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Your ref: ID/250269

25 February 2019

## **PUBLISHING THE UK GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE, REVISED GUIDANCE AND AMENDING LEGISLATION FOR THE OPERATION OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

Thank you for your letter of 19 February sending me notice of your changes to the Regulations, guidance and response to your consultation on the use of section 19 and section 22 permits for road passenger transport in Great Britain.

As articulated in our earlier response, I remain concerned at any move to substantially change the system by which community transport services are provided across Great Britain. I am disappointed, therefore, that you have chosen to impose changes which will have widespread impacts across the community transport sector.

We greatly value the services provided by third sector community transport organisations across Scotland, and recognise that these are local organisations which have not outgrown their areas, and which provide immense value to local communities. A light touch regulatory system for these organisations is essential to their continued existence. I cannot agree that your proposed changes to the operating environment for these services will offer them the options to comply with the regulations without making substantial changes to their operations.

A pause to consider the outcome of the judicial review would allow all the proposed exemptions to be considered together, and allow the time for a proportionate response to be developed.

I deeply regret your choice to impose such a burden of regulation across small organisations which provide valuable services to people in our local communities but would not have the capacity or means to make changes of the nature proposed. I believe many vulnerable people may find themselves without transport options in future as a result.

For those organisations who do have the capacity to meet the new exemptions, there will be a considerable cost burden and I hope you will provide support to all those groups who will seek to make such profound changes.

I would be pleased if you were to reconsider the publication of the regulations and give proper attention to the likely impact of these proposals on all our smaller voluntary sector transport providers. A cessation of the services they provide would be a great and irreplaceable loss.

**MICHAEL MATHESON**