

DINGWALL
Ross-shire

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

14th February 14, 2007

Dear Ms Jolly,

Scottish Citylink Inquiry: notice of proposal to accept undertakings

I have been advised about your current consultation on undertakings.

As a resident of Inverness, but someone who has only lived in the area for a short time, I have been struck on the peripherally of the area and the distance from the central belt. Inverness is currently a thriving regional centre, but it is some 170 miles from Glasgow and 150 miles from Edinburgh.

It is therefore very dependent on good transport links to maintain and grow its economy, and, crucially, the important tourism sector.

When Megabus introduced services to Inverness in autumn 2004 it brought a sea change in service provision, with fast journeys and affordable fares.

The Joint Venture has continued this, with an unprecedented hourly service from Inverness to the central belt, whilst retaining the very low fares offered. Through clever use of connections at Perth, high frequencies are provided to both of Scotland's main cities, plus intermediate points.

However, due to the rural nature of the area and the distances involved, it is vital that the Joint Venture is allowed to continue in its entirety. The A9 corridor cannot sustain two competing operators, and the strength of the Joint Venture is greater than the sum of its constituent parts.

I have taken time to read your Final Report, and I cannot accept that you had justifiable reasons for not accepting behavioral undertakings. These would have protected customers from changes to fares or service levels, and also ensured that the villages in the Spey Valley continued to receive the lifeline links that the Joint Venture provides.

It is clear that there is widespread opposition from this area to your decision, and it is essential that you listen to that, and vary your decision accordingly.

I note you publish submissions on your website, and I am happy for you to publish this also.

Yours sincerely

Warren Mitchell