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BY EMAIL

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Dear Michael

Covid-19 – Route-map out of Lockdown Phase 2 – Face Coverings

Following discussions between SPT and Transport Scotland, I am writing to add my voice to calls from the transport sector for the mandatory wearing of face coverings on public transport (with only narrow, medically justifiable, exceptions).

As anticipation grows for moving to the next phase of the route map and for easing out of lockdown, the mandatory wearing of adequate face coverings could, alongside any potential safety benefit, provide some reassurance to people returning to public transport. Current figures show there has been worryingly low uptake of face coverings on public transport despite repeated urging since last month by the First Minister and despite prominent display by SPT and others of Transport Scotland's messaging framework. Given the importance of consistency across modes and journeys, a mandatory requirement in Scotland would be the most effective way forward to address this and SPT would welcome the clarity that adopting such a position would provide.

From a medical perspective, I note also there is a clear interplay between social distancing policy (the distances for which will relate to the physics of expiratory droplet sedimentation) and face covering policy (which is motivated by droplet capture). Given the heavy impact social distancing policy decisions made by government ministers continue to have on the transport sector, I would urge you and your colleagues to review regulations with your expert advisors and consider whether suitable face covering policy might justifiably permit closer proximity in public places achieving both the public health effects and practical transport and economic recovery benefits we collectively need.

I look forward to hearing from you and if SPT can be of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Dr Martin Bartos
Chair, SPT