

PE1223/MMM

**Transport Accessibility and Road Safety Team
Transport Policy**

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Sigrid Robinson
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Date:
16 November,
2015

Dear Sigrid,

Many thanks for the Public Petitions Committee's ongoing interest in Petition PE1223 and Glasgow City Council's evaluation trials of enhanced school bus signage, which have been taking place over 2015.

As you will be aware, Glasgow published its evaluation report today (16 November) and this is available on the local authority's website:

<http://www.gosafeglasgow.com/news/glasgow-publishes-findings-of-school-bus-signage-research>

Transport Scotland is currently considering the details of these findings, which augment those of Aberdeenshire Council from 2010. There is now a particularly mixed evidence-base in relation to the effectiveness of enhanced signs and Transport Scotland wants to ensure we have fully reflected on this before ascertaining the best way forward in relation to this issue.

One of the key factors emerging from Glasgow's findings is that the existing statutory minimum sign is not well-recognised – although they also raise questions as to the recognisability of enhanced signage – and this may be in part to a lack of prominence in the learner driver process and in driver guidance and literature.

The Minister for Transport and Islands has, therefore, written to the UK Transport Secretary requesting measures to raise awareness of the current UK school bus sign. Mr Mackay has asked for this to be given sufficient prominence within the UK Highway Code, where it currently appears on page 117, alongside commercial vehicle danger signs such as 'Oxidizing Substance' or 'Non-Flammable Compressed Gas'. Given these are fairly uncommon signs applicable for specialist freight vehicles, the everyday nature of the school bus sign means it would likely benefit from appearing in a more conspicuous section of the document.

Additionally, it appears the signs that feature in questions for the theory paper in the UK driving test are generally road signs rather than vehicle signs. Whilst this may be understandable, Mr Mackay has queried the proportion of theory papers on which the school bus sign features and for consideration as to whether this is adequate, given the emerging Scottish evidence about current awareness.

There are also a range of filmed video clips showing typical road scenes which are used in the hazard perception section of the driving test and Mr Mackay has asked for clarification on whether the school bus sign features in any of these clips and, if not, whether consideration can be given for its inclusion in future versions.

Additionally, he has again asked the Department for Transport to consider revisiting the restriction on flashing lights on school bus sign, or consider devolving power to the Scottish Parliament on the issue, which would increase the options available for considering school bus signage measures in future.

Glasgow City Council's findings make a welcome addition to the evidence base on the merits of enhanced signage. Yet this is far from unequivocal. As such, Transport Scotland is fully considering all aspects before deciding on the most effective approach.

I am copying this letter to the Petitioner, Mr Ron Beaty, out of courtesy to keep him updated with developments.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Rooney
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