

PE1657/W

Councillor Willie Scobie submission of 1 February 2021

First Minister, Alex Salmond, and his successor, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, along with respective Transport Ministers, have failed to deliver the 3 R's (local roads, railways and regeneration) as promised in November 2011.

"It was described as the "start of a new era" when Stena Line's new £80 million port at Cairnryan was officially opened on Friday.

The 27-acre port is one of the most modern facilities in the UK and heralds the start of a new route between Scotland and Northern Ireland, which will be serviced by two new ships, Stena Superfast VII and Stena Superfast VIII, the largest ferries ever to sail between the two countries.

The opening of the new port brings Stena Line's recent investment in the service to a massive £200 million, which also includes the opening in 2008 of the VT4 port in Belfast, and safeguards the ferry link between Scotland and Northern Ireland for the next generation.

Dan Sten Olsson, chairman of Stena Line, said at the event: "Today is a historic day for the people of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"The long term future of this important ferry link between both countries has been secured for future generations and I'm delighted that Stena Line has been able to play its part in maintaining a connection between both countries which goes back over 150 years.

"We have built a facility that will support and stimulate both leisure and freight markets and we are confident that this and the next generation will continue to see ferry travel as an important part of their travel plans."

Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond, who also attended the opening, added: "It is exciting to see how this former brownfield site has been transformed into a 21st century ferry port in less than two years, safeguarding hundreds of jobs at the terminal and ensuring this historic ferry link continues for generations to come."

During his speech, the then First Minister outlined what he called the "three R's" of Scottish Government support.

He told guests from Scotland and Northern Ireland that supporting local roads, railways and regeneration is a key priority for central government.

In addition to highlighting improvements to road and rail service, Mr Salmond also announced the creation of a Scottish Government Taskforce – led by then Infrastructure and Capital Investment Secretary Alex Neil – to support ambitious plans to transform the Stranraer waterfront.

He said: "I am absolutely determined that the Scottish Government will play our part in supporting what is a major investment in the south-west of Scotland. To that end, we will be focusing on three key areas to help make the most of this fantastic new port.

Stranraer Labour Councillor Willie Scobie added: “Alex Salmond and his SNP Government need to be doing a great deal better to serve the people of the South West of Scotland and to come anywhere near to the private investment made by Stena.

“We need the road improvements, regeneration of Stranraer waterfront and the rail service improvements to connect with ferry sailings if the rail line is to be secured.

“These need to be backed up with real financial commitment and not the empty rhetoric that we heard from the First Minister.”

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/official-opening-historic-new-port-2561710>