

Scottish Secretary visits Belfast to discuss Union connectivity

News story

On his recent visit to the city Alister Jack met businesses to talk about improving transport links between Northern Ireland and the rest of United Kingdom.



On board the Stena Line Belfast – Cairnryan ferry

On a two-day trip [30 March and 1 April 2022], Mr Jack met Stena Line, logistics companies, transport firms, and businesses who transport goods between Belfast and Scotland.

The poor state of the roads on the Scottish side of the ferry link – in particular the A77 and A75 – is an issue highlighted by Sir Peter Hendy in his recent [Union Connectivity Review](#)

Sir Peter was clear that strengthened transport connections between all parts of the UK are vital to maximise economic growth and jobs. He advocated the creation of 'UKNET' – a strategic transport network spanning the entire United Kingdom. Upgraded roads in South West Scotland would be a key part of that network. Sir Peter recommended offering the Scottish Government new funding to upgrade the A75, and encouraged the Scottish Government to improve the A77.

Secretary of State for Scotland Alister Jack said:

Sir Peter Hendy's Union Connectivity Review highlighted the need for urgent investment in the poor roads in South West Scotland. These are not just local roads serving people in the South West of Scotland. They are crucial arteries linking Northern Ireland with the rest of the UK. They are vital for the transportation of goods in both directions, but are currently not fit for purpose.

My meetings in Belfast will help inform the UK Government response to Sir Peter's review. We have been clear that we want to work with the Scottish Government to make urgent improvements to the A77 and A75.

Meeting the Ulster Scots Agency

The Scottish Secretary also met the [Ulster Scots Agency](#) on his visit, to hear about their community and culture. The Ulster-Scots' identity links Scotland and Northern Ireland, with centuries of shared history. Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis joined him for this part of the visit.

Mr Jack added:

It was a great pleasure to meet the Ulster Scots Agency and members of their community. They have a fascinating history and culture, and I was grateful to them for sharing it with me. It was also real a pleasure to hear the very talented young musicians from Campbell College.

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