

Anne Jolly
Inquiry Secretary (Scottish Citylink)
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4AD

13 February 2007

Dear Ms Jolly,

**Scottish Citylink Inquiry:
Notice of proposal to accept undertakings**

I am aware of your current consultation and apologise for any delay in response.

I am the Councillor for the Balloch Ward of Highland Council, and Chair of the Inverness and East Highland Local Economic Forum.

I am aware that you have already received submissions from the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership, and from a number of other organisations and individuals in the Inverness area. Whilst this submission contains a personal view, I support the other representations from this area.

Good transport links are vital to the economic prosperity of the Highlands, and it is vital that the area is well connected to the central belt by quality, affordable public transport services. This helps to maintain and grow tourist trips to the area.

When Stagecoach extended Megabus services to Inverness in Autumn 2004, this introduced affordable transport options for many, and helped to overcome the peripherality and rurality that our location can cause. In addition, the new service resulted in fewer car trips, due to the fast, direct services offered.

When, only one year later, the Scottish Citylink Joint Venture took over Megabus services, it was pleasing that the low fares and fast journeys were continued. I have received no adverse comments about the Joint Venture services.

Councillor Robert Wynd M.C.M.I., M.Inst., T.A.

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In addition, the Joint Venture retained regular stopping services calling at important intermediate points like Aviemore, Kingussie and Newtonmore. The services to these points are effectively lifeline links.

Taken together, from Inverness we have departures every hour to Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow, which is unprecedented and the company should be commended, not required to sell part of the business.

In my opinion, it is vital to the continued economic development of the Inverness City Region, and indeed Highland, area that the Scottish Citylink Joint Venture is allowed to continue in its current form. Any concerns you have can be appropriately dealt with through requiring the company to give undertakings on maximum fares and minimum service levels.

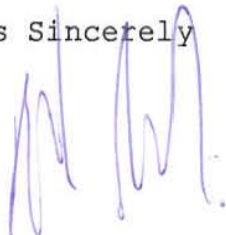
Locally, Stagecoach is a progressive company, with a very modern fleet, attractive network and a growing passenger base. They are receptive to feedback, prepared to try new innovations and always put the interests of the passengers first. This is reaping dividends, with passenger growth across the Inverness network of 8% year on year. I believe their operation would stand comparison with any similar city across the country.

It is clear that the Stagecoach philosophy has carried into the Joint Venture, and I am sure that they will continue to invest and innovate in order to continue increasing passenger numbers, thereby helping to deliver central and local government policies.

In summary, I urge you to reconsider your decision, and adopt undertakings to overcome any perceived problem.

I note that you publish submissions on your website, and I would ask that you publish this also.

Yours Sincerely



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