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## **DTLR CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – ABANDONED VEHICLES**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the aims of the consultation document on abandoned vehicles produced by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and seeks approval of the Council's proposed response to the questions asked in the document.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 As a result of the continuing problem, nationally, of abandoned vehicles the Government has stated that it is determined to tackle this problem, that, based upon reports from Local Authorities, suggests that up to 350,000 cars were dumped in 2000.
- 2.2 The resulting Consultation Document has been produced outlining a series of proposed short term and long term measures to combat this problem. Views are being sought on these measures with responses to be received by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2002.

### **3 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The proposals, both short and long term, are essentially designed to firstly enable Local Authorities to deal with abandoned vehicles more quickly and efficiently. Secondly, it is to introduce more stringent measures and deterrents particularly around the registration of the vehicle with the DVLA in order to reduce the number of cars being abandoned.
- 3.2 The following points detail the individual proposals within the consultation document on which the DTLR are seeking views. Points 3.3 to 3.5 are all short term measures with points 3.6 to 3.8 being longer term.
- 3.3 The reduction of notice periods under the Vehicle Excise Duty Regulations 1997 and the Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986 relating to the removal and disposal of vehicles.
- 3.4 Local Authorities to take on the role of contractor for clamping and removing unlicensed vehicles.

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- 3.5 Government measures to allow Local Authorities easier and faster access to the DVLA vehicle records.
  - 3.6 The United Kingdom to move to a system of continuous registration.
  - 3.7 Keepers of vehicles to retain fiscal responsibility for vehicles unless they can demonstrate that they have notified DVLA of the transfer or destruction of the vehicle.
  - 3.8 A tightening of the procedures surrounding the transfer of vehicles including the requirement for both parties to register the transfer.

#### **4 SUGGESTED ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE**

- 4.1 The reduction in notice periods for removing, notification and disposing of vehicles would certainly have a very positive effect on the efficiency of dealing with these vehicles. It would also assist in improving the public's perception of how these cars are dealt with, where understandably, they are sometimes unaware of the legal process and notice that currently has to be given. Within this proposal particular endorsement is given to the suggestion of reducing the notice period for removing vehicles which are considered to have no value from the present 7 days to 24 hours.
- 4.2 The Council would have some concern about taking on the role of contractor for clamping and removal of unlicensed vehicles on behalf of the DVLA due to the potential resource implications that this may create. However, we would be interested in seeing the results of pilot schemes that are currently taking place in Newham and Lewisham whilst taking into account that the extent of this issue may be much greater in those areas than in Rochford.
- 4.3 Any measures taken to improve the speed of access to DVLA information on registered keepers would be supported, particularly where methods could be introduced at low cost to the Authority. This Council would agree with each of the proposals regarding the tightening of registration of vehicles. In dealing with abandoned vehicles, it is a regular occurrence for there to be no registered keeper or for the last registered keeper to be able to disown responsibility for that vehicle, usually claiming it has been sold, thus preventing any further action being taken. The introduction of more stringent measures and enforceable penalties for not notifying DVLA of a change of ownership would provide considerable improvement to this problem.

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**5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Any measures that can be introduced to improve the problem of abandoned vehicles will have a positive effect on environmental standards within the District.

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A reduction in the number of abandoned vehicles in the District would reduce the total cost incurred by the Council and also lessen the amount of staff resources taken up with processing the removal of such vehicles.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Members note the content of this report and agree to the suggested response detailed in section 4 of this report to be sent in reply to the DTLR's consultation document.

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**Background Papers:**

DTLR Consultation Document on Abandoned Cars

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