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From: Bob McLellan [mailto:Bob.McLellan@fife.gsx.gov.uk]

Sent: 13 February 2007 15:56

To: Anne Jolly

Cc: Cllr.Antony Martin; Cllr.Jim Philp; Cllr.Mike Rumney

Subject: Scottish Citylink Inquiry: Notice of Proposal to Accept Undertakings

I have been advised about your current consultation on undertakings.

Scottish Citylink services on the Saltire Cross are important to Fife Council, as they provide regular coach links to points further north. These are the only such coach services, and link Dunfermline with Kinross, Milnathort, Perth, Pitlochry, Aviemore and Inverness. Through connections at Perth, links are provided to Dundee and Aberdeen. Prior to the Joint Venture, there were no Megabus services that stopped in Fife.

In addition, subsequent to the Joint Venture, at the initiative of Stagecoach, Ferrytoll Park and Ride has been added as a stop on cross-border services, providing Fife residents with direct links to Newcastle, Scotch Corner, Sheffield and London.

There are a number of other key points which, although outside Fife, are important to Fife. These include Kinross (easy access from Glenrothes), where the imminent opening of the Park and Ride site will greatly enhance connectivity, and Dundee (easy access from St Andrews and north Fife).

Stagecoach is the major provider of local and interurban services in Fife, and the Council enjoys a positive working relationship with the company, and in partnership we have introduced a number of positive initiatives for transport users, aimed at encouraging modal shift and reducing car use.

Whilst I support the concept a competitive market place, this can only be where the circumstances are right. I believe that the real competitors to Scottish Citylink are the private car and rail services. I am aware of the patronage growth of 41% that the simplified Joint Venture timetable has generated, and in my professional opinion, a significant proportion of these journeys would previously have been made by car.

It is clear in your report that a series of undertakings were offered and were acceptable to the Competition Commission. These undertakings would have protected the travelling public from any monopolistic action by Scottish Citylink, by putting ceilings on fare levels and giving minimum service levels. As undertakings were applied previously in the First Scotrail Inquiry, it seems sensible to adopt them in this case.

I am genuinely concerned that any divestment will, over time, result in reduced service levels for Fife, and I urge you to revisit this decision and require Scottish Citylink to adhere to undertakings.

I am also aware that a significant number of other local authorities on the Saltire Cross network have made similar comments, and feel that you should take full account of this feedback and alter your decision accordingly.

Finally, I am happy for this letter to be posted on your website.

Dr Bob McLellan

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