



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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

12th February 2007

Our ref: CA/8457/PO/BHD
Please quote on all correspondence.

Dear Ms Jolly,

Scottish Citylink Inquiry: notice of proposal to accept undertakings

Your current consultation on undertakings has been brought to my attention.

I am MP for central Ayrshire, but have taken an interest in transport matters throughout my political career. The Scottish Citylink Joint Venture services on the Saltire Cross do not pass through my constituency, but are vital to many in this area, as through changing coaches at Glasgow, they are able to travel to key destinations including Stirling, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, Aviemore and Inverness.

Since Stagecoach acquired their bus operations in the West of Scotland around 15 years ago, I have had regular, productive dialogue with the company. They have been open to feedback and suggestions, and prepared to innovate. At all times, they attempt to provide high quality services that are attractive to customers, and the increased patronage they have seen is testament to that.

Their involvement in Scottish Citylink has resulted in a step change in service provision which contributes greatly to the delivery of local and central government policies, and they should be applauded, not required to sell part of the business.

In my opinion, the real competitor to coach services is the private car. The growth in patronage, which I believe exceeds 40%, clearly demonstrates that they are encouraging passengers from other modes, particularly the

car. Any forced sale of part of the business will only make coach travel less attractive and result in passenger numbers declining again.

I firmly believe that your decision is wrong, and that you should be discussing what undertakings Scottish Citylink can give regarding fares and service levels to overcome any concerns you may have. Undertakings were applied when First were awarded the Scotrail franchise, so there is a precedent that can be followed.

It is my suspicion that your decision has been process-driven, not customer-driven, and I am certain that your required divestment will be damaging to the travelling public and, indeed, to the economy of Scotland as a whole, which is largely dependent on good passenger transport links.

I therefore ask that you reconsider this decision and abort any ideas of requiring a divestment.

I note that you intend to publish submissions on your website, and I would ask that you do so with this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian H Donohoe', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Brian H Donohoe MP
Central Ayrshire