



Traffic Warden Service Review

Consultation Evaluation

Traffic Warden Review - Consultation Evaluation

Background

The introduction of decriminalised parking legislation in 1991 and the adoption of the Scottish aspect of this in 1997 has allowed for significant change to be made to parking enforcement in a number of council areas, allowing for a change to the service provision by legacy forces and now Police Scotland.

Police Scotland proposes that the role of Traffic Warden become redundant and as a consequence the 84 staff affected would be redeployed or make an application to be considered for voluntary redundancy or early retirement.

The financial savings required within Police Scotland have resulted in a close examination of many areas of business to look at both efficiency and whether there is a need for the service to be continued. On examination of the provision of parking enforcement there is a clear benefit to be gained through the decriminalisation process and savings from no longer providing a traffic warden service across Scotland.

The review of traffic warden provision ran in tandem with the Public Counter Review Consultation process:

- 25 June 13: Elected representatives, Council Chief Execs informed by letter of intention to review.
- Meetings commenced with Transport Scotland, SCOTS, SOLACE and Scottish Government on way forward and direction of travel in relation to removal of traffic wardens role.
- Business case submitted to CC, JNCC and HRC- August 2013
- Following approval, senior management teams briefed with outline proposals.
- The consultation process officially commenced after proposals were presented at the JNCC on 19 September 2013.
- Group consultations commenced on 1 October 2013 when proposals presented to staff at first seminar in Stirling.
- External consultation commenced on 1 October 2013 with Elected representatives (Community Councils, Councillors, MSP and MP) and, Council Chief Execs. Consultation to run for one month.
- Chief Constable attended Justice Subcommittee on Policing and gave a commitment to continue listening to consultation views on Public Counters and Traffic wardens till the middle of December.
- Transport Scotland nationwide event on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement- Input from ACC Mawson. Invite made from ACC Mawson to all local authorities to engage in consultation if they had concerns or wished to negotiate an extension to service. Presentation available.
- JNCC and SPA HRRC presentation on final proposals- accepted
- 24 December 2013- letter sent to Community Councils, Councillors, MSP and MP and, Council Chief Execs advising of the removal of the

post of traffic warden on 3 February 2014 with the exception of councils who were negotiating extensions to service.

- 3 February 2014- implementation of the removal of traffic warden service in the majority of the country. (exceptions Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders, Highland, Western Isles, Orkney Isles, Stirling and Falkirk) These councils had a short extension while negotiations or staff selections were on going.

Staff Consultation

Criticism was raised over the manner in which staff were personally informed of the proposals. Many stated they would have preferred to have been told in person. The decision was made to announce proposals to media, on Police Scotland website and internal Intranet simultaneously, the rationale being that this would be the most effective method of getting the announcement out to the greatest number of staff at the same time without being disadvantageous to any individual. This period of consultation is justified by the decision to release a widespread announcement of the proposals to all affected parties as opposed to holding the proposals for a 2 week period until group consultations were completed with staff.

Public Consultation

The public consultation period was announced as running for 4 weeks. There was criticism that this period was too short and did not meet recognised minimum consultation period of 6 weeks for public bodies according to Scottish Government guidelines. Further comments were made over the contact methods promoted to submit observations and concerns. It was felt too much emphasis was placed on contact by electronic means with no postal address published. The 4 week consultation period was justified due to the tight timescales the review was working in order to maximise financial savings.

This consultation period was extended by the Chief Constable committing to listen to views past the consultation end date when giving evidence at the Justice Sub-committee on Policing on 31 October 2013.

Some correspondence made mention of the fact that the consultation process was not meaningful due to the fact that traffic wardens had already been released on VR/VER. The consideration of counter proposals contained later within this document highlights the importance of the consultation. That being said, the review has provided an opportunity for those staff who wish to leave the organisation to go whilst simultaneously providing options for those wishing to remain.

In terms of the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement a number of Local Authorities expressed their reservations surrounding the period of time it would take to establish, with some speculating that it would

take a minimum of 2 years to complete the process. Much of the work that is required for the implementation of DPE however will be the checking and updating of the Traffic Regulation Orders that are in place and are currently the responsibility of local authority. If the local authority has maintained these and they are up to date and accurate then the process can be relatively short with a commitment from Transport Scotland to implement the national level part of this process within 6 months.

Concerns were raised regarding practical interim measures for parking enforcement while Decriminalise Parking Enforcement is being considered/implemented. The message has been reiterated throughout the review that Police Scotland will continue to enforce parking which is dangerous or obstructive and will work with local stakeholders to identify areas affected by problematic parking, targeting these areas during directed periods of action.

The above concerns have often been mooted in tandem with concerns that the removal of the traffic warden service, whether or not the decision to adopt DPE was financially viable, would lead to traffic chaos within town centres however it has been shown that in areas where Police Scotland have already withdrawn Traffic Wardens, there has been no apparent adverse effect on local communities. This is further reinforced by the lack of parliamentary business or questions raised during or after the withdrawal of traffic wardens in the legacy Strathclyde Police area.

Relating to the subject of financial viability there was comment made that the transfer of enforcement from Police Scotland to the relevant Local Authority would not create a cost saving as it would merely be a transfer of the operating responsibility from one public body to another. As contained within the business case the adoption of DPE by local authorities would allow any income being generated through enforcement to be kept and redistributed within that local authority area as opposed to being sent to the Treasury in London. This is a stream of funding that is not available to Police Scotland and is one that can be used to offset cost or indeed generate a significant income stream.

The impact of the transition on the enforcement of the misuse of disabled persons' Blue Badge scheme was specifically raised in a number of letters. On that topic the Code of Practice for Local Authorities makes it clear that it is the responsibility for the Local Authority to enforce breaches of the use of blue badges. Police Scotland will continue to issue tickets on disabled bays where a blue badge is misused and will support local authorities who are attempting to enforce other aspects of the legislation.

Lastly, there have been letters which mention the other duties carried out by Traffic Wardens or Community Traffic Wardens which are not within the sphere of traffic enforcement. A majority of these duties fall in line with the duties of a police officer and as such this workload will continue to be undertaken by police officers.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

A total of 46 items of correspondence have been received from key stakeholders (i.e. councillors, community councils, local authorities, MPs, MSPs) as of 11th December 2013. A breakdown of the main subjects raised during consultation correspondence is as follows:

Interim measures/Traffic Management issues – **19**

DPE financial viability – **9**

Consultation process – **6**

DPE timescales – **5**

Other duties of Traffic Wardens – **4**

Disabled parking issues – **4**

Positive comments – **2**

A combined retention of traffic warden and public counter services petition containing 271 signatures was received from Iain Gray MSP and Fiona O'Donnell MSP regarding Tranent.

Counter Proposals

Two formal counter proposals have been received:

1. Counter Proposal from West Lothian Council

West Lothian Council had already funded a 2 year contract for a traffic warden to cover Livingston. This contract is due to expire on 30 June 2014. Agreement has been reached to retain the post until the contract expires.

2. Counter Proposal from Community Traffic Warden, Fife Division

The counter proposal recommends that Police Scotland create the roles of Divisional Resilience Assistant, Supervisor and Coordinator to undertake a number of duties generally done by Community Traffic Wardens in some legacy areas but fully within the scope and remit of a police officer. The rationale for this counter proposal is that it is cheaper and better value to have police staff doing this at a lower salary level, that it will provide resilience to police officer operational deployment and that there is a statutory obligation on Police Scotland to enforce parking legislation.