

Ken Skates AM  
Minister for Economy and Transport

21 October 2019

Dear Ken,

### **Traffic Commissioner for Wales**

On 9 October the Committee held its annual scrutiny session with the Traffic Commissioner. You can find the transcript [here](#). During the session several points were made on which the Committee would like further information or to hear your views.

The Committee was concerned to hear about “tensions” in the relationship with the organisation providing administrative support to the Traffic Commissioners, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). These tensions appear to be causing operational issues, as well as some concerns about “a lack of accountability”. The Commissioner informed the committee that the legal framework document which is set out to govern the relationships between the UK Government, Commissioners and the DVSA was not being adhered to by the DVSA. He also mentioned that there was an approaching review of this agreement to which there “might be an opportunity for Welsh Government to input” into. The Commissioner suggested that there should be an annual assurance process for the Welsh and Scottish Governments, as well as the Secretary of State, to be assured that the DVSA is meeting its objectives.

We would appreciate your views on the effectiveness of the legal framework in light of the Commissioner’s comments, including any issues this approach to coordination may raise for Wales, and any action the Welsh Government is taking to seek to address these.

The Commissioner spoke about the seminars he has been running for Public Service Vehicle operators. They are designed to give the PSV operators upfront information so they don’t find themselves breaking the law later on and according to the Commissioner are effective. Unfortunately the small size of the Commissioners team means he is not able to work through the full list of PSV operators. Will the Welsh Government work with the next Commissioner to increase attendance? Will the Welsh Government also consider working with the



next Commissioner to develop and deliver a similar line of seminars for HGV operators?

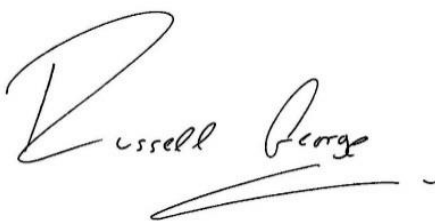
The Traffic Commissioner made it clear he felt that bus registration in its current form is not working as well as it could. The Commissioner felt his office, would be better suited to the task that the current system where Welsh registrations are dealt with from an office in Leeds. Traveline Cymru have also separately suggested they take on this role. Can you outline your long-term thinking on the bus registration process, including how devolved competence might be used in the future?

The Committee also discussed the Panel on Nitrogen Dioxide with the Commissioner. He was understandably reluctant to answer too many questions on the matter with litigation underway, and also did not want to pre-empt any announcements Welsh Government might make. The Committee would be grateful therefore if you could provide more details of the Panel, including its composition, terms of reference, the approach it has been asked to take and when the conclusions from its work will be published?

The Committee would be interested to hear your views on the Welsh Government's approach to discussions with the UK Government around any moves towards devolving responsibility for the following:

- Relocating Public Service Vehicle operator licensing administration for Wales to the Traffic Commissioner's Office in Caernarfon
- Improving synergies between the Welsh Government/the Trunk Roads Agencies and the DVSA

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Russell George AM  
Chair  
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

