous.
- There is a large proportion of tourist traffic, which is unfamiliar with the snaking, twisting nature of the road.
- There is a mix of slow (agricultural vehicles) and fast-moving traffic (cars and motorcyclists), which can cause delays and lead to driver impatience in the form of rash and often near fatal errors of judgement.
- In some places the road width does not allow two HGVs to safely pass each other without one giving way to the other.
- The road width also does not allow road work to be carried out in a safe way without closing the road (eleven closures occurred for this reason in 2016/17), which results in lengthy diversion routes on even more unsuitable roads.
- There is increased traffic travelling south via the A77 south of Ayr to get to the North Channel ferries operating out of Loch Ryan as a result of the withdrawal of the Troon to Larne ferry service.

Potential benefits of an upgrade

The National Planning Framework Strategy Map unequivocally demonstrates the economic and social significance of both A77 and that of A75 to Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom in equal measure.

The local and national economy would benefit by being more accessible to tourists, commerce and improve the links between Scotland and Northern Ireland and its neighbour and EU country the Republic of Ireland.

The A77 Truck Road had nine road closures south of Whitlett's roundabout at Ayr in 2016/17 alone due to road traffic incidents. If the road was wider and upgraded, then these closures would be less frequent, so the communities along the diversionary routes could be left without the thundering traffic disturbing their idyllic settings.

The bypasses and improvements we seek are not that dissimilar to the project benefits of the A737 Dalry bypass in that these upgrades it would serve to separate local from strategic traffic. This in turn would encourage improved economic & employment opportunities through better journey time reliability for both motorists and businesses along the length of the A77.

An independent study commissioned by South Ayrshire Council stated that the benefit to Scotland of events, such as the 145th Golf Open that was held at Royal Troon, was £110m as a whole. The world famous golf course and holiday complex at Turnberry owned by President Trump is being starved of such events due to the lack of investment in the road structure. The action called for in the petition could therefore have positive economic implications for Scotland as a whole.

Conclusion

South West Scotland needs a fit for purpose road infrastructure in order to sustain and grow with the greater community of Scotland, the United Kingdom and within whatever relationship it has with Europe.

The A77 Action Group is not alone in holding these opinions, as many people use the A77 every single day for work, or for social and domestic purposes, and have supported this campaign.

Annexe B

Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1610 and PE1657 on 8th September 2022

The Convener: For our next continued petitions, we are joined by Emma Harper MSP and Elena Whitham MSP. We also have comments from another colleague, but I will come to that shortly.

PE1610, by Matt Halliday, calls on the Scottish Government to upgrade the A75 Euro route to dual carriageway for its entirety as soon as possible. PE1657, by Donald McHarrie, calls on the Scottish Government to dual the A77 from Ayr Whitletts roundabout south to the two ferry ports located at Cairnryan, including the point at which the A77 connects with the A75.

During the Public Petitions Committee's consideration of the petitions, it took evidence from the Minister for Transport and the Islands in 2017 and received 31 written submissions. Our meeting papers summarise a number of written submissions, including the submission from the then Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, which was raised at the previous consideration of the petitions. The written submission gave details of investments that were made in the A77 and A75, the second strategic transport projects review in the Dumfries and Galloway area and the parallel study that engaged with stakeholders and considered the rationale for improvements to transport in south-west Scotland.

The United Kingdom Government has also committed £20 million to developing projects that were identified in the interim report of Sir Peter Hendy's union connectivity review, including upgrading the A75 between Gretna and Stranraer.

In his most recent submission, Donald McHarrie, the petitioner for PE1657, points to research that was conducted for the strategic transport projects review that highlighted that the current A77 is behind the current required standard. The submission notes that, in the week commencing Tuesday 24 August, there were two fatalities and two casualties between the A77 and the A714 diversionary route, causing the south-west corner of Scotland to be cut off to traffic to the north. The petitioner is calling for the committee to hold a round-table session in Stranraer, as discussed by the session 5 committee, so that members can hear at first hand about issues that are raised in the petition.

Finlay Carson MSP hoped to be able to attend, but he is currently convening another parliamentary committee. He therefore sent the following:

“I have been a long-term advocate for improvements to both the A75 and the A77 and I have given evidence at the Committee on numerous occasions stressing the need for action and not further delay.

The Conveners Group met the First Minister on 13 November 2019. The First Minister said that she would respond to the petition in writing and that she would use PE1610 as a case study to describe the process that the Government goes through to reach decisions. Despite repeated requests for information from the committee, no response as far as I am aware has been received.

In light of the current continuous problems particularly on the A77 at Carlock Wall, I would like the Committee to consider a Stakeholder meeting as previously suggested. It should include the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and The Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and Transport Minister.”

I will now come to our two colleagues who have joined us. They might want to add to our deliberations before we consider what steps to take next.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Thank you, convener, and thank you for having us at this morning’s committee meeting to discuss this important petition.

Like my colleague Finlay Carson, I have asked numerous questions in the chamber on this matter, and we had three debates on it in the previous five-year session. The issue is of great interest to people in the south-west of Scotland, given that the A75 and the A77 are the main arterial routes connecting us to the European Union, and I absolutely agree that they need to be improved.

I am therefore interested in finding out how we are going to move forward with the petition. I am aware that the south-west roads review has fed into the strategic transport review, which is due to be released imminently, and I am keen to see what improvements the Government will be committing to.

When Michael Matheson became cabinet secretary with responsibility for this issue, he visited Stranraer to meet members of the A75 and A77 action groups, and we were able to hear from him on the matter. From freedom of information requests that have been put in on this matter, we are aware of challenges with regard to safety, collisions, fatalities and so on, and we have tried to use that evidence to make the argument for investment in these roads. We also know how many lorries are on the roads when ferries arrive and depart.

I am keen to see what the committee can do to chivvy the Government along into taking action and making improvements on both roads.

The Convener: Thank you for that. Do you have a view on the suggestion that was made in session 5 about having a round-table discussion on the matter?

Emma Harper: I know that the transport secretary met petitioners here in Parliament and also at the meeting in Stranraer that I organised and to which all colleagues were invited. I wanted to make it clear that this is not a political issue; instead, it is about safety, transport and access.

If publication of the strategic transport review is imminent, I think that it would be worth while hearing about that first instead of having another round-table meeting. I know how concerned the transport secretary is right now and I know that he is aware that people in the south-west of Scotland, too, have a high level of concern.

The Convener: I also welcome to the meeting Elena Whitham, who is engaging with the committee for the first time. What are your thoughts on the petition?

Elena Whitham (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP): Good morning, everyone, and thank you, convener, for the opportunity to address the committee.

As the very new MSP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, I found it imperative to speak in support of the petition's desire for significant improvements to the A77, as the majority of the single-lane section of the route lies within my constituency boundaries. Given how often I travel the route, I know first hand of the frustration at being stuck behind a convoy of heavy goods vehicles or at the delays and lengthy diversions via rural road infrastructure that are caused by scheduled road repairs or serious accidents, which can, in some cases, result in agony and heartbreak with the report of another fatality. Sadly, as the convener has said, we have in recent weeks lost yet more lives along this stretch of road, and I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families involved.

I also fully understand that the geography of the stretch south of Ayr is as challenging as it is beautiful. At places, the road hugs the coast and offers the most spectacular views, but at times it also offers the most frustration, with driver impatience causing rash decisions that sometimes have serious consequences. Several years ago, while travelling the route to my caravan with my five-year-old son in the car, I experienced a near-crash when a driver frustrated by a slow-moving lorry decided to overtake and I found myself hurtling head-on at his vehicle. Thankfully, the driver managed to nip back in front of the HGV and I kept control of the car, but 17 years later, I can still recall those feelings of helplessness and terror.

Like the folk of Maybole, I am delighted with the progress of their much sought after and anticipated bypass, and I know what benefits they will see from this huge infrastructure investment. Currently, large HGVs crawl through the town mere feet from pedestrians and buildings, which makes it difficult for residents or visitors to enjoy the historic town. The bypass has enabled a multimillion-pound town centre regeneration project to kick off. I know that, along with greatly improved air quality, which is massively important, the town will see a renaissance of town centre vibrancy.

Many other small towns and villages, from Minishant to Kirkoswald and from Girvan to Ballantrae, see their daily lives impacted by the high volumes of HGV traffic en route to the port of Cairnryan. It is imperative that improvements are made that will mean that tourism, trade and commerce continue unimpeded but local lives are protected and communities are nurtured.

I fully understand that we need to await the publication of the strategic transport projects review 2 recommendations. I hope that we will see significant investment in the south-west—that is long anticipated and much needed. All options need to be on the table, including moving freight on to rail and off the roads, dualling, bypasses and additional crawler lanes. In this new, Brexit era, the A77 and the A75 are the gateway routes to the European Union, and we cannot overestimate their importance.

The Convener: Thank you very much. Would colleagues like to make contributions? In the first instance, there is certainly an argument for keeping the petitions open. What further actions might we take?

Tess White: Four MSPs—Emma Harper, Elena Whitham, Finlay Carson and Sharon Dowey—talk about safety, transport and access, which Emma Harper mentioned. It is disappointing that we have not seen progress, despite numerous requests. Progress needs to be made on the issues.

David Torrance: Like the convener, I think that we should keep the petitions open. We should write to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport to seek an update on the progress of strategic transport projects review 2 and request an indication of when phase 2 outcomes will be announced. We can also ask him about his views on the United Kingdom Government upgrading the road. I would like to wait until we get written submissions back to see whether we should go ahead with holding a round-table meeting.

The Convener: I was struck by Emma Harper's advocacy of holding off a round-table discussion until we see a little more about where things are going. However, we can still reserve the right to come back to that. We should be clear that we will write to the UK Government about the A75. Do committee colleagues agree to that?

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): I am generally supportive of the idea of dualling the national trunk road network for safety reasons. That is sometimes conflated with environmental concerns, but the safety implications of dualling on trunk roads are critical.

Elena Whitham raised a wider point about rail substitution. A wider assessment of the ability to move freight from the ports at Cairnryan and Stranraer on to rail is worthy of consideration. What is lacking, certainly on the west coast, is a port strategy generally. There needs to be consideration of the utilisation of some of the Firth of Clyde ports further north, such as the port at Greenock, for moving freight on

to the motorway network. That would help to relieve pressure on the Ayrshire trunk road network.

I think that all these things are considered in isolation, so perhaps it might be worth writing to the relevant ministers to ask for this to be considered in the strategic transport projects review. We need to look at things in a wider sense, because there is no consideration of ports infrastructure in the west of Scotland and how that is managed. It is, in effect, a free market, but that has significant public costs that are not properly accounted for.

The Convener: Okay. Thank you. That probably strayed slightly beyond the parameters of the petition, but I can see its relevance to it. Obviously, we are coming to the issues as a new committee, and they are continuing petitions. I do not know whether those issues were previously explored or whether Mr Sweeney has identified issues that we could seek further opinions on from the Scottish Government. However, we can do that.

I should clarify that we will ask the Scottish Government—not the UK Government—for a view on the UK Government’s proposals in relation to the A75.

Are members happy with that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C

Scottish Government submission of 31 August 2022

PE1610: Upgrade the A75 / PE1657: A77 upgrade

Thank you for your letter of the 10 September 2021 to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport regarding PE1610: Upgrade the A75 / PE1657: A77 upgrade that the committee is considering. In addition, thank you for your patience, as an administrative issue has unfortunately caused a delay in your letter being actioned. I have been asked to respond given that both routes have been subject to review as part of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2).

I would note that both petitions have been ongoing for a number of years and I am aware that previous evidence provided by Scottish Ministers and Transport Scotland officials has pointed to the fact that STPR2 would outline what future infrastructure investment was required for both the A75 and A77. I am therefore happy to report that on the 22 January 2022 the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport reported to Parliament the publication of the reviews' outcomes in the form of 45 draft recommendations. Included within the review is Recommendation 40 – *Access to Stranraer / Cairnryan* which highlighted proposals for improvements for both the A75 and A77, together with the need to consider further, future improvements to Stranraer railway station. Specifically, STPR2 recommends that safety, resilience and reliability improvements are made on the A75 and A77 strategic road corridors, in turn supporting placemaking opportunities. This would include, but is not limited to enhancing overtaking opportunities, widening or realigning carriageways and improving junctions.

To assist the committee in their further consideration of both these petitions, it may be helpful to note that the South West Scotland Transport Study (which formed the STPR2 - Initial Appraisal: Case for Change for the South West Region), published in January 2020, did not recommended taking forward the option for full dualling of either the A75 or the A77. Instead an option for targeted road improvements on both routes was recommended to progress for further appraisal as part of STPR2. This was on the basis that this option supported the regional

transport objectives, whilst more proportionately meeting the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy set out in the National Transport Strategy and our commitment to delivering transport projects which will help us to create the conditions for an inclusive and net zero emissions economy.

I would further note the appraisal process for STPR2 has considered the performance of all options against transport planning objectives, which are aligned to our National Transport Strategy priorities. STPR2 in coming to the conclusion that it has, has also considered Value for Money based on performance against these objectives and the five Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance Criteria. This is an important consideration given the current and future pressures on public finances.

With regard to your second query, STPR2 did consider surface access and the necessary infrastructure requirements to Scotland's major ports and airports, including those on the west coast. It also recommends an investment programme in port infrastructure, including power supplies, to support STPR2 recommendation (24) renewal and replacement of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) and Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) vessels including progressive decarbonisation by 2045.

However, I believe your specific query refers to investment in ports along the South and West coast of Scotland in order to attract further freight movements to the Island of Ireland and thereby reduce the number of HGV movements on the A77. In this wider regard, consideration of port infrastructure was "out of scope" of STPR2. This was on the basis that, ports in Scotland are independent statutory bodies – each governed by their own local legislation – and are deemed commercial entities. Therefore, the Scottish Government has no say in the day-to-day running of their business, nor can it dictate business decisions made by a company on how to best utilise its resources. This remains the responsibility of the port authority.

The final point that you have raised is in connection with the A75 and the Union Connectivity Review (UCR). I would note that the UCR was published in two steps, with an interim report presented in March 2021 and the final report on the 26 November 2021.

I must firstly highlight Scottish Ministers' concerns that the UCR was established without consultation with the Devolved Governments. Their

position is that some of the recommendations in the UCR final report present a risk of encroachment into Scotland's devolved settlement.

Although the UCR's findings recommends improvements for the A75, a shared view by Scottish Ministers, the trunk road network in Scotland is and must continue to be the responsibility of Scottish Ministers. The UK Government (UKG) must respect the devolution settlement and accept that it is for Scottish Ministers to determine their priorities and provide funding in line with established budgetary mechanisms for Scotland.

A £20m Union Connectivity Development Fund was also announced at the same time as the UCR interim report was published. This funding is not for delivery, it is for development – which Scottish Government were already doing. The UCR offers funding support for the A75 and Transport Scotland officials are in discussion with their UKG counterparts to understand how this may be accessed. Scottish Ministers are prepared to discuss funding with the UK Government, but need assurance that this would be additional funding and not top-sliced and repackaged existing monies.

In conclusion, I hope that I have been able to clarify the position with respect to the Committee's queries and with the publication of the STPR2 draft recommendations have clearly signalled the Scottish Government's intent to upgrade both routes. The 12 week consultation on all 45 draft STPR2 recommendations closed on the 15 April and Transport Scotland is now considering all of the responses received, including a number from stakeholders in the South West of Scotland. This analysis will inform the final reporting and investment delivery plan which is scheduled to be published later this year. Taken together, these documents, when published, will then provide the evidence base behind the future strategic transport investment priorities for Scotland for the next 20 years, whilst informing future Scottish Government spending reviews and budgets.

Petitioner submission of 4 September 2022

PE1657/HH - A77 Upgrade

The A77 Action Group want to make this further submission drawing the Committee's attention to a number of recent aspects that relate to this Petition.

The Petition was first before committee on the 14th September 2017. Our Petition mentions the landslide at Marchburn, 1 mile north of Cairnryan which happened in 2014. Since then, the Marchburn landslide, the A77 has been constantly under traffic management control with the major A77 trunk road being reduced to a single lane. This first landslide took 4.5 years to rectify. A further landslide then followed at Lendalfoot with the trunk road reduced to single lane for 8 months, taking us up to the landslide prevention work at Carlock Wall in 2019. Today of writing Carlock Wall has been more serious than the other 2 landslides and was attended to by Transerve and currently by Amey as the A77 Trunk Road contractors. We draw the Committee members' attention to the fact that Transerve commenced the work on Carlock Wall in 2019 with geo-engineering works to pin and stabilise the land, with a completion date of summer 2020. This was delayed because of COVID with an updated completion of Spring 2021.

Amey has succeeded Transerve as the A77 Trunk Road Contractor and undergone a review of the geo-engineering. The geo-engineering works was the subject of yet further delays on the advice conveyed to A77 Action Group at a meeting we had with Transport Scotland and Amey representatives that the initial engineering works was not substantial to stabilise the land. Members of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee may want to seek what the reasons are for the continual delays, what extra cost has this put on the works, and examine reasons for any failure in the engineering works with any additional expenditure required?

The reason we draw the number of landslides to the Committee's attention, the road being reduced to single lane being the subject of traffic control since 2014, and continual delay after delay to completion dates is to compare the A77 against the A83. In doing so, this is to compare the capital expenditure being allocated to the A83 at the Rest and be Thankful as against the major A77 trunk road that is the arterial route between Scotland, Northern Ireland and onward into Europe through Southern Ireland. This route contributes greatly to the local and Scottish economy being it serves the only sea crossing on the Irish Sea between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

It is our contention that the A77 would have been better served being re-aligned at Carlock Wall which, in our view, would have been more cost effective. We say this as the topography of the ground at Carlock Wall could be the subject of further landslides in years to come, as many suspects as possible.

In saying that, we would draw the Committee members attention to what is being considered as a possible resolution to the road problems at the Rest and be Thankful. The links below illustrate in detail what is being considered by way of tunnelling into the hill to create an alternative route with expert opinion being sought from Norway into road tunnelling. Given the landscape of the road between Cairnryan and Ballantrae, could the same consideration be given to the A77 with the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee seeking clarification of the Scottish Government's Transport Minister as to why this is not a consideration for the A77 on a cost effective and efficient long-term basis.

Our last point would be in drawing attention to the cost benefit of having the town and villages on the A77 being served by a bypass. This not only would make the environs of the town and villages much safer, but it would bring prosperity with inward investment as is demonstrated at Maybole. Already they are seeing a massive increase to the construction industry with a new school being built, 300 and more private and social houses and a new supermarket coming to Maybole. This is in comparison to seeing shops closing and boarded up on our High Streets. We fully understand why the other towns and villages would be envious of Maybole but we prefer they have the opportunity to share in such prosperity that a bypass can bring to small towns and villages on a main arterial route.

We hope the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee will consider this further submission along with the links to further information on advice being sought from Norway experts on re-alieneing roads by tunnelling into the landscape.

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/49429/consultation-report-main-report-and-appendices.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/A77ActionGroup/photos/pcb.2207333766092907/2207333556092928/>

<https://www.facebook.com/A77ActionGroup/photos/pcb.2207333766092907/2207333559426261>

<https://www.facebook.com/A77ActionGroup/photos/pcb.2207333766092907/2207333562759594>

<https://www.facebook.com/A77ActionGroup/photos/pcb.2207333766092907/2207333649426252>

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Petitioner submission of 6 September 2022

PE1610/LL – Upgrade the A75

As for submitting further information, I would just like to state that the situation remains the same as before with the same issues arising and that there is further evidence of trade moving away from Scotland to ports in England and Wales, with one company stating that their use of the Cairnryan ports has fallen from 50% to 20% in the past 18 months. They are not alone in this and with some £37bn of freight reportedly travelling along the A75 annually, this is a drastic and worrying reduction.

Again, there has been much interest taken in this issue among politicians in Northern Ireland, which I am sure will become more coherent upon the resumption of the Stormont Assembly. The UK government as well has highlighted the inadequacies of the situation, with its Union Connectivity report recommending that funding should be made available for major upgrades. While I am not naive about the fair amount of political point scoring involved in that announcement and about the Scottish Government's concerns of a "power grab", it would be a failure of responsibility, to this area of Scotland, if all available funding opportunities were not considered and explored fully.

The South West of Scotland continues to be disadvantaged in comparison to other areas with better connectivity and a major upgrading of transport links is essential to encourage investment, to safeguard the ferry links between Scotland & Ireland and to greatly improve the lives and wellbeing of the citizens of Galloway and Ayrshire.

There is a "Green" argument in the current era of the Climate Emergency against new road building, however in the case of the A75 (& A77), I would argue that the Loch Ryan - Northern Ireland link being the shortest crossing, would actually reduce journey times in comparison

with the English & Welsh ports and thus the time that vehicles are creating emissions. Improving the roads would also make it easier to capitalise on this area's natural resources by easing the transportation of infrastructure and hardware required for the exploitation of wind, hydro & tidal energy production. Also in these times of uncertainty as to the cost of living and food security, the short sea crossing is vital to the timely delivery of "just in time" perishable goods, again making the case for investment in the A75 vital.

Finally, a lot is being made by Transport Scotland about investment being made on the A75 in terms of the amount being spent on maintenance, once again I feel the need to point out that similar "investment" is already being made on roads all over Scotland , what is required is the sort of capital investment that is being spent in the A9, the Aberdeen bypass, the A96 , the Forth Crossing and the central belt motorways.

Thank you for continuing to consider and to act upon this petition.

Finlay Carson MSP submission of 7 September 2022

PE1610: Upgrade the A75 and PE1657: A77 upgrade

Regrettably, I am unable to attend today's meeting of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.

Once again, however, can I voice my wholehearted support for the petition PE 1610: Upgrade the A75 and PE1657: A77 upgrade.

As many of you are probably aware, I have raised this issue many times in the Scottish Parliament chamber pressing for this work to be carried out as a matter of urgency.

The A75 and A77 are key strategic routes for the Port of Cairnryan and serve as crucial economic and transport infrastructure links between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and beyond. Yet, despite their

importance, both the A75 and A77 continue to be starved of the investment needed to upgrade these routes to the standard required for key strategic links.

I know both featured in the draft recommendations contained within the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 – but, sadly to date, no final publication has been forthcoming. The outcome of STPR2 must be published as soon as possible and following this investment in the A75 and A77 must come quickly.

The UK Government's Union Connectivity Review highlighted the need for the A75 to be improved and crucially the review and subsequent UK Government response suggested that there was the possibility of additional investment from the UK Government to get this road up to an acceptable standard. It is incredibly frustrating that Scottish Government Ministers have been slow to engage with UK Government colleagues to secure additional funds to upgrade the A75.

The A75 and A77 are both key drivers of economic growth in South West Scotland and beyond. We need the Scottish Government to respond to the need to invest in and improve these routes which has been highlighted not only by hauliers and ferry operators but by the residents of South West Scotland who want to see their fair share of investment in this crucial route. For too long, this part of Scotland has been left behind in transport investment, it is time for the Government to act rectify this.

I would urge the committee to back this petition and provide it with the necessary support and backing it deserves.