

From: Gregor McAbery [mailto:gregor@mcabery.freemove.co.uk]
Sent: 14 February 2007 17:08
To: Anne Jolly
Cc: Bob Hall
Subject: Scottish Citylink Inquiry: notice of proposal to accept undertakings

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

14th February 2007

Dear Ms Jolly,

Scottish Citylink Inquiry: notice of proposal to accept undertakings

I am writing on behalf of Aberdeen Friends of the Earth to express our concerns regarding the Competition Commission's Inquiry into the Scottish Citylink/Megabus operations.

Competition with other modes

The car is clearly the main competitor to the coach network and we are disappointed to note that this has not really been acknowledged. The public transport competitor is clearly the First Scotrail operated rail network. Arguably there is little room in the market for competing coach services on routes serving our smaller cities.

Sustainable Networks

There simply is not the population to fill competing services, and there is no guarantee that the current growth in patronage would be maintained. The Way these routes are branded gives the customer some confidence in the quality of service on offer, and has notably pulled a lot of people out of the driving seat that would never have considered trying traveling by coach. It is essential that we do not punish good practice. Sustainable public transport networks are essential to the local and national economy and the coach has a big part to play in these networks.

Scotland's Backbone

Arguably the coach network is the backbone of Scotland, offering affordable commuting and leisure travel to a great many people. It is ludicrous to imagine that selling off part of that bus network is in any way looking after the needs of the traveller.

Case for Conditions

There may be a case for conditions that prevent any feared competition issue from becoming reality. We would advocate measures that prevented unacceptable rises in the cost of fares, or cuts in services.

The case has not been made that there is any current problem anywhere except in the way that we judge a competition issue in the public transport market.

Climate Change

More climate change emissions are inevitable as the 'trusted brand' is diminished by the proposed sell-off and people will move back to the car. At a time when we are trying to fight climate change it would be nice to think that some common sense could be injected into this process.

The joint venture has given people the frequent, fast and reliable connections that they want. Significant improvements in patronage levels have been achieved with people from all background taking the coach, with many opting to leave the car at home for the first time in years.

Let's keep the joint venture going strong and enjoy the common benefit of less congestion and pollution on the trunk road network.

Regards

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