

Co/ Forest Lodge, East Brotherfield
Kingswells, Aberdeen
AB158QN
18 May 2007

FAO : Mr Stewart Stevenson, MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Holyrood, Edinburgh

Dear Mr Stevenson,

Transport Strategy for the North-East

I would like to congratulate you on the SNP's victory and on your nomination as Minister for Transport and Climate Change. This will be an important, interesting and challenging portfolio.

In the run up to the election, myself and a few of our team, were fortunate enough to meet with Mr Salmond at one of his surgeries in Turriff. He gave us over an hour of his busy time to discuss our concerns with the previous Executive's handling of the AWPR issue.

At this meeting he provided us with a few commitments on the basis that he was elected as First Minister which he minuted in a follow-up letter. These were:

- In the interests of open government, to publish all correspondence and documentation relating to the previous Transport Minister's selection process, which the previous administration had refused to provide
- To hold a public inquiry with the widest remit on reviewing options for the AWPR
- To abide by the findings of any public inquiry on this matter
- To not use PFI as the basis for any infrastructure programme

Mr Salmond, who is clearly committed to improving transport for the North-East, also expressed an interest in reviewing tunnelling options which could potentially reduce the impact and improve the efficiency.

I have to admit that on our drive back to Aberdeen we were impressed by Mr Salmond's quick appreciation of the issues and on his desire to find the right solution.

As you move into your new role, I realise that you will have many conflicting priorities and that you will be picking up a number of "botches" from the previous administration. Everyone knows that Mr Scott's proposals for the AWPR were wrong (nearly all the election candidates thought them sub-optimal), however, there is very strong desire for improved transport investment in the North-East. In your own constituency both the AWPR and upgrading the A96 will be matters of high interest (not to mention the Haudagan !).

Before you formulate fixed views on these matters we would like to invite you to make a visit to Mr Scott's proposed route to discuss some of the issues. Mr Scott refused to visit the site of his specific proposals and many in the area became rather disillusioned regarding the lack of openness and transparency of the Scottish Executive.

Road Sense is a group of concerned citizens of the North East who include people in Business, Education, Medicine, Environmental, Farming and many other walks of life. We are a group of concerned, professional people who commit to behaving in a totally respectful and constructive way and our aim would be to help inform you of the serious issues that relate to Mr Scott's specific proposals.

I would also be pleased to have representatives from the AWPR team and/or Transport Scotland at this site meeting as we realise that they have simply been progressing their work under the instructions of Mr Scott. I envisage that this meeting would take 2-3 hours as we would like to view a few specific sites that are of particular concern regarding these proposals.

I would be grateful if you would consider this request with due regard and I also attach for your information a letter that I have sent to all newly elected MSPs. I thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to hearing from you in due course,

Yours faithfully

William Walton

Chairman – Road Sense