MACS believes in a Scotland without the barriers that isolate and exclude disabled people from making their choice of successful door-to-door journeys.
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Dear Mr Matheson

Cc – Dear Scotland

As you are aware the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) has a legal duty to prepare and submit an annual report to you, which evidences our work in line with delivering on our strategic remit.

The report produced last year gave an overview of the Committee’s work and outlined 13 recommendations identified by MACS as necessary to undertake in order to make transport accessible to everyone.

We produced these recommendations in response to listening to the voices and views of disabled people across Scotland, using their lived experiences to identify what changes are required and where our focus needs to be strengthened to ensure equity of access for all.

In order to give you quality advice we work at strategic and grass roots levels and actively facilitate horizon-scanning sessions to ensure that we focus on issues important to disabled people.

The feedback we receive from disabled people indicates that there is an appetite for more change and for this change to happen quicker. There is a call for more resources to be invested in delivering the Accessible Travel Framework (ATF) commitments quicker. Disabled people want this backed by public awareness campaigns to give them confidence that transport networks will be accessible to all and their needs will be met. Our Committee members would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you as soon as your diary permits.

We are keen to support and strengthen others’ work in improving travel accessibility in Scotland by contributing our expertise, sharing our knowledge, giving guidance and signposting. We strongly believe that collaboration, co-production and a joined up approach is far more effective than working in isolation. This fits and strengthens the Ministerial commitment to the disability rights motto of “nothing about us without us”, which was given during the production of the ATF.
We have been refining our approach over the last two years and have assessed where we are most likely to achieve maximum impact, stripping back our activities to refocus on key areas during 2018/19 and beyond.

Our main aim focuses on gaining a greater buy-in to the need for a strengthened emphasis on accessible travel and the need for an increased pace of change. We need this to meet disabled people’s expectations and deliver a fairer and more equal society.

This year we have used the opportunities presented to us by having an open door to Scottish Ministers, across all portfolios, to ensure you heard the call for accessibility to be central to future Programme for Government (PfG) considerations. Our Recommendation 1 supports and strengthens this call by asking that accessibility is specifically mentioned within PfG and embedded throughout.

**Recommendation 1:**
To advocate that Accessibility is central to Programme for Government and promotes a fair and accessible Scotland.

We are extremely grateful for your open door approach, which provides the opportunity for MACS to engage with other Ministers. We very much appreciate their commitment to listen and ensure their plans and strategies cite accessible travel as a critical element of their own portfolio areas and policy planning.

We look forward to further engagement with you all in the year ahead.

We are grateful to our Secretariat for their support and assistance, responding to our growth needs and the endless hours dedicated to organising stakeholder engagements on behalf of the Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the time, dedication and commitment of MACS members and express my thanks and appreciation to my team for going above and beyond, acknowledging their continued investment in this agenda. I hope this report clearly evidences their hard work, commitment and the support they have given me throughout this reporting year.
I am delighted that throughout this year momentum has been built and awareness has been further raised through numerous measures and sources aimed at improving the accessibility of our transport systems and infrastructure to allow disabled people to travel with equity of access, freedom of choice, and dignity.

This momentum gives all of us the chance to re-engage, sense check our plans and ensure we are prioritising the needs and wants of disabled people throughout Scotland. The ATF was launched in 2016 under the ethos of “nothing about us, without us” and MACS will work hard throughout the coming year to facilitate this, and ensure the needs of disabled people are at the heart of this agenda.

Yours sincerely

Linda Bamford
National Convener
Our key focus this year
Throughout 2018/19, we worked across Scottish Government Ministerial portfolios to highlight the importance of an accessible transport system and inclusive infrastructure. We worked hard to emphasise that accessibility is essential to enable disabled people to not only travel independently and freely but also to remove barriers that prevent them connecting with their communities and consequently reducing loneliness and social isolation. We need an accessible transport system and inclusive infrastructures to help get people into employment and to enable them to access housing, healthcare facilities, leisure facilities and tourism.

Enabling disabled people to access all services equally and with dignity and choice has a positive impact on the economy and in turn contributes to a wealthier and fairer Scotland.

MACS has advocated that accessibility and inclusion issues are ‘front and centre’ in all transport and mobility planning. This means that the impact of any policy, service development or initiative on disabled people needs to be thought through at the earliest possible stage and planned with the involvement of disabled people.

We have been promoting the need for Public Bodies, Public and Private Sector organisations and all stakeholders to meaningfully engage as early as possible with disabled people to allow them to assist with designing a Scotland that is accessible to all. MACS has encouraged organisations to take the opportunity to learn from disabled peoples’ knowledge and experiences and include them in identifying solutions to the barriers they encounter rather than seeing these barriers as a problem to solve at a later date and with additional cost.

We have taken many opportunities to raise the importance of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) and the need to engage with disabled people when conducting them from the outset.
This has been raised with various Scottish Government Ministers and Public Bodies. We have reminded them of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and more recently, the Fairer Scotland Duty. A need for stronger enforcement of these Duties has been a constant call of the Committee this year and I would like to personally take the opportunity to thank you for reminding Local Authorities of their responsibilities in this area.

As yet, the impact from your letter has not been forthcoming. We suggest that evidenced-based improvements would give confidence that this critical legislation is being implemented. We propose that a way forward could be for MACS to host a roundtable discussion on your behalf to offer our insights, experience and expertise to Local Authorities to raise their awareness of the benefits of meaningful EqIAs that involve disabled people and/or their representatives. Our ethos being that this will assist with getting it right first time.

The need to continue to push and advocate these important issues, to ensure they become embedded in our practices and action, has been strengthened within our recommendations for 2019-2020.

**Recommendation 2:**
To ensure that the Scottish Government makes it clear that Local Authorities have a duty to respect the legislation regulating improvements of the accessibility of public transport service provision and the surrounding infrastructures.

**Recommendation 3:**
To promote conducting meaningful Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) before any service changes, developments or withdrawals in order to identify, mitigate and manage any negative impacts or consequences to disabled people.
Remaining on the subject of EqIAs, in our response to the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on permits issued under Sections 19 and 22 of the Transport Act 1985 we made specific points about the importance of local community transport initiatives, particularly in rural areas where public transport is sparse or non-existent. We highlighted that any changes to community transport service provision are more likely to have an impact on disabled people, their travel needs, and keeping them connected. We made a strong call for this to be considered during the review of the permits.

DfT recently announced that it intends to specify a number of exemptions in law that will mean, for example, groups whose main activity is not transport and also those undertaking journeys of less than 10 miles will be regarded as non-commercial and therefore entitled to operate under Section 19 and 22 permits in the future. Guidance on exemptions has been published.

However DfT is yet to make a final decision and give clarity on a number of areas, such as firm definitions of “commercial” activity. This announcement has created great worry for groups in rural Scotland as many of them work in large rural areas with journeys exceeding 10 miles.

MACS will continue to monitor decisions announced by the DfT as we are concerned that many smaller rural Community Transport groups will be unable to comply with the licensing requirements eroding, or indeed eliminating this crucial lifeline transport provision.

Throughout this reporting year, MACS has been involved in the review of the National Transport Strategy via the overarching Partnership Steering Group and by co-chairing the Tackling Inequality Working Group. During participation, our focus was to ensure that the need for an accessible and inclusive transport system and surrounding infrastructure was understood. We continually advocated that this was critical and central in future planning.

We again called for assurances that EqIAs are completed before public transport services are introduced, revised or withdrawn to safeguard the needs of disabled people. We will continue to work with Transport Scotland to offer guidance and monitor progress, along with responding to the consultation on the National Transport Strategy.
This year an area of increased focus has been aviation and ensuring that air travel and infrastructure are accessible to people with a range of disabilities. We are still in the process of familiarisation with Scottish Airports, which will allow us to use our findings to underpin discussions and cross check grass roots experiences with the Civil Aviation Authority airport ratings.

As we outlined in last year’s report, we remain committed to ensuring disabled people can travel safely and without barriers across all modes of transport. This includes ensuring that they are supported by well trained staff, who have the right skills, knowledge and understanding of the needs of disabled people to give confidence to provide adequate and necessary assistance. Therefore, we worked closely with transport providers across all modes to spread good practice and encourage them to involve disabled people in the design, and where possible, delivery of their disability awareness training. This will enhance the effectiveness of the training and the understanding and competence of their staff.

We will continue this work with transport providers and assist Transport Scotland’s Accessible Travel Team to deliver these elements of the ATF.

**Recommendation 4:**
To promote and advocate the need for disability awareness training to be undertaken by service providers, vehicle designers, architects and planners to help them recognise the diversity of needs disabled people have, and enhance their confidence in providing appropriate assistance.

**Recommendation 5:**
To assist and advise Transport Scotland’s Accessible Travel Team to introduce a nationally consistent standard of disability awareness training for service providers and vehicle designers to ensure that the needs of disabled people are fully understood and taken into account (including journey planning, booking and completing the journey safely and satisfactorily).
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Our achievements this year
This year we ensured the Committee streamlined its work and focused its efforts and time on areas that would assist with delivering our recommendations. We fully utilised our overarching Planning and Strategy Workstream to share knowledge and ensure collaboration between our modal workstreams.

We used the workstream leads meetings to work better together and pull our thoughts and knowledge. This included openly discussing issues we wanted to investigate further and those we wanted to “park or pause?”. Our approach has been demonstrated in the changes to the Committee meeting agendas, where protected time is now allocated for workstream updates and where we have introduced escalation papers to gain Committee buy-in and approval to new areas of working (as part of our scoping and horizon scanning).

We raised our profile across Ministerial portfolios and also with Transport Scotland Directors and Policy Teams. We achieved this through meetings, briefings and constructively challenging policy developments.

We are grateful to Laura Murdoch, Transport Scotland Policy Director, Bus Accessibility and Active Travel, for opening doors with her colleagues and facilitating MACS working beyond historic boundaries.

We successfully increased awareness of the relevance of accessible transport in every part of Scottish life and used emerging strategies, contract and franchise agreements to ensure accessibility and the needs of disabled people are core in consideration. We also reinforced the need to ensure we continued to engage with disabled people or their representatives when designing, redesigning or making changes to services. Our refined 10 recommendations, which we are hoping to achieve within the next one to three years, strengthen our key ask of stakeholders going forward.

**Recommendation 6:**
To advocate that any service design, redesign or changes to service provision are planned collaboratively and in co-production with stakeholders and to highlight references to good practice guidance.
This year we refined our development days to focus on one theme. We invited key stakeholders to co-facilitate the day with MACS, leading by example with collaborative working and coproduction to ensure compliance with good practice. On occasion, this led to identifying better practices and ultimately being the instrument to get organisations to talk and work together to design services and places that are fit-for-purpose and more accessible and inclusive to all.

The March 2019 Development Day was devoted to Accessibility and Active Travel. We took this opportunity to bring organisations together to link, discuss and make progress on these two key Ministerial commitments. It was a great success and provided an excellent platform in connecting and thinking jointly to enable disabled people, who so choose, to enjoy the benefits of active travel. We are thankful to Transport Scotland’s Active Travel Team, Transport Scotland’s Roads Directorate, the Active Nation Commissioner and Sustrans Scotland for co-facilitating this day with us and allowing all organisations to learn from and with each other.

We facilitated information sessions this year, which allowed us to hear from, work with, and constructively challenge representatives from several Scottish Government teams, such as: the Employability Team, the Equality Unit and the Analytical Team.

We also worked with the Scottish Road Works Commissioner, the Equality and Human Right Commission and the Poverty and Inequality Commission engaging with VisitScotland to ensure accessibility is embedded within tourism strategies.

Likewise, this approach proved to be a successful platform to engage with transport providers and advise them on improving the travel experience for disabled people ensuring their needs are central in planning and strategy formation.

Our efforts in advocating for early engagement with disabled people before any decisions affecting them are taken, have been noticed by the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. They reiterated MACS recommendation to carry out thorough EqIAs before any developments or service changes.
In addition, the Scottish Government agreed to adopt a requirement for health and inequality impact assessments (HIIAs) in their strategies and guidance for Local Authorities. This addition is welcomed by MACS.

While working with transport providers this year, we offered our assistance in making transport terminals more inclusive and accessible for people with different access needs. In addition to our regular engagement, we produced and shared, with transport providers and operators, our Accessibility Toolkits for train stations, ferries and ferry terminals. Both documents outline key issues and barriers disabled people experience when travelling. The key objective of these guides being to help rail and ferry service providers make travel as accessible and inclusive as possible for everyone.

In addition, the ferry guidance provides a baseline to assist ferry terminal providers in their applications for funding from the Transport Scotland Ferry Accessibility Fund. As ferry travel rarely stands in isolation, issues relating to transitions to another mode of travel have also been referred to in these documents.

We are also proud to say that our call for ferry operators and terminal providers to install “Changing Places” toilets, where possible, was very successful. There is an aspiration that any new terminal project will incorporate these facilities and existing infrastructure will look to refit where possible.

We have challenged the criteria for accessible train stations, noting that a broader criteria than “step free” must be used. We are hopeful that our accessibility toolkit will assist service providers in this area.

We have been working with the rail industry to emphasise and explain that everyone has different needs, not necessarily mobility related, and that they should be accounted for at the concept stage of any design. We are pleased to report that our pragmatic advice and input has been recognised and appreciated by owners and builders of Caledonian Sleepers, who gave assurances that accessibility is now high on their agenda. They thanked MACS for raising awareness of the needs of disabled people, which strengthened their discussion with rail colleagues on improving rail station accessibility for the future.
Many of the improvements we advocate rely on robust and up to date underlying good practice guides. To ensure the views and experiences of disabled people are considered we have secured representation on the working group for the re-write of the Inclusive Mobility document and the Guidance on the Use of Tactile Surfaces, both of which are reserved to the DfT. We have already responded to the tender brief to the consultant, Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), who is undertaking the research prior to the re-write of these documents. For the first time we managed to get Scottish cities, i.e. Edinburgh and Glasgow, included in the areas to be researched for good and bad practices, instead of all research being solely focussed in England.

The DfT review of the Inclusive Mobility Guidance, in our view, is long overdue. We have been pushing our DfT colleagues to move on this issue without further delay and to define a completion date for review. We will continue with this call.

**Recommendation 7:**
To advise the Department for Transport (DfT) to progress with its work on Inclusive Mobility Guidance with urgency. Should this progress be further delayed beyond 2019 then MACS will ask Scottish Ministers to instruct Transport Scotland to produce an updated Scottish version of this guidance (taking account of Scottish context) in partnership with the appropriate organisations.
Recommendation 8:
To promote a requirement that accessibility and disability knowledge should form an essential part for the remit and objectives for the transport providers’ accessibility leads to help them better understand and promote improvements for disabled people when using their service (all transport mode service providers).

To support the above MACS aims to continue to be the mainstay organisation on research into Inclusive Street Design, giving advice and promoting accessible design, inclusive streets and streetscapes to ensure that the infrastructure of all pedestrian routes and road environments are accessible to all.

Likewise, we have asked the DfT that the review of the Public Service Vehicle Access Regulations (PSVAR) is completed sooner than the proposed 2027 timeframe. This could assist with some of the current issues in Scotland, particularly the use of coaches on registered bus routes in rural areas. Coaches are not accessible to people with reduced mobility and being used on registered bus routes is currently more prevalent in rural areas of Scotland and further impacted by the limited alternative public transport options.

We will continue to advise Transport Scotland’s Accessible Travel Team, Active Travel Team, Sustrans Scotland and other organisations on the provision of an inclusive infrastructure that enables travel and active travel in Scotland.

We believe that better engagement with disabled people or their representatives would alert service providers to the barriers faced by them (such as the step height on coaches, infrastructure of train stations). We strongly believe the transport providers’ accessibility leads require a firm understanding of the needs of disabled people to allow them to design and deliver services which are fit for purpose. We have strengthened this call within our recommendations.
Finally, we have brought to light important questions about the accountability and value for money of the £4 billion+ a year Motability scheme in Scotland. We hosted a roundtable discussion to question Motability and to allow Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) and key stakeholders in Scotland to represent the views and the concerns of Motability customers in Scotland. We also provided the platform to afford Motability the opportunity to respond to these concerns and, hopefully, take on board some learning opportunities in terms of problems Motability customers face in Scotland and their concerns in light of the findings of the National Audit Office review of Motability.

The post roundtable report was agreed by the DPOs and stakeholders in attendance and shared with Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Government Social Security Team, the Chairs of the House of Commons Work and Pensions and Treasury Select Committees and is available on MACS website [www.macs-mobility.org](http://www.macs-mobility.org).
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Our focus for next year
The coming year will see us focus on maintaining our raised profile with Scottish Ministers and Transport Scotland’s Policy Directors. We will continue to advocate the needs of disabled people in relation to travel and transport and ensure that Available, Accessible and Affordable transport (the triple A check) underpins all areas of our work.

To deliver this we will continue to ask that accessibility is core to service provision including any new services, renewed contracts and franchise agreements. We stand ready and offer our assistance to make sure we get it right and provide services that are accessible to all and allow disabled people to travel with freedom, choice, dignity and independence. Only then will disabled people be able to live the life they choose and participate as an active member of society allowing them to achieve their full potential.

Recommendation 9:
To advocate for engagement with MACS when developing or revising policy or contracts by officials to gain expert advice and ensure accessibility is given a priority consideration. This includes using procurement and franchise opportunities when awarding contracts to promote accessibility in transport provisions.

We will use our development days to further engage with stakeholders to scope and respond to emerging issues, while continuing to engage with DPOs, to ensure their voices and the voices and views of those they represent are embedded in our work and the advice we give to Ministers.
We will continue to use *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People* commitments as the foundation of our work and drive progress towards delivering on the five central ambitions:

**A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People - Five ambitions**

1. Support services that promote independent living, meet needs and work together to enable a life of choices, opportunities and participation. Health and social care support services are designed to meet – and do meet – the individual needs and outcomes of disabled people.

2. Decent incomes and fairer working lives. Making sure disabled people can enjoy full participation with an adequate income to participate in learning, in education, voluntary work or paid employment and retirement.

3. Places that are accessible to everyone. Housing and transport and the wider environment are fully accessible to enable disabled people to participate as full and equal citizens.

4. Protected rights. The rights of disabled people are fully protected and they receive fair treatment from justice systems at all times.

5. Active participation. Disabled people can participate as active citizens in all aspects of daily and public life in Scotland.

From this focus, we will take a deeper interest into transport to health and social care, as disabled people are highlighting issues with transport when accessing healthcare.

We will continue to work closely with Transport Scotland’s Accessible Travel Team to assist them in delivering the ATF quicker through the annual delivery model.

**Recommendation 10:**
To advise Transport Scotland’s Accessibility Team on the implementation of the Accessible Travel Framework, including identifying blockages and seeking solutions.
We will work to improve engagement with our counterparts in England - Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and Northern Ireland - The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC). We will share knowledge and good practice examples, explore areas of common interest, including areas for partnership working with mutual benefit. We will discuss and explore reserved issues that affect disabled people in Scotland and agree areas to pull resources to progress agendas.

We will work on widening awareness of the importance of access and mobility issues, on the National Transport Strategy Review, the Transport (Scotland) Bill, the Connected Scotland Strategy, the Strategic Transport Projects Review and on Motability.

Our particular areas of interest with the Transport Bill remains the 20 minute loophole for loading with respect to the proposed ban on pavement parking. We will continue to recommend that the loading exemptions are removed from the Bill and that parking over dropped kerb crossing points should be addressed within it.

We will ensure that ideas for innovation in the transport sector fully recognise the impacts, challenges and opportunities for disabled people. We will speak at a number of technology/’smart travel’ sector events, including ‘Mobility as a Service’ (MaaS), and ensure we engage early in this agenda to advocate the needs of disabled people in this fast paced innovative and disruptive area.

We will maintain our effective working relationship with Transport Scotland’s key teams including, Accessible Travel, Active Travel, Ferries, Bus Rail, and Policy Directors. We will also push to emulate this working practice with the Aviation Team.

This year will see the Ferries and Aviation Workstream expand and strengthen our involvement in Aviation. The Workstream Lead is an invited panel guest at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM) at British-Irish Airports EXPO Conference in June 2019. This will be followed by the CAA and other key external stakeholders attending MACS development day in August 2019, where the day will be themed around “Aviation and Special
Assistance”. This will offer opportunities for organisations to learn from each other to deliver improvements for disabled passengers using air travel. This will also give MACS the opportunity to follow up on our submission to the Aviation 2050 Strategy – available on our website.¹

The Ferries and Aviation Workstream Lead is also planning to work and engage more closely with Claire Smith (as Transport Scotland’s Accessible Travel Team Lead) on the air travel elements of the ATF.

We will continue to have an input on the research into Inclusive Street Design (previously known as Shared Space) to develop good qualitative design principles that will eventually be made available to anyone who has a role in shaping our built environment, including - but not limited to - all designers, planning professionals and architects.

During the next year we will have a particular focus on bringing the Blue Badge system into the digital age by ensuring that is fit for the 21st century, encouraging the Scheme to be more accessible and usable for disabled people.

Another focus for next year will be to ensure that Passenger Assistance system on Scottish railways continues to be regarded as best practice throughout the UK and the transport sector. We will also ensure that any planned developments or disruptions take into account the needs of disabled passengers from the earliest planning stage.

MACS was instrumental in achieving the reduced timeframe for booking Passenger Assistance for rail travel, from three to two hours. Our goal is to enable spontaneous travel for all and, as such, we will continue to push for a “turn up and go” service.

MACS recognises that there is a need to seek clarification on the definition of “accessibility”. We are aware it currently leads to confusion and misunderstanding, particularly in relation to rail and bus. It can often be tied up in legislation or compliance. Therefore, we will continue to work with partners to clearly determine the meaning of “accessibility”, which is far more than just “step-free” access.

We have asked Transport Scotland’s Accessible Travel Team to engage with stakeholders and facilitate a discussion on “what accessibility means, looks and feels like”.

In order to ensure that travel is inclusive for all, we will continue to advise Ministers that accessibility is considered in any bid for contracts or franchise agreements funded by public money, including Bus Service Operator Grants (BSOGs).

Our recommendations have been formed from feedback the Committee received during our engagements with DPOs, disability organisations, disabled people and various stakeholders, as well as members’ drawing on their own lived experience and expertise. We have been working with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the importance of a well-developed and accessible transport system is understood across government and service providers.

We want everybody to realise that our transport network is critical and crosses through many parts of people’s lives, including where they choose to live, how they get to work, socialise and stay connected with friends and communities.
Our Strategic Recommendations for 2019-2020
Through work undertaken last year and the wide range of discussions, consultation responses, Ministerial meetings and engagements with stakeholders, we identified 10 recommendations for 2019/2020. We realise that some of them are longer term and as such it may take longer than a year to achieve them.

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