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Dear Oliver,

Thank you for your letter of the 29 September regarding transport in Dumfries and Galloway and the successful summit held on the 22 August.

The Scottish Government recognises the important part that the strategic transport network and in particular the trunk roads plays in Dumfries & Galloway and through Transport Scotland it has maintained and safely operated the network. This is demonstrated by the investment of £50 million in six new roads schemes and a spend of £60 million on road maintenance on the A75, since 2007.

The Transport Summit was a first for Scotland and was planned as a focussed opportunity to explore strategic transport issues for the Dumfries and Galloway area. The draft summit report, published on the 19 September, provides an opportunity to members of the public and other stakeholders to read what was discussed and contribute if they wish. I note your comment regarding the two local residents who waited outside the venue and would advise that both myself and Mr Swinney spoke with them before the start of the summit. Subsequently my officials met them at a community meeting held in Springholm on 13 September, thus ensuring that they have had opportunity to make their views known.

In considering the format of the summit, the focus was on strategic transport issues in Dumfries & Galloway and the contribution it makes to the regional economy. Alistair Speedie, Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure at Dumfries & Galloway Council spoke about the importance of their Active Travel Strategy and the part that it plays in the hierarchy of transport in the region. I also understand that SWeststrans, the regional transport partnership are themselves about to commence their own review of their Regional Transport Strategy a key strand of which is active modes of travel. The National Transport Strategy, which I announced at the summit, will set out what kind of transport we want in



Scotland in 20 years' time and how we get there, addressing strategic challenges and realising opportunities along the way.

I fully appreciate the important role that the A75 plays as the most direct route to A74(M) from the ports at Cairnryan and the main route to those acute medical services provided at Dumfries for those living in the west of the region. It for that reason that I also announced at the summit the review of the Strategic Transport Projects Review, this will allow us to consider how to better connect Dumfries and Galloway with its links north and south through a variety of road and rail interventions. This will ensure that we strike the right balance of transport investments in the region and the review will consider options for the A75 corridor between Gretna and Stranraer (including the link to Cairnryan). The Scottish Government's on-going commitment to improving infrastructure in Dumfries & Galloway is also set-out in the recently published "Programme for Government" document.

Finally on the A76, it is worth re-capping why temporary traffic lights have had to be installed. During autumn/winter 2014, landslides occurred on the route which resulted in road closures for the clear up. Following the initial responses, temporary traffic lights were erected to protect road user safety and allow for remedial works to be designed and implemented. There are currently two sets of temporary traffic signals on the A76 between Sanquhar and Carronbridge. One set is in place at Enterkinfoot due to the embankment supporting the A76 showing signs of soil movement in winter 2014, which caused displacement of the road verge and safety barrier. The second set of traffic signals is at Auchensell Pool (south of Enterkinfoot) following the washout of a culvert under the A76 last winter.

The traffic lights at both locations are necessary in helping to allow the road to remain open to traffic and help to protect the safety of the travelling public. The signals are checked daily by Scotland TranServ with settings adjusted as required to minimise delays.

For Auchensell Pool, Scotland TranServ is currently progressing the design of the necessary remedial works, which are expected to be delivered before the end of 2016. At Enterkinfoot, the embankment failure is much more complex, with issues such as the steepness of the slope and access difficulties at the site. Further Ground Investigations (GI) are required before the final engineering solution can be determined, designed and constructed. The programme for the Enterkinfoot GI is scheduled to run from November 2016 to March 2017.

Transport Scotland is currently working with its Operating Company to review these timescales to identify any opportunities to accelerate the programme where possible. Temporary traffic lights will remain in place to ensure that this key route remains open.

I hope you have found this response helpful.

Best Wishes
H. Yousaf
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