

**PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF PE1098
QUESTIONS / ISSUES ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

TUESDAY 5 AUGUST 2014

Scottish Government—

- Please confirm that progress is being made in relation to the devolution of powers relating to seatbelt provision, in line with the timetable set out in your previous response.

TUESDAY 22 APRIL 2014

Minister for Transport and Veterans—

- Please can you provide the Committee with a more detailed timetable for the devolution of powers to Scottish Ministers in order that the progress of this process can be monitored?

Transport Scotland—

- Please can you provide the Committee with further information on the work Transport Scotland is undertaking with local authorities on signage and lighting?
- The Committee requests that Transport Scotland assists local authorities with evaluations of some of the pilot schemes relating to signage and lighting with a view to reporting on them and developing them nationally. Will Transport Scotland undertake this work?

TUESDAY 4 MARCH 2014

Welsh Government—

- As discussed by the Public Petitions Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2014, which powers have been devolved from the UK Government to the Welsh Government that enabled it to take action on the issue of school bus safety?

Scottish Government—

- As discussed by the Public Petitions Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2014, please can you provide a timeline of the contact between, and subsequent action by, the Scottish and UK Governments on the devolution of powers relating to school bus safety since 2010?

TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2013

UK Government—

- Which powers relating to school bus safety have been agreed will be devolved to Scottish Ministers and what do you expect the timescale for achieving this to be?

TUESDAY 30 APRIL 2013

Scottish Government—

- Please confirm why there is a two month delay to the publication of the report on the investigation into the associated costs of fitting seatbelts, and other safety measures, on all school transport?
- Given the considerable length of time since these petitions were first considered by the Committee, what are, and have been, the obstacles to devolving powers relating to school bus safety? Please confirm by what date a decision on this will be made.

TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2012

Transport Scotland—

- In January 2011 you indicated that early in 2012 you would ask the Transport Research Laboratory to undertake a full review of the guidance on improving school transport safety. The Committee is interested to hear how this review is progressing and seeks assurances that signage is covered in the review.
The Committee is also interested to hear, following the outcome of the review, how many local authorities have followed the advice that they can make it a requirement for operators to remove signs when vehicles are not being used to transport children. The petitioner has stated that his local authority has claimed that *“they have no real sanction or locus when it comes to vehicles operating commercial services”* and this appears contradictory both to the guidance and to the evidence given to the Session 3 Committee by Mike Penning who said *“I talked to Mr Beaty earlier and have read his correspondence. It is worrying that local authorities he contacted said “We can’t do that”. Actually they can. That is worrying because people in those authorities are in charge of our children.”*
The Committee is also interested to hear, again as part of the review, how many local authorities ensure that school bus signs are meeting the required minimum size standards.
For the benefit of clarity for the Committee and the petitioner can you confirm that the devolved powers will allow the Scottish Government to legislate for changes in relation to signage as well as seatbelts with regards to school transport safety?
- Is there likely to be any movement around the devolution of the powers prior to the proposed referendum in 2014.

UK Government—

- Is there likely to be any movement around the devolution of the powers prior to the proposed referendum in 2014.

TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2011

Transport Scotland—

- The Committee asks that in addition to a full report of the meeting and its outcomes the Minister also provides a list of action points and a copy of the timetable that the Ministers and Officials are working too to enable the Committee to take the petitions forward.

TUESDAY 25 JANUARY 2011

Transport Scotland—

- Can I refer you to the discussion during the meeting and the letter from the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure with regards to the short survey that has been commissioned for February 2011 to gather initial reactions on the effectiveness of the Guide. The Committee would be grateful if you could provide it with a deadline for the report being published?

Aberdeenshire Council—

- Can I refer you to the discussion during the meeting, in particular to the point made by Nanette Milne with regards to the report you have just completed on the trial that you have been running on school bus signage? The Committee would be grateful if you could provide it with an update on the trial.

TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2010

Scottish Government—

- Again in the light of recent accidents will you consider requiring local authorities to insert particular provisions into their contracts with school bus providers in terms of seat belt provision and improved signage?
- Can you provide any update on the school bus sign pilot scheme being run by Aberdeenshire Council?
- What are your views on the issue raised by Petitioner PE1223 in his recent submission to the Committee (PE1223/Q)? In particular the points made on the whether or not you have asked local authorities what safety measures they take and what they consider to be safe working practices.
- What discussions are ongoing with local authorities in relation to the provision of school transport safety measures?
- Can you also provide a response in relation to Petitioner PE1223 in respect of the question he has raised on what action you have taken (and how) with regard to Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020?

Society of Chief Officers of Transportation (SCOTS) Road Safety and Working Group—

- Can you provide information to the Committee on any discussions you have held on school bus safety issues.

Strathclyde Police Force—

Cumbria Police Force—

- The Committee would be grateful if you could provide it with an approximate timescale for when you anticipate your respective investigations into the accidents involving pupils from Lanark Grammar School and Keswick School will be complete. The Committee is currently considering two petitions on the issue of school bus transport safety and will be interested in the outcomes from these investigations, the lessons learned and actions to be taken?

MONDAY 15 MARCH 2010

Scottish Government—

- reference was made at the meeting to the in-principle support of the committee (13 January 2009) to these petitions—

“Nigel Don asked whether, as a matter of principle, the committee could agree with the petitioners by supporting this safety initiative and calling for the overtaking of school buses when they are in operation to be banned. The committee took a position on a matter of principle—curiously enough, on seat belts, which Nanette Milne mentioned—in a previous parliamentary session when dealing with a similar situation. Therefore, it would not be remiss of the committee to take an in-principle position by recommending a particular course of action. We could ask both Governments as well as other agencies to make progress on addressing the issue to the satisfaction of the petitioners. Would that be worth doing? Is there a consensus among committee members on that? If there is, we can move forward.”

The Scottish Government is therefore invited to recognise the position of the committee on these petitions.

- the Committee has now received the response from the Department for Transport (PE1098/R & PE1223/N) to the question asked about a trial of the all-stop rule in limited areas. The Department does not propose going ahead with such a trial. What is its response to this?
- it is now three years since its *School transport: survey of good practice* was published which identifies examples of good practice in contracting, and covers use of seat belts, bus safety and standards, contract monitoring and pupil safety including supervision and use of CCTV. What lessons have been learned from that and in what specific ways has school bus safety improved?

- in your letter to the Committee of 9 September 2009 you state that you will call on the UK Government to consider any strengthening of legislation in relation to school transport. Have you done so and what was the response?
- in the letter to the Committee of 21 January 2010 the Minister states 'there are no plans to require local authorities to insert particular provisions into their contracts with school bus providers'. While aware of the legislative limitations that may apply to this subject matter, why not at least indicate to local authorities that the preference of the Scottish Government (through for example the Bus Service Operators Grant and we refer to the point made by petitioner Lynn Merrifield in her letter (PE1098/S)), is for larger safety signage, for three point seat belts etc to be provided? You can do this. What harm would it do to do so?
- the Committee is well aware that spending on this issue is for local authorities themselves to determine but what leadership and guidance is it giving to them, as principal funder, to ensure that school bus safety does not fall down the list of priorities in the face of local authority budgetary pressures?
- does the size of the bus determine the size of the safety sign at the back? For example, is the 'school bus' sign the same size at the back of a single deck bus as it is on a large 100 seat double deck bus?
- what guidance is issued to local authorities on where the signage should be placed? For example, on a back window which also displays text about the size of the coach does obscure the sign. Do local authorities tell bus operators where to put the sign so that it has maximum visibility?
- what lessons have been learned from the 1 second 1 life learning activity produced by Aberdeenshire Council?
- what actions does it intend to take arising from the FAI into the death of Robyn Oldman?