

PE1223/III

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

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Andrew Howlett
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Date: 19
December, 2014

Dear Andrew,

Many thanks for your letter of 14 November regarding Public Petition PE1223 and the Public Petitions Committee's request for further information. I welcome the Committee's ongoing interest on this issue and its willingness to engage with Transport Scotland on how we can all drive improvements.

In relation to the first point raised, my previous correspondence to Committee in October set out some of the details of a previous pilot regarding enhanced school transport signage already undertaken in a rural local authority: Aberdeenshire Council. The Aberdeenshire pilot provided useful and insightful findings in relation to the effectiveness of such signage from the perspective of a local authority operating dedicated school transport contracts within a rural area. This can be seen at:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/transportation/roadsafety/SchoolBusSignsEvaluation.pdf>

This evaluation undoubtedly provides valuable lessons regarding good practice, yet Transport Scotland is keen to build on these findings and ensure that the evidence base is as comprehensive and robust as possible, covering both urban and rural settings. As such, the Glasgow pilot which I outlined in my last letter is being pursued. This evaluation will provide evidence from the perspective of an urban setting, to complement Aberdeenshire's findings, ensuring an evidence base that includes both urban and rural. As such, it would not seem necessary to revisit a pilot in another in a rural area at present.

It should also be noted that we had interest from various local authorities in undertaking the pilot and the primary reason for proceeding with Glasgow was not cost, yet the capacity to undertake such an evaluation and the contribution it would make to the evidence base in this area. I would like to reassure the Committee that preparations for the Glasgow pilot are progressing well and that Transport Scotland is in the process of appointing a contractor to give evaluation support and guidance to the project.

The findings from the evaluation of the pilot will help Transport Scotland and our road

safety partners take future considerations on the issue of school transport signage more widely, in order to more fully discern best practice in this area and lessons for Scotland.

On the second point regarding a previous meeting with Mr Beaty, it is obviously of regret if any petitioner or member of the public who meets with Transport Scotland feels they have not been afforded proper courtesy and consideration, and we will of course take on board the comments made here.

I would like to reassure the Committee that it was felt that the north east location and the specific venue at which the meeting took place would be convenient for the petitioner. This was in no way intended to be seen as dismissive or trivialising of its importance. Transport Scotland has long recognised that Mr Beaty is a committed campaigner in this area who has made a valuable contribution to our efforts to keep children safe on the school journey. As such, we will ensure that all future contact is conducted in an appropriate venue suitable for Mr Beaty and that a formal record of the meeting is taken and agreed with Mr Beaty.

The Committee may wish to note that the Minister for Transport and Islands is due to meet personally with Mr Beaty in the Scottish Parliament on 27 January to discuss his concerns and how we can all work together to make improvements in our vital efforts to safeguard children on their journey to and from the classroom.

I hope this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Thomson
Team Leader - Transport Accessibility and Road Safety
Transport Scotland