

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29TH MAY 2002

ABANDONED VEHICLES

Report by the Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of forthcoming changes in Legislation to enable Local Authorities to take action in respect of vehicles which have apparently been abandoned.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 allows the Council to remove vehicles abandoned on the street or other public places after the expiry of a statutory seven day notice.
- 2.2 The Government intends to enhance the power to remove abandoned vehicles by reducing the period to 24 hours instead of the present 7 days; provide closure links between Councils and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA); enhance the facilities for tracing vehicle ownership through additional funding.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 At the present time East Ayrshire Council deals with around 300 abandoned vehicles per annum. In the early life of the Council, local contractors were prepared to remove vehicles without charge but impending regulations governing the dismantling of vehicles coupled with reduced markets for spare components mean that contractors are now charging up to £30 for the removal of each vehicle. Combined with rapidly increasing numbers of abandoned vehicles, this is creating resource pressures for the department. This is a national problem which has been raised with the Scottish Executive by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.
- 3.2 The proposal to reduce the life of the statutory notice from 7 days to 24 hours is welcomed as invariably abandoned cars attract the unwelcomed attention of certain sections of the community causing safety and other hazards.
- 3.3 Computer links between the DVLA and local authorities which will allow easier tracing of the last registered owner are to be made available. The Government intends to change the present vehicle registration system to ensure that all vehicles will be associated with the registered keeper who will have clear responsibility for meeting costs and

complying with responsibilities until the DVLA has been properly notified of a change of keepership.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is not possible to quantify the financial implications fully at this stage but removal of abandoned vehicle alone is costing the Council in the region of £9,000 per annum at the present time

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Government intends to give Councils new powers which will assist in a speedier removal of abandoned cars from public places.
- 6.2 These new powers will provide for a reduced expiry time of the statutory notice system and enhanced access to the DVLA records.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Committee is invited to note the report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

3rd May 2002

WS/JFC/RRS

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

Implementation Officer – john.crawford@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

AGENDA