

20 May 2021

Dear Ms Johnstone

Committee scrutiny of transport in Session 6

We are writing to you in your capacity as Presiding Officer to raise the issue of committee scrutiny of transport policy in Session 6 of the Scottish Parliament.

Transport constitutes the sixth largest area of government expenditure and as a sector is the largest contributor to Scotland's climate emissions. It plays an increasing importance in many areas of government policy including delivering a green recovery, spatial planning for towns and cities (e.g. 20 minute neighbourhoods), reducing economic and health inequalities, and tackling climate change. With the greater importance of transport to Scottish Government policy, comes the need for greater and more focussed scrutiny.

During Session 5 of the Parliament, transport was scrutinised by the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. While this committee provided some robust oversight over the past years, the broad remit of the committee left it limited resources and time to scrutinise transport policy. In its legacy report of 23 March, it stated that "The huge breadth of the Committee's remit has also inevitably resulted in time and resources being spread very thinly and the depth and quality of scrutiny has also suffered as a result." The committee anticipated that in the absence of change that this problem would worsen in Session 6.

We believe that a committee that focuses specifically on transport would be better positioned to capture the varying contexts of transport across Scotland, ranging from remote, rural locations to high-density urban contexts.

We urge you to provide transport with its own committee or be clearly recognised in a joint committee with another more appropriate policy area, such as climate change, in Session 6. This step would recognise that transport is a significant and complicated policy area which is becoming increasingly important in the context of economic growth, community development, health, inequalities and of course climate change.

We would be pleased to discuss this matter further with you, and would be happy to supply additional information should you find this of use. Should a committee be formed, our organisations would be pleased to advise on wide-ranging sustainable transport matters, drawing on our extensive experience in the field.

Yours sincerely,

Lorna Finlayson, Scotland Director, **CoMoUK**

Jools Townsend, Chief Executive, **Community Rail Network**

Stuart Douglas, Smarter Choices Smarter Places Manager, **Paths for All**

Maggie Simpson OBE, Director General, **Rail Freight Group**

Sam Greer, Regional Director Scotland, **Stagecoach**

John Lauder, Deputy CEO and Executive Director for Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, **Sustrans**

Colin Howden, Director, **Transform Scotland**

Robert Samson, Senior Stakeholder Manager, **Transport Focus**