



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Keith Brown
Minister for Transport and Veterans

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11 June 2013

The Trans-European Transport Network (TENT-T) Comprehensive Network

Dear Keith

On 31 May 2013, I received a letter from the Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Regional Development regarding the status of the Glasgow to Stranraer rail route. I have attached the correspondence received for ease of reference.

I would be grateful if you could provide me with details of the Scottish Government's position regarding the status of this rail route as part of the Trans-European Transport Network, together with information on any discussions you have had with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive on this matter.

Yours sincerely

**MAUREEN WATT MSP
CONVENER**



COMMITTEE FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jimmy Spratt MLA
Chair to the Committee for
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31st May 2013

Mrs Maureen Watt MSP
Convener to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee
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The Scottish Parliament
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The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Comprehensive Network

Dear Maureen

I refer to the above and to Transport Scotland's recent request for the Glasgow to Stranraer rail route to be downgraded to the Comprehensive Network.

I have attached, for your information, a copy of a letter issued by the Minister for Regional Development in Northern Ireland, Mr Danny Kennedy MLA, to Keith Brown, Minister for Transport and Veterans. You will see that our Minister has asked that Minister Brown review his decision given the strategic and financial importance of this element to Northern Ireland.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you might consider this correspondence at a meeting of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee and agree thereafter to make representations on behalf of the Committee for Regional Development to Minister Brown in order that this key network is maintained.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Jimmy Spratt
Chair to the Committee for Regional Development

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Keith Brown MSP
Minister for Transport and Veterans
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Your Ref:
Our Ref: DRD/SUB/406/2013
Date: 22 May 2013

KEITH

TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK (TEN-T)

I am aware of the ongoing discussions between the Department for Transport in London and the European Commission on the makeup of the TEN-T maps, and in particular the recent request made by Transport Scotland for the Glasgow to Stranraer rail route to be downgraded to the Comprehensive Network.

Whilst, this is a matter for the Scotland to decide on, I feel it is important to highlight the potential impact this downgrade could have on the corresponding connection from Larne to Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Recent feedback from the Department for Transport indicates that should the rail route from Glasgow to Stranraer be downgraded, the Commission will also seek to downgrade the Belfast to Larne rail link. Similarly, should the A77 in Scotland be downgraded, the corresponding A8 in Northern Ireland will also fall to the Comprehensive Network.

Given the focus of funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) on the Core Network, the downgrading of either of these routes to the Comprehensive Network will naturally have a detrimental impact upon Northern Ireland's ability to bid for CEF funding.

Beyond access to funding, the downgrade of these routes will have an impact upon on the connectivity of Northern Ireland with the rest of the UK. The downgrading of these routes will make Northern Ireland dependent upon a connection through the Republic of Ireland for

access to the rest of the UK's Core Network. Therefore, Northern Ireland will, in effect, be disconnected from its Member State's Core Network.

Maintaining a core connection to the Core Network in Scotland and England is a high priority for Northern Ireland. In particular, due to the volumes of freight traffic from Northern Ireland, it is vital that a Core Road Connection is maintained.

Given the evident mutual interests embedded within this issue and the finite time available for this to be resolved, I should be grateful if we could meet or discuss this matter by telephone as a matter of urgency.

I am copying this letter to the Minister of State for Transport, my Executive colleagues and to the Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Regional Development.



DANNY KENNEDY MLA
Minister for Regional Development

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MAY/JM