

Minister for Housing and Transport
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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



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18 March 2014

Dear David

Petitions PE1098 and PE1223

I write to you today to advise you that I have recently received confirmation of “in principle agreement” to proceed with a Section 30(2) Order from UK Government Ministers.

The Section 30(2) order will devolve powers to the Scottish Parliament in relation to school bus safety. It is subject to scrutiny in the UK and Scottish Parliaments, before being signed off by the Privy Council. It is currently anticipated that this process will be completed in the first half of 2015.

In addition to informing you of this positive outcome, I am making a public announcement today, that once the Scottish Parliament has the legislative competence, it is our subsequent intention to introduce legislation in the next Scottish Parliament. This legislation will ensure that seatbelts are provided for children to use whilst travelling to and from school on dedicated school transport.

We have engaged with CoSLA and the Association of Transport Coordinators (ATCO) in order to source information on the costs and implications of legislating to provide seatbelts on dedicated school transport. A further meeting with CoSLA is scheduled for April.

As part of the need to gather comprehensive and detailed information on the impacts of legislating, Transport Scotland commissioned MVA Consultancy to work with local authorities to produce a report on the costs and challenges of changing specifications for school transport, together with a costing model.

After discussing and validating the findings with ATCO and CoSLA, the MVA report was published on 18 October 2013.

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One of the key findings of this report was that a long lead in time will allow local authorities time to plan for the change and revise their contracts accordingly at upcoming renewals. By making an announcement now of our intention to legislate in the future we are giving time to local authorities and bus operators to prepare for the change.

Kind regards

KEITH BROWN