

PE1223/PPP

**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: 2 Feb 2016

Dear Sigrid,

Thank you for your email of 8 January inviting Transport Scotland to submit comments to the Public Petitions Committee (PPC) on PE1223.

Regarding our correspondence to the Department for Transport (DfT) concerning Glasgow City Council's evaluation trials of enhanced school bus signage, a letter from the Minister for Transport and Islands issued to UK Transport Ministers on 12 November. Given the time-lapse, Scottish Government Ministerial offices have been in contact with their counterparts in the UK Government to pursue this and we still await a response, which we are assured is due any time now. Obviously the Scottish Government is hopeful that Mr Mackay's suggestions are met with a positive response.

We note that DfT's latest submission to the PPC intimates that there may be powers open to the Scottish Parliament in respect of vehicle markings and warning beacons due to powers that were devolved last year through a Section 30 Order to allow for legislation to progress on school bus seatbelts. Transport Scotland has taken investigations into the boundaries of the new legal competences transferred to Holyrood. The new powers relate specifically to the description of such vehicles, rather than prescribing technical standards.

Notwithstanding those considerations, it is not clear whether the suggestion relates to permanent features on buses, rather than something which can be attached and removed in the manner of a sign, as was tested and evaluated in the Glasgow trial. Most vehicles used as dedicated school buses in Scotland are also from the commercial passenger fleet – not bespoke vehicles designed solely for the school-run – and therefore signage is used to highlight when children are being transported and removed when they are not. This is quite distinct from permanent features, which would obviously be impractical to change for different journeys, and appear quite different from the original focus of this Petition.

Although Transport Scotland will continue to examine what powers in this area are available to Holyrood following the devolution Order, it may avoid any potential for ambiguity or distraction to make the distinction between signage and permanent features at this stage.

We will keep the PPC updated on any response we receive from UK Ministers regarding our suggestions following the Glasgow school bus signage trials.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Rooney
Road Safety Policy
Transport Scotland