

Summary of Responses on Regulating the Supply of Number Plates in Northern Ireland.

Dear Consultee

Consultation on Regulating the Supply of Number Plates in Northern Ireland

As you are aware, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) recently conducted a consultation on regulating the supply of number plates in Northern Ireland. The paper contained the proposal to introduce in Northern Ireland a system of statutory controls of number plate suppliers similar to that, which exists in England and Wales.

Initially, the consultation received very few responses, but subsequent telephone canvassing of consultees gave a clear indication of the views of those affected by the proposals. DVLA would like to thank all those who took the trouble to examine the document and respond.

The proposals to regulate the supply of number plates met with general support as a means of fighting vehicle crime. All agreed that they would incur some set-up and running costs, but as in England and Wales they were not considered to be prohibitive. The small businesses contacted were not able to provide detailed cost estimates, but the majority considered the potential cost to be insignificant.

Several consultees expressed concern about companies operating both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. They thought that some companies might relocate their number plate business activity to the Republic of Ireland. However, this would necessitate removing all parts of the business from Northern Ireland and is not expected to have a significant impact. The presence of shared borders has not deterred other European states from taking steps to regulate the supply of number plates within their own territory.

It is now intended to seek legislation to extend the scheme operating in England and Wales to Northern Ireland and Scotland. The details of the operation of the scheme in England and Wales are currently under review and this might result in some amendments to the regulations and to administrative practices. Subsequent implementation in Northern Ireland would benefit from any changes based on the experience gained in England and Wales since the introduction of the register in January 2003. In addition, there would be scope to incorporate minor variations to reflect Northern Ireland conditions if that is considered desirable.

Provided that the necessary legislation is passed, further information will be issued at least three months in advance of implementation.

Yours sincerely

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