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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref

Nick Ramsay AM  
Chair, Enterprise & Business Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

15 January 2014

Dear Nick

I said that I would write to the Committee with more detail on the history of the new TEN-T framework and the Welsh Government's engagement in the TEN-T review and development of the new framework.

The Welsh Government has been actively engaged in discussion about the new TEN-T framework since 2010 to ensure that key routes and hubs were included on the Core Network map if they satisfied the Commission criteria.

The Commission published its review of TEN-T in 2010 and included questions to establish whether the TEN-T maps at the time were still valid. Those maps reflected the previous TEN-T arrangements, for which there was only one level of TEN-T and routes were either on the network or not. There was an opportunity at this stage to comment. The Welsh Government advised the UK Government that the maps, which featured Holyhead, were still valid for Wales.

The major change under the new arrangements has been the introduction of two network levels - the 'Comprehensive' Network and the 'Core' Network. All TEN-T routes are now part of the Comprehensive network (which essentially reflects the maps under the previous arrangements) but some are also part of the Core network. The Core Network represents the 'backbone' for transportation within the Single Market and is the strategic priority under the new arrangements and the focus for funding. The comprehensive network feeds into the core.

The TEN-T Regulations define the routes and standards those routes must meet. A companion Regulation on the 'Connecting Europe Facility' (CEF) sets out the financing proposals for the Trans-European Networks.

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Before the final CEF Regulations were published in October 2011, a number of drafts were prepared. From our records, it appears that at least one draft of the CEF Regulations indicated, in an annex of pre-identified projects on the Core Network, that Holyhead was part of a 'Core Network Corridor' from Dublin to the Continent. There were no accompanying maps and there were no specific projects linked to Holyhead listed. As noted earlier, inclusion in a Corridor does not determine eligibility for funding.

The final version of the CEF draft regulation published in October 2011 did not include Holyhead as part of a 'Core Network Corridor'.

It is not clear why a Corridor route through Holyhead was included in an early draft of the CEF regulation but not the final version, but the routing of the Corridors was proposed by the European Commission.

Separately, the Welsh Government's understanding is that the port never met the Commission's criteria for inclusion separately as a Core port.

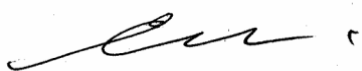
As I reported to the Committee, I have followed this matter up with the Department for Transport. Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Transport advised in his recent reply to me that the UK Government reserved its position on Corridors because of concerns about governance, the potential additional administrative burdens and the net benefits, but did have discussions with the Commission to try and understand the rationale behind the Corridor proposal for the UK and requested that it be applied consistently.

He also confirmed that the final Corridor involving the UK was the Commission's proposal.

I hope the Committee will agree that what is important for Wales is to focus our efforts on making the most of the investment opportunities offered by being on the TEN-T network and securing support for projects in Wales.

Work on this has already started, including liaison with the Commission, and I would be happy to provide an update to the Committee later next year.

Given the wider interest in this matter, I am circulating this letter to all Assembly Members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. ...', located at the bottom left of the page.