INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE

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Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: **9th December 2004**

Title: **DEALING WITH ABANDONED VEHICLES**

Report of: **Head of Commercial and Technical Services**

Report reference: **CTS 23/04**

Summary: This report reviews the situation regarding Abandoned Vehicles

and sets out actions for the future which would enable vehicles

to be removed more quickly

Recommendations: It is recommended that members debate the issues set out in this report and agree a way ahead which can be presented to the Executive.

Contact Officer: Keith Poole **Ext:** 5101

Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny

9th December 2004

CTS 23/04

Dealing with Abandoned Vehicles

1. Introduction

1. Abandoned vehicles are a major and increasing problem throughout the country. Such vehicles are unsightly, can cause obstruction, are a potential danger to children and, if vandalised and set on fire, create further risks to the public. It is generally recognised that the problem of vehicles abandoned has increased substantially in recent years together with an increase in vehicle arson.

   The Government appreciates the extent of the problem and the adverse effect it can have on the environment. It appears that legislative changes may be introduced to assist Local Authorities to deal with this problem (see Appendix G).

   The large majority of vehicles reported as abandoned, and in practice virtually all of them removed by Local Authorities, are unlicensed, and do not display a current tax disc. The last named owner on the vehicle record is unlikely to admit

ownership, and in many cases vehicles will have been sold on without the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) being notified. It is clear that many older vehicles are changing hands at very low prices without documentation. There is also a clear link between unlicensed vehicles and their use in crime, vehicle arson and illegal parking.

It is also evident that a proportion of the vehicles that are reported as abandoned, are reported on more than one occasion in different locations. It appears that cars are left by the roadside, and only moved when they are reported and notice of removal is attached to the vehicle. At this point, the vehicle is removed to another location, where the process is repeated.

2. In June 2003 report CTS/13-03 (Dealing with Abandoned Vehicles) was presented to Executive setting out proposals for dealing with Abandoned Vehicles. A copy of the report is attached in Appendix A to this report. Report CTS/13 – 03 made a number of recommendations as set out below:-

   Recommendations – It is recommended that Members approve the following proposals:-

a. Commercial and Technical Services Unit assume responsibility

   for dealing with abandoned vehicles

b. The City Council enter discussions with Cumbria County Council

   with a view to the City Council administering the storage and

   disposal of abandoned vehicles on behalf of the County Council

   for an agreed cost

c. The Crime and Disorder Partnership be requested to provide

£20,000 annually to cover the cost of administering the scheme for dealing with abandoned vehicles

d. The procedures for dealing with abandoned and untaxed

vehicles as set out in Appendix 2 be adopted subject to any minor refinements arising as a result of further discussions with partners

e. The proposals set out above be subject to a review after

12 months of operation

1.3 With regard to the recommendations the following actions have already been taken:-

a. Commercial and Technical Services assumed responsibility

for dealing with abandoned vehicles on the 1st August 2004.

Ruth Crane is now responsible for dealing with this function and will attend the meeting of the O&S Committee to contribute to the discussion. The delay in implementing the change was due to the appointment process. Members should note that the present post is temporary with a 12 month contract terminating on the 12th July 2005. Members are asked to consider the need to make this post permanent.

b. Discussions have taken place with Cumbria County Council

on the storage of recovered vehicles. So far no agreement has been signed. This issue is discussed in more detail later in this report.

c. A request for £20,000 funding from the Crime and Disorder

Partnership was rejected. However a bid was submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for funding from the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund. The bid was successful and £35,000 has been awarded to fund the appointment of an Arson Reduction Co-ordinator for 2 ½ years

and promote associated initiatives.

The role of the officer will include:

1. Ensure a co-ordinated response to arson in the

   Carlisle Area. Engaging all stakeholders, including the Fire Service, Police, Carlisle City Council Cumbria, County Council and the community

2. Provide a central point of contact as the liaison officer

   for all the above organisations and other outside agencies

3. Develop and manage arson reduction projects and

   initiatives as proposed by the Arson Reduction Task Force or as identified as good practice in other areas, concentrating initially on dealing with Abandoned and Burnt out Vehicles

4. Maintain information and data systems to monitor and

   evaluate projects, plans and progress made with regard to arson reduction

The officer appointed to carry out this function is Jason Priestley, employed by Cumbria Constabulary. He is a Police Constable and will attend the O&S Meeting to answer questions

a. Appendix 2 in report CTS/13 – 03 set out a number of proposed

   changes to the way abandoned vehicles are dealt with. The notes below outline what has happened so far:-

- Untaxed Vehicles – The City Council has obtained

authorised access to the DVLA database, so that officers can obtain details of the registered keeper of a vehicle. Discussions have taken place as to how to deal with untaxed vehicles and this is discussed later in this report

- So far this issue has not been raised in the Focus Magazine. It is suggested that this take place in the near future when an updated policy has been agreed
- Abandoned vehicles of little value are served with a 24 hour notice before being removed. Other vehicles receive a 7 day or 15 day notice.

1.4 The Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership has been working closely with the Commercial and Technical Services department to seek best practice to deal with the problem of abandoned and arsoned vehicles.

This culminated in a problem solving event held in September 2004 when police officers, fire officers and local government offices from Carlisle and Cumbria attended a seminar to examine the extent of the problem to learn from best practice around the country. Details of the Problem Solving Event are given in Appendix B.

The situation with Abandoned and Burnt Out vehicles needs to improve and the later sections of this report examines ways in which this may be achieved. The proposals have been developed to take into account the issues discussed at the problem solving event and incorporate Best Practice from other areas, in particular the Car Clear Scheme developed in Bristol and now in use in other areas.

1. Relevant Statistics
    1. The Head of Commercial and Technical Services took on responsibility

    for dealing with Abandoned Vehicles in August 2004. It is proposed that relevant statistics on this function will be maintained by Ruth Crane so that performance can be monitored in the future.

2. Staff in CTS have been unable to obtain statistics for previous years but it is believed that the number of vehicles being dealt with so far this year are comparable with previous years. The new recording system will enable future trends to be better monitored. It is planned that the Police/Fire Service will make a short presentation at the O&S Meeting on statistics related to burned out cars.

2.3 The table below shows relevant statistics for 2004/5:-

Monthly Statistics

	Apr-Jul	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04
Total number (Abandoned Vehicles Reported)	164	53	61	64
Vehicles Average/Good Condition	0	39	51	56
Vehicles BURNT out	0	14	10	8
HIGHWAY	0	49	57	56
PRIVATE LAND	0	4	4	8
Vehicles not present on initial inspection	0	15	16	17
Vehicles not present on expiry of notice	0	15	21	16
Vehicles uplifted	58	22	16	19
Police Investigation/Dealing with	0	0	7	4
Vehicle reported, but not abandoned	0	1	1	6
Cost to CTS For Removal Of Vehicles (inc VAT)	£3,407	£1,292.50	£940.00	£1,116.25

Annual Estimates

Average number of vehicles reported (per month)	49
Predicated Number Vehicles reported (Apr 04-Mar 05)	588

Average number of uplifted vehicles (per month)	16
Predicted Number of Uplifted Vehicles (Apr 04-Mar 05)	192
Cost For Removal of Abandoned Vehicles (Apr 04-Oct 04)	£6,756.25
Predicted cost for remainder of the financial year	£4,523.75
Predicted uplift costs (Apr – Mar 05)	£11,280.00

4. At the present time it is predicted that 588 vehicles will be reported as Abandoned and of these 192 will be actually uplifted. These statistics do not include burned out vehicles which have been dealt with by the Police and the Fire Service. The Police are introducing a revised policy as set out below in an extract from their latest proposed procedures manual:-

   "Abandoned vehicles not causing obstruction or danger to others

   In relation to reports of abandoned vehicles, burnt out or otherwise, the investigation officer must make every possible attempt to identify the owner of the vehicle and only after such enquiries are exhausted, will the vehicle be classified as ‘abandoned’. In general, the vehicle should not be recovered through the (Police) scheme – it is the duty of the Local Authority to remove all vehicles abandoned in the open air. However, if it is deemed necessary to recover the vehicle for more detailed mechanical or forensic examination – then recovery should be made via an (Authorised Recovery Operator) ARO – bearing in mind that should the vehicle remain unidentified, the cost of such recovery and subsequent storage will be the responsibility of the Constabulary.

All vehicles abandoned or disabled (brokendown) on the hard shoulder of a motorway are a potential danger and should be removed as per ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) – Road Policing, guidelines i.e. following expiration of a 30 minute period following the police becoming aware. Note – such vehicles should not be recovered via the scheme. Responsibility for removal is that of the County Council and agreements exist which enable the police to arrange removal on behalf of the Council".

5. It seems likely that, as a result of this change of Policy by the Police, the City Council will be required to collect additional abandoned vehicles. In 2003/4 the Fire Service reported just over 200 burnt out vehicles. It is impossible at this stage to estimate how many additional vehicles the Council may be required to recover. Some burnt out vehicles will still be recovered by the Police. It is also likely that the total number of burnt out vehicles will reduce due to the Arson Reduction Initiatives being pursued. It would seem prudent to allow for 100 additional burnt out vehicles to be recovered at this stage and future cost estimates are based on this assumption. The Police will be asked to ensure that there is an auditable procedure to ensure that all burned out vehicles have been investigated to establish whether they are abandoned and not associated with a crime.

3. Options for the Future

1. As briefly discussed in Section 1.3 (c) the Arson Task Force (ATF) is seeking to reduce the number of burnt out vehicles many of which start by being abandoned. They are therefore supporting initiatives which will reduce the number of abandoned vehicles. The problem solving event held on the 8th September discussed the problem and examined examples of good practice elsewhere. A copy of the notes of this meeting are attached in Appendix B. As a follow on to the problem solving event the ATF agreed to fund a report from Mike Dixon, who was responsible for developing

the Car Clear Scheme in Bristol, on how the City Council, Police and Fire Service should deal with the issue of Vehicle Arson and Abandoned Vehicles. A copy of his report is attached in Appendix C. Mike Dixon will attend the meeting of O&S to answer questions on the report and the Car Clean Scheme he outlines.

3.2 Future City Council Policy

Having studied the report from Mr Dixon it is proposed that the existing City Council Policy for dealing with Abandoned Vehicles be amended as set out below. The changes should result in vehicles being removed from the streets or private land more quickly thus lessening the potential for vehicles to be vandalised and burnt out. The main issues dealt with in the revised Policy are:-

1. Dealing with Untaxed Vehicles
2. Joint Agreement with County Council for sharing costs
3. Timescales for Removing and Storing Abandoned Vehicles
4. Car Clear Scheme
5. Developing Links with the Community

3.2.1 Dealing with Untaxed Vehicles

a. The DVLA have a scheme whereby they can give authority to

councils to clamp or immediately remove untaxed vehicles. From investigation it would appear that many authorities prefer not to clamp and prefer to immediately remove to storage any untaxed vehicle.

b. The City Council Car Parking Enforcement Team experience

problems with untaxed vehicles. Many of these vehicles receive a large number of penalty charge notices for parking contraventions and it can be difficult to trace the owners of these vehicles. The Parking Team would welcome the early removal

of these untaxed vehicles.

c. It is proposed that the City Council enter into an agreement with

DVLA to remove, store and dispose of untaxed vehicles. The proposed procedure is set out in the draft agreement attached in Appendix D to this report and on the attached Flow Diagram.

d. The City Council would levy charges for dealing with these

vehicles which are intended to ensure that all costs are recovered.

3.2.2 Joint Agreement with the County Council

a. Under the relevant legislation the City Council is responsible

for the collection of Abandoned Vehicles and the County Council is responsible for the storage and disposal of vehicles

b. Discussions with the County Council indicate that they wish the

City Council to administer the County Council functions on their behalf. To facilitate this they propose that an agreement is signed between the authorities. A draft agreement is attached in Appendix E based on an existing agreement they have with Allerdale Borough Council.

c. It appears mutually advantageous to enter into such an

agreement with the County Council as it will enable the City Council to recover administration costs which it has previously been unable to recover

d. It is proposed that:-

- In consultation with the City Council Legal services Unit an agreement be signed with Cumbria County Council dealing with the Storage and Disposal of Abandoned Vehicles
- Such agreement to include provision for the City

Council to recover all relevant costs

3.2.3 Timescales for Removing and Storing Abandoned Vehicles

3.2.3.1 Existing Policy

At the present time the procedures for dealing with Abandoned Vehicles involves the procedures set out below

- For vehicle of no value on the highway a 24hr notice

  is served after which time vehicle is removed

- For vehicle with value on the highway a 7 day notice

  is served after which time the vehicle is removed

- For a vehicle on private land a 15 day notice is served

  on the land owner prior to removal

- Any vehicle considered to pose a danger is removed

  immediately

3.2.3.1.1 Suggested Policy

It is considered that the existing procedures, particularly regarding vehicles with value are too slow. Many other authorities are now adopting policies under which vehicles are removed immediately, or at least within 24hrs, and taken to store. There are concerns that legally this type of policy may be suspect and claims could be made

against the Council.

Members are asked to consider adopting the procedure set out in Appendix F which effectively propose removal after 24 hours. On private land it is proposed that agreements be made with landowners where vehicles are usually dumped which would enable removal within 24 hrs.

Members may wish to consider a scheme which involves the immediate removal of vehicles. Such schemes are in operation and have proved successful in other parts of the County but there are concerns about the legality of such schemes.

3.2.4 Car Clear Scheme

3.2.4.1 Appendix C contains a report prepared by Mike Dixon of MJD

Associates detailing the "Car Clear" Scheme which was initially introduced in Bristol. This scheme is aimed at dealing with the problem of abandoned and burnt out vehicles and involves a partnership by a number of agencies. This approach is now recognised as Best Practice by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

3.2.4.2 Members are requested to consider the benefits of a Car Clear

Scheme and discuss the introduction of such a scheme in Carlisle. At a late stage in the preparation of this report a Government Strategy document was received setting out the Governments views on removing Nuisance vehicles. A copy of the document is attached in Appendix G. This appears to support the Car Clear Scheme and proposes new legislation to permit vehicles to be removed more quickly.

3. A scheme such as car clear would be an initiative

to be pursued by a partnership. It may be most appropriate for the Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to lead such a partnership and seek suitable sources of funding. Members are asked to consider this issue and what future reports may be needed.

3.2.5 If the City Council approve the budget bid for £14,000 in 2005/6 and £20,000 in subsequent years this will enable the Abandoned Vehicle Co-ordinator post to be made permanent. The post holder can then continue their work in developing links with other partners, council units and groups in the community, such as CHA. This work should greatly enhance our effectiveness in dealing with this issue.

4. Funding Issues

4.1 2004/5 Budget

In the present financial year 2004/5 a total budget of £38,400 has been allocated to deal with Abandoned Vehicles. £20,000 of this allocation is a non recurring allocation and a bid to make this a recurring allocation is included in the budget cycle.

The existing financial situation is set out below:-

Detail	2004/5 Budget	Spending To 31/10/04	Estimated End of Year
Employee related costs	20,000	6,602	15,900
Payments to Contractor	18,400	3,686	11,280
Total	38,400	10,288	27,180

4.2 The employee costs are less than budgeted due to the fact that the

officer was not in post until the 12th July 2004. Similarly the cost of removing vehicles is less than budgeted. It is suggested that any surplus arising in 2004/5 should be carried forward to 2005/6 to assist in funding the revised proposals.

4.3 2005/6 Budget

For the financial year 2005/6 it is envisaged that income will be received from the following sources:-

- Carry Forward from 2004/5 - £11,220

- Bid for Funding being considered - £14,000

- Existing Recurring Budget - £18,400

- Other Sources of Income See Section 4.5

Total £43,620

It is envisaged that the actual costs incurred will be:-

- Employee Costs (including transport) - £28,600

- Payments to Contractors - £15,000

Total £43,600

4.4 It is estimated that 300 vehicles will be removed in 2005/6 compared

to the 192 predicated to be uplifted in 2004/5. This increased figure takes into account our increased activity as set out earlier in this report. Additional costs associated with the storage of vehicles and the associated administration

will be funded by the County Council under the terms of the proposed agreement set out in Appendix E.

4.5 Additional Sources of Income

This report highlights a number of options under which additional income may be generated, such as removing untaxed vehicles and dealing with the storage of vehicles on behalf of the County Council. In addition many authorities seek to recover their costs from the last registered keeper of any vehicle which is abandoned. This is an option which members are asked to consider.

At this stage it is not possible to accurately estimate what surplus income these options would generate after the relevant administration costs have been taken into account.

5. Summary

5.1 Members are requested to consider the following issues and help define the future direction for this service.

a. Dealing with Untaxed Vehicles

Should the City Council enter into an agreement with DVLA to enable untaxed vehicles to be removed by the City Council (see 3.2.1 and Apendix D)

b. Joint Agreement with County Council

Should the City Council enter into an agreement with the County Council under which the City Council deal with the Storage and Disposal of vehicles (see 3.22 and Appendix E).

(c) Dealing with Abandoned Vehicles

Should the City Council take steps to deal with Abandoned Vehicles more quickly. A suggested revised procedure is set out in 3.2.3 and Appendix C. Is a 24 hour response quick enough.

(d) Car Clear Scheme

Should the City Council work with partners to develop and introduce a Car Clear Scheme. Who should lead this scheme and seek the funding.

(e) Funding Issues

In order to continue to deal with Abandoned Vehicles additional funding is required as set out in 4.0. A bid for £14,000 in 2005/6 and £20,000 annually thereafter has been submitted. Members are asked to support this bid. In order to recover costs associated with Abandoned Vehicles should the Council pursue the last registered keeper for costs (see 4.5).

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that members debate the issues set out in this report and agree a way ahead which can be presented to the Executive.

Appendices

Appendix	Detail
A	Report CTS/13 – 03 to Executive, 9th June 2003, Dealing with Abandoned Vehicles
B	Arson Task Force, Problem Solving Event, 8th

	September 2004 – Notes of Meeting
C	Report from Mike Dixon setting out proposals for dealing with Abandoned Vehicles and Vehicle Arson
D	Draft Agreement with DVLA for dealing with Untaxed Vehicles
E	Joint Agreement with Cumbria County Council regarding division of responsibility and sharing of costs
F	Proposed Abandoned Vehicle Procedure
G	Cleaner Safer Greener Communities Removing Nuisance Vehicles

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REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Date of Meeting:	**9th June 2003**		
Public			
Key Decision:	**Yes**	**Recorded in Forward Plan:**	**Yes**
Inside/Outside Policy Framework			

Title:	**DEALING WITH ABANDONED VEHICLES**
Report of:	**Head of Commercial & Technical Services**
Report reference:	**CTS/13-03**

Summary:

There is a growing problem of vehicles being abandoned on public and private land. This report gives details of the problem and sets out a number of ways in which this problem may be tackled.

Recommendations - It is recommended that Members approve the following proposals :-

a. Commercial and Technical Services Unit assume responsibility for dealing with abandoned vehicles.

b. The City Council enter discussions with Cumbria County Council with a view to the City Council administering the storage and disposal of abandoned vehicles on behalf of the County Council for an agreed cost.

c. The Crime and Disorder Partnership be requested to provide £20,000 annually to cover the cost of administering the scheme for dealing with abandoned vehicles on a trial basis.

d. The procedures for dealing with abandoned and untaxed vehicles as set out in Appendix 2 be adopted subject to any minor refinements arising as a result of further discussions with partners.

e. The proposals set out above be subject to a review after 12 months of operation.

Contact Officer: Keith Poole **Ext:** 5073

DEALING WITH ABANDONED VEHICLES

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1. Existing Situation

Both nationally and locally there is a growing problem of how to deal with abandoned vehicles. Many vehicle owners, rather than fund the proper disposal of the vehicle are simply dumping the vehicle. Many of these abandoned vehicles than become targets for vandals who damage or burn the vehicle.

The Government has expressed determination to tackle this problem, which has grown substantially in recent years. In a speech on 24th April 2001 on improving local environments, the Prime Minister said:

"Abandoned cars are a major and increasing problem in many areas. They encourage crime and make an area look squalid and run down. According to an RAC survey, 10,000 cars were dumped in Birmingham last year alone.

We will press for the maximum fines to be imposed on those people abandoning vehicles where they can be traced. Local Authorities need to be able to deal with abandoned vehicles quickly. Two pilot schemes, in Newham and Lewisham, are now looking at the scope for Local Authorities to wheel clamp untaxed, nuisance vehicles and remove them after 24 hours. If these pilots are successful we will roll this scheme out nationally."

To progress this issue DEFRA circulated a consultation document in October 2001 reviewing how the problem could be tackled. A copy of this consultation document is attached in the Appendix to this report. Section 2 of the consultation document gives a good summary of the

problem.

2. The responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles rests with the district council under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and the Removal and Disposal of Vehicle Regulations 1986. However it is the duty of the County Council to store and dispose of these removed vehicles. The Government has already implemented a number of changes to the regulations to assist in the process of removing vehicles and further changes will occur in the future.

3. In 2002 in Carlisle, a total of 646 vehicles were notified as being abandoned and staff in the Environmental Health Division had to institute procedures to have these removed. Appendix 1 details the various stages which have to be followed in order to remove a vehicle. This procedure as it exists now is lengthy and it can be a number of weeks before vehicles are removed. It is often the case that vehicles are burnt or vandalised before they are removed. Of the 646 vehicles which were originally notified action had eventually to be taken to remove 246 vehicles. It is assumed that the remaining vehicles were removed by their owners without any Council action being needed or removed by other persons.

4. In 2002 the cost of removing each vehicle was £50 under an arrangement with a local Car Recovery firm. This represented a total cost of £12,300 to the City Council. With regard to the present situation, base budget provision has been made in 2003/04 for £14,500 to be available to deal with the removal of unauthorised vehicles and £3450 is available for the disposal of burnt out vehicles. With the increasing scope and cost of dealing with this problem it is uncertain whether this allocation will be sufficient to deal with the problem. No budget is available for the staff costs involved in dealing with this issue.

5. Options for the Future

At the present time staff in the Environmental Protection Services Unit (Environmental Quality Section) deal with the disposal of abandoned vehicles. Due to the amount of new Environmental legislation with which they have to comply, this section have discussed the transfer of responsibility for dealing with abandoned vehicles to the Commercial & Technical Services Unit. It is proposed that staff in the Neighbourhood Services Team deal with abandoned vehicles due to the synergy with the car parking function. This will

enable the Environmental Quality Section to concentrate on its core workload which has increased substantially due to new legislation.

6. In carrying out the job of dealing with abandoned vehicles the Commercial and Technical Services Unit propose to implement the draft procedures set out on Appendix 2. These procedures are still the subject of discussions with other interested parties such as the Police, Fire Service, County Council Waste Management Officer, DVLA and disposal contractors. These ongoing discussions are unlikely to result in any major changes to the procedures.

2. CONSULTATION

1. Consultation to Date

Consultation has taken place with Cumbria Police and Cumbria Fire Service to gather information about the extent of the problem. The Fire Service report that in the last year they have had to deal with 210 burnt out vehicles. The Police and the Carlisle Crime Reduction Partnership are concerned about the extent of the problem and have been helpful in putting forward information on good practice in other parts of the County, discussions with them are ongoing. Discussions have taken place with Allerdale District Council who already operate a scheme to deal with Abandoned Vehicles. Their experience and comments has been useful in preparing this report.

2. Consultation Proposed

As explained earlier discussions with a number of parties are still ongoing to refine the proposals. It is further proposed that discussion takes place with Eden District Council to see if they wish the City Council to assist them in dealing with Abandoned Vehicles.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members approve the following proposals:-

a. Commercial and Technical Services Unit assume responsibility for dealing with abandoned vehicles.

b. The City Council enter discussions with Cumbria County Council with a view to the City Council administering the storage and disposal of abandoned vehicles on behalf of the County Council for an agreed cost.

c. The Crime and Disorder Partnership be requested to provide £20,000 annually to cover the cost of administering the scheme for

dealing with abandoned vehicles.

d. The procedures for dealing with abandoned and untaxed vehicles as set out in Appendix 2 be adopted subject to any minor refinements arising as a result of further discussions with partners.

e. The proposals set out above be subject to a review after 12 months of operation.

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The above recommendations are considered to be necessary in order to better deal with the problem of abandoned vehicles. The effectiveness of the scheme will be reviewed after 12 months of operation at which time modifications may be appropriate.

2. IMPLICATIONS

1. Staffing / Resources

The Staff in the Environmental Quality Section will be freed from the task of having to deal with abandoned vehicles. This will enable them to deal with tasks arising from new Environmental Health legislation regularly being introduced.

The Neighbourhood Services Team will be able to use its existing skills in observing and dealing with vehicles contravening parking regulations. It is difficult at this stage to estimate the likely staff resources needed to administer these functions however the best estimate is one full time Technical/Clerical Assistant costing £20,000.

2. Financial

The cost of removing vehicles must be funded by the City Council. A budget of £17,950 is available for this work for 2003/04. Based on existing costs this is sufficient to remove 359 vehicles in the year.

The cost of storing and disposing of vehicles will be borne by the County Council. Subject to an agreement being reached with the County Council the City Council will administer this function with all relevant costs being refunded by the County Council, including a proportion of the staff costs.

The staff costs for administering this function is estimated at £20,000. It is estimated that 25% of these costs will be funded by the County Council under the proposed joint agreement. The remaining cost of £15,000 together with any additional costs for the removal of vehicles (over and above 359 in number) are unfunded at present.

It is proposed that a bid be submitted to the Crime and Disorder Partnership to fund these costs on a trial basis. Note however that the City Council and the County Council are likely to have to meet any costs arising upon completion of the trial.

3. Legal

Detailed discussions are still to take place with the Head of Legal Services regarding the proposals in this report and any joint agreement with the County Council.

4. Corporate

If a more effective scheme for dealing with this problem can be found then this is likely to help achieve the corporate objective of improving the quality of life in the City.

5. Risk Management

It is suggested that these proposals be subject to review after 12 months. This will enable funding to be reviewed together with the cost effectiveness of the scheme. Discussions with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have indicated that they may be willing to fund any shortfall in operating this scheme for an initial trial period.

6. Equality Issues

N/A

7. Environmental

The swift removal of abandoned vehicles can only benefit the environment.

8. Crime and Disorder

Consultation has taken place with Cumbria Police and Fire Service in the preparation of this report. The proposals are based on similar schemes in other areas which have been effective in reducing crime

and disorder.

Appendix 1

Existing Procedure for Removal of Abandoned Vehicles

Stage No.	Action Required
1.	Initial report of the abandoned vehicle is received. This is reported to Cumbria Police
2.	Cumbria Police carry out site inspection to verify location and condition of vehicle. Police also check whether vehicle has been involved in an accident or is stolen.
3.	If the Police consider the vehicle to be abandoned then the City Council is notified.
4.	The City Council places a notice on the vehicle requiring it to be removed within 24 hours, 7 days or 15 days depending on circumstances. Failure to remove vehicle may then result in its removal.
5.	After expiry of the notice period arrangements can be made for the removal of vehicle.
6.	Details of vehicle forwarded to disposal contractor for action.

Appendix 2

Procedure for Dealing with Abandoned Vehicles

CONTENTS

1. Untaxed Vehicles
2. Reporting of Abandoned Vehicles
3. Removal of Abandoned Vehicles
4. Storage of Vehicles
5. Disposal of Abandoned Vehicles

Section 1 - Untaxed Vehicles

Arrangements are proposed between the City Council and the DVLA so that the City Council can report details of untaxed vehicles to the DVLA. The DVLA can then take appropriate action against the keeper of the vehicle.

This scheme will help play a part in reducing the number of abandoned vehicles as the DVLA may be better able to trace the owners of untaxed vehicles before they become abandoned.

Council Officers who are regularly involved in outside activities (e.g. Parking Attendants, Park Patrols, Monitoring Officers etc.) will report any untaxed vehicles. This will involve completing a reporting form giving details of the vehicle. This form will be passed to the Car Parking Section before being forwarded to DVLA for action.

Section 2 - Reporting of Abandoned Vehicles

It is proposed that details of the procedures for dealing with

abandoned vehicles be circulated to local residents through the Focus Magazine. This will ensure that residents can report abandoned vehicles to the Car Parking section promptly thus enabling the Council to take action as quickly as possible.

In addition to this, Council Officers who are regularly involved in outside activities will also report details of abandoned vehicles.

Details of all reports received will go to the Car Parking section who will institute the procedures set out in Section 3 - Removal of Abandoned Vehicles.

Section 3 - Removal of Abandoned Vehicles

The Car Parking Section will receive all reports of abandoned vehicles and will then take the following actions:-

No.	Proposed Action
1.	Forward details of vehicle to Police via Fax or E-mail.
2.	Car Parking Section arrange for notice to be placed on the vehicle. The following types of notice will be used :-
	• For vehicles abandoned on the highway, or on private land, which are considered to have no value, the notice period prior to removal will be 24 hrs for vehicles on the highway. After expiry of notice period vehicle will be removed to compound for storage or disposal. For vehicles on private land a notice must be served on the landowner giving them 15 days to object to the proposed removal of the vehicle. After expiry of this period the vehicle will be removed.
	• For vehicles abandoned on the highway but which have some value, the notice period will be 1 day. After expiry of notice period vehicle will be removed to compound for storage. A 7 day notice will be sent to the last registered

	keeper informing them of actions taken and from where the vehicle can be claimed prior to disposal. For vehicles on private land a notice must be served on the landowner giving them 15 days to object to the proposed removal of the vehicle. After expiry of this period the vehicle will be removed.
	• For vehicles which are creating a hazard on the highway, these will be removed immediately to storage.
3.	Police to examine their database to identify whether the vehicle has been involved in an accident, is reported stolen or is known to them for another reason. Any available information is then forwarded to the Car Parking Section. This information should therefore normally be available prior to any vehicle being removed.

Section 4 - Storage of Abandoned Vehicles

Under the relevant legislation it is the responsibility of the City Council to remove abandoned vehicles. It is then the responsibility of the County Council to store and dispose of the vehicles. Discussions with the County Council have indicated their desire for the City Council to administer all functions, including employing a contractor to remove, store, and dispose of vehicles. The County Council would refund the City Council for all relevant costs incurred.

It is intended that tenders be invited from local vehicles recovery firms for this work.

Section 5 - Disposal of Abandoned Vehicles

With regard to the disposal of abandoned vehicles there are specific requirements as to how and when disposal can take place. The following actions are proposed.

a. In the case of a vehicle which is in such a condition that it ought to be destroyed, and on which no current licence is displayed at the time of its removal. This vehicle may be disposed of at any time after its removal.

b. In the case of a vehicle which is in such condition that it ought to be destroyed, and on which a current licence is displayed. This vehicle may be disposed of any time after the licence expires.

c. In any other case, any time after such steps as may be prescribed have been taken by a competent authority to find a person appearing to the authority taking such steps to be the owner of the vehicle and either :

    i. they have failed to find such a person, or

    ii. he has failed to comply with a notice served on him in the prescribed manner by a competent authority requiring him to remove the vehicle from their custody within the prescribed period,

    but, in a case where it appears to the authority proposing to dispose of the vehicle that a licence is in force in respect of the vehicle, not a time earlier than the expiry of the licence.

a. If, before a vehicle is disposed of, the vehicle is claimed by a person who satisfies the authority that he is its owner and pays such sums in respect of its removal and storage as may be prescribed to the authority entitled to those sums, the authority shall permit him to remove the vehicle from their custody within such period as may be prescribed.

b. If, before the end of the period of one year beginning with the date on which a vehicle is sold by an authority in pursuance of this section, any person satisfies that authority that at the time of the sale he was the owner of the vehicle, that authority shall pay him any sum by which the proceeds of sale exceed the aggregate of such sums in respect of the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle as may be prescribed.

APPENDIX B

CARLISLE+EDEN Crime Reduction Partnership

The Carlisle and Eden Arson Task Force

Problem Solving Event (Vehicle Arson)

Carlisle Racecourse
Wednesday 8th September 2004

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1. List of delegates and contacts
2. Copy of presentation by Pc Priestley
3. Copy of the presentation by Mike Dixon.
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Introduction

The Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) formed the Arson Task Force following a successful funding bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It aims to co-ordinate a multi-agency response to levels of arson committed in North Cumbria, implementing new schemes and initiatives to reduce all forms of arson.

Invitations were sent to a number of different stakeholder organisations and identified individuals who have a particular interest or responsibility with regard to the issues of abandoned vehicles or vehicle arson.

The positive response and subsequent attendance was very encouraging and demonstrated that vehicle arson and abandonment is a real problem for many different organisations.

The purpose of the event:

- **Raise awareness of the existence of the Task Force and its aims.**
- **Identify stakeholders.**
- **Encourage stakeholder involvement.**
- **Highlight the extent of the problem we have in North Cumbria.**
- **Illustrate how people have tackled the problem in other areas.**
- **Debate the way we currently address the issues and explore how we could improve our response.**
- **Identify priorities for the Task Force to address with a view to forming a strategy**

Highlighting the problem

Pc Jason Priestley the Arson Task Force Administrator illustrated the extent of the problem in North Cumbria. A number of main issues were raised:

Vehicle fires account for 21% of all deliberate fires attended by Cumbria Fire Service.
The City of Carlisle is the problem area with a low percentage of vehicle fires occurring in the Eden district.
Cumbria Fire Service attended 166 deliberate car fires at a total cost to them of over £146,000, equating to £880 per call out. Interestingly more than 50 other cars were burnt out without fire service attendance, these vehicles still have a cost implication for removal and disposal.
Cumbria Police had reported to them 272 thefts of vehicles (a known source of burnt outs). The total value of this property being over £250,000.
Carlisle City Council had 458 abandoned vehicles reported to them, many of these cars are not uplifted. This is mainly due to the cumbersome and slow 7day removal policy currently operating in Carlisle. Many vehicles are moved prior to the arrival of the Council Officer or removal agent.

The main sources of vehicle arson are:

- **Stolen and subsequently burnt out to destroy property and evidence**
- **End of life vehicles that are abandoned by owners when no longer of use.**
- **Community vehicles (pool cars) used by criminals that are later set alight when they are no longer required or become known to the police.**

Arson set to increase

Both Home Office and local police data sources show that if we do not step up our response to the problem then arson will continue to rise at alarming rates. This could mean an increase of up to 48% over the next two years.

To give an insight into how partnerships in other areas are successfully tackling the problem two representatives from such partnerships were invited to share their experiences with the delegation.
Both of these initiatives are being held up as best practice, below is a summary of their work.

Best Practice 1

The Avon and Somerset Car Clear Scheme (MIKE DIXON of MJD Associates)
Mike Dixon formerly a director with Bristol City Council now working as an independent consultant was instrumental in the formation of the Avon and Somerset Car Clear Scheme, a scheme set up to address the growing problem of vehicle arson.
The Avon and Somerset Scheme is nationally recognised as best practice and was the winner of 'The Tilley' Problem Solving Award 2002 for addressing vehicle crime.

He stressed the importance of recognising the issue as a joint problem and that a partnership approach must be employed if any scheme was to be successful.

He illustrated that burnt out vehicles as well as creating the appearance of a ghetto have an associated cost implication to many partner organisations. This includes fire and police service response and the local authorities responsibility to remove, store and dispose of these vehicles.

The scheme which has been fully operational since 2002, contains the following strands:

Community awareness - Informing people of the problem and offering ways to reduce it. (Including a hotline for abandoned vehicles)

Vehicle removal schemes – Using existing legislation and low risk/risk free procedures and policies to remove abandoned and community vehicles as quickly as 30 minutes.

Reducing the supply of un- roadworthy vehicles - by way of vehicle amnesty, offering the public a legitimate way of disposing of unwanted, end of life vehicles.

Education\Targeting Offenders – targeting those who commit or have the potential to commit arson through education, peer pressure and discussion.

The main thrust of the scheme was to develop a system for the removal of abandoned and 'at risk' vehicles from the streets of Bristol.

With regard to vehicle removal the scheme employs current relevant legislation (The Road traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Sec 99 and Sec 101)) to counter abandoned vehicles.

Mr Dixon made particular reference to the concept of targeting pool vehicles for removal and the advantages of it, reducing the risk of arson and the means to commit crime.
He explained how the Avon and Somerset scheme operates near to the edge of legislation but due to the fact that many of these vehicles are not officially owned by anyone and their users do not have the relevant documents I.E. Road Fund Licence, MOT and Insurance, very few people come forward to claim 'their' cars back.
He added that by law a person would be entitled to apply for compensation for any vehicle uplifted by such a scheme having firstly borne the cost of the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle. In addition any person being the owner of such a vehicle would be liable to prosecution for the related document offences as outlined above.

Therefore the likelihood of an 'owner' coming forward is very rare and in fact out of the thousands of vehicles uplifted and crushed only a couple of legal challenges have occurred. Mr Dixon maintained that this presents a low risk to any partnership employing such a scheme not only due to the fact that the amount of compensation awarded is very low.

The criteria for a vehicle being considered abandoned is that it must be:

Illegally operated
Owned by no one, used by many
Have an 'involved in crime' marker on it.
Be un-taxed and uninsured.

Mr Dixon summed up by explaining that the scheme had achieved a 20% reduction in vehicle arson in the Avon and Somerset area.
More recently he assisted The Chester Partnership in developing an arson reduction/abandoned vehicle scheme that has achieved an immediate effect in their area resulting in the following:
Reduction of vehicle arson by 37.5%.
38.5% reduction in abandoned vehicles.
58% reduction of abandoned vehicles on Housing Association land.
Distributed 8000 leaflets promoting the scheme.

Established good data sharing frameworks between agencies.

Best Practice 2

Easington's Response to Arson (PC James Cowell)

Pc James Cowell of Durham Constabulary then gave an insight into Easington's Response to Arson (ERA). An initiative involving Durham Police, Easington District Council and the local Fire Service.
The ERA is currently being reviewed by the Home Office for recognition as 'Best Practice'.

He outlined how the initiative has addressed three forms of arson:
Vehicles
Derelict Houses
Flammable Waste

He described that a particular area namely Easington had been suffering from high incidence of car fires, the highest in Durham Force area.

He explained that many cars are bought cheaply and used as community or pool cars, used in crime then subsequently abandoned or set alight.
Most end of life cars have little scrap value and are abandoned on street or land rather than being disposed of in the proper way.
This leads to areas becoming run down and neglected giving a bad impression and resulting in an increased fear of crime.

PC Cowell also explained how it is essential that partnerships adopt an efficient abandoned vehicle scheme, the one existing in Easington removes vehicles immediately therefore reducing the opportunity for the vehicle to become burnt out.
He outlined that for the purpose of the scheme a definition of an abandoned vehicle would be:

"...A vehicle that appears to have been left at a location in circumstances giving rise to the presumption that it had been given up or forsaken and not left unattended. A combination of a vehicles poor condition, lack of registered keeper, expired Road Fund Licence and a period in situ are factors which might lead to abandonment".

Through the scheme Police Officers, Traffic Wardens and Street Wardens identify abandoned vehicles and can attach notices to them, in hotspot areas the officer will request an immediate uplift and will wait with the vehicle until the removal agent attends.
This scheme will operate 24hrs 7 days a week if required.
The vehicle is then stored at a secure site for 7 days before disposal (destruction)

The Easington Scheme will seize illegitimate vehicles from people driving around who do not possess the proper documentation, the kind of cars used in crime or to transport criminals. The police will stop such a vehicle, ask users to vacate and then seize the vehicle. This tactic has had great success in reducing abandonment, fire setting and disrupting crime (including vehicle crime) and those involved in it.

The scheme has led to such a reduction in abandoned vehicles that officers are now finding it increasing difficult to find abandoned vehicles within their area.

The Easington Partnership have removed and seized hundreds of vehicles and have yet to be successfully litigated against by anyone who has had their vehicle uplifted.

This is due to a strong partnership being jointly responsible for the scheme and any subsequent risk of litigation.

The Workshops

Following the presentations the delegation were asked to get involved in a number of workshops that focussed on the following topics.

Policy and Procedure
Preventative Measures
Targeting and Investigation
Data Systems and Information Sharing

Issues raised in the workshops were fed back to the group as a whole.

Feedback from the Workshops

Based on the SWOT model of identifying **S**trengths **W**eaknesses **O**pportunities and **T**hreats

The attached tables show the items discussed and identified by the different workshop groups.

Policy and Procedure Workshop Feedback (Workshop one)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• We stick to the law – don't take unnecessary risks • We all recognise the need to improve • We have recognised that the current problem will get worse following the European Directive. • We have an Arson Task Force and a general will to work together on this subject • Our Partnership relationships are well established	• 7 Day system – too long to leave a vulnerable vehicle on the street • Systems do not talk to each other • No single point of contact • Very poor information sharing • Two contractors – who has control of it all • System not continuous – vehicles difficult to track from point of identification • Delays in system due to extra tier being introduced
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Scope for regular meetings between practitioners • Network already established and will exists to move the issue forward in a positive way • Funding could be made available by demonstrating cost/benefit to partners • Use of PCSOs • Use of MJD Associates and ERA in Easington as mentors	• Legal Services of both Police and Local Authorities • Who pays – which budget? • Time commitment – will this be added to someone's existing job

Preventative Measures Workshop Feedback (Workshop 2)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Arson Control Forum • Operation Minx • POPO (Prolific and Other Priority Offenders)	• Few Prosecutions • No witnesses • Data sharing • Fragmented Education • Dedicated Youth Workers
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• DVLA Operations • Targeted Response • Provide Security Products • 'Design out' areas for burning cars • Auction- Sources • Recovery to destroy cars • Tenancy Agreements • MOBEC Scheme (West) • Nuisance Vehicle Officer • LSP environment Safe Community • ASBO • Involve whole county • Police Community Officers • Shared recovery scheme	• Resources • Legal services

Targeting and Investigation Workshop (Workshop 3)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Arsonists (known) • Known Hotspots • Desire - to implement best practice	• Fear of legal issues • Low detection Rates (forensics) • Forensics (cost Vs benefits) • Lack of local support for local contractors • Documentation • Lack of partnership working
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Increase intelligence • Local community (encourage) • Fire service – information • ASBOs • Joint agency training • Removal of vehicles • Loss of opportunity	• Increasing • Quality of life • Environmental • Increasing problem

Data Systems and Information Sharing (Workshop 4)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Support of partner agencies • Shared risks • Reduced risks • Reduce duplication • Shared resources • Compiling shared information • Gathering intelligence	• I. T problems • Securing data • Ownership • Definition (also threat)
OPPORTUNITIES • Forum/funding • Partnerships • Shared learning • New systems	**THREATS** • Timescales • Budget restraints

Identifying Priorities

Having listened to the speakers and attended the workshops delegates were then asked to fill in a feedback form that asked the following questions?

1. **List no more than seven actions/issues that partners need to adopt?**
2. **How could the activity of the Arson Task Force assist your organisation to achieve its aims and objectives?**
3. **What will (should) be your organisations contribution to addressing the problem of vehicle arson?**
4. **What do you think other organisations can do (should be doing), to address the issues identified today?**

The responses were collated and a number of common themes emerged.
This list shows the items that appeared more than 3 times on delegate's lists. Numbers in brackets show how many delegates rated the item as a priority

1.DATA and Information Sharing (23)
It is important that the partnership is able to share data quickly and easily and that information and intelligence on who is using end of life vehicles, where they are abandoned and likely to be abandoned and where vehicle fires are occurring, in order that we can properly begin to prevent vehicle arson and abandonment.

2.Partnership Working (21)
A need to adopt a multi agency approach when dealing with the problem was recognised and that the issue of vehicle arson and abandonment is a problem for us all, this was reiterated in the presentations given by Mike Dixon and Jim Cowell.

3.Change or define existing policies/adopt vehicle removal scheme. (19)
Some of our existing procedures are slow and do not deal with abandoned vehicles in an efficient manner, we need to adapt or create new policies and procedures to speed up removal of abandoned vehicles.

4.Identify/allocate/secure funding (16)
Funding must be identified and secured in order that any scheme can be sustained.

5.Dedicate roles in each organisation (11)
Properly identify roles in each organisation so that arson reduction work is 'built in' to our organisations aims.

6.Take risks collectively (9)
Be prepared to take risks with new vehicle removal and seizure schemes and share these risks so that no one partner becomes isolated in face of any litigation

7.Understand each other's responsibilities (8)
Partners need to understand each other's roles, responsibilities and limitations.

8.Identfy Best Practice (8)
The event was well received and the outside speakers were thought to be interesting and informative, they shared best practice and illustrated how partnerships in other areas are dealing with the same problems. Efforts to identify other best practice models must continue to take the AFT forward.

9.Take immediate action (6)
It is important that following the initial launch of the Task Force that a strategy is formed quickly and actions are instigated at the earliest opportunity.

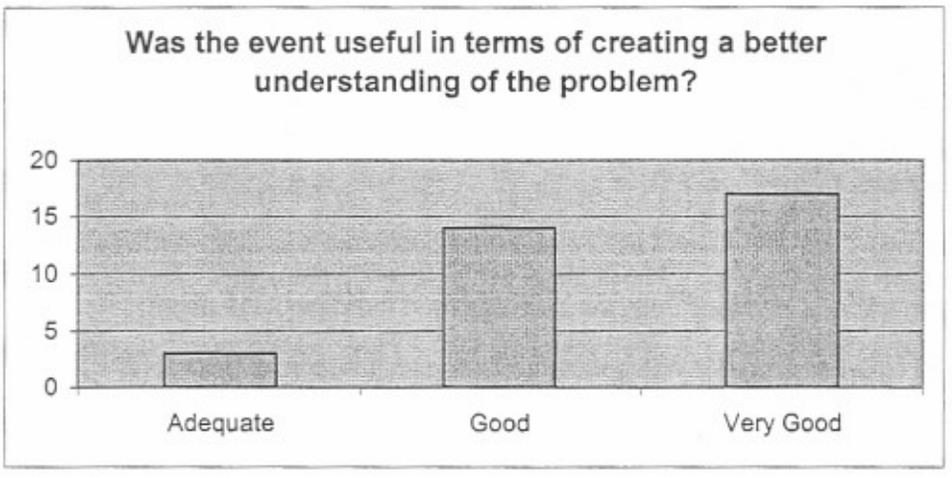
10.Involvement and support for Removal Agents (6)
Removal agents are a vital component of any vehicle removal scheme and so it is very important that they are consulted at the outset and given continued support whilst any scheme is in operation.

11.Media/public awareness (5) Ensure that the public are aware of any strategy, action or service available through media and/or a helpline to report abandoned vehicles.

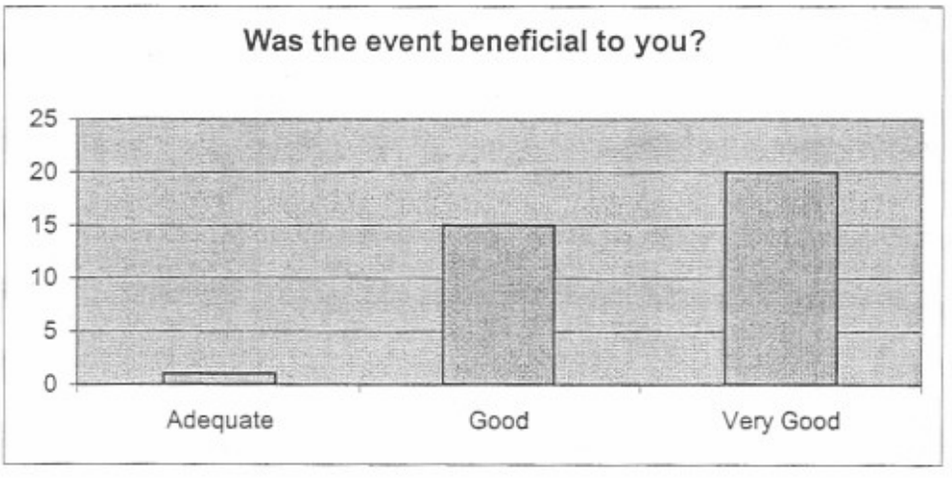
12. Legal issues (4) There will be legal issues with the implementation or adaptation of any policy or procedure. Early consultation with the relevant legal service departments is necessary at the outset to avoid problems arising once a scheme is up and running.

Summary/conclusion

The seminar itself was generally well received. Most people found that they had a better understanding of the problem after the event.



In addition most attendees commented that the event was beneficial to them in their role.



All representatives stated that their organisation had something to offer in terms of addressing the problem. Many felt that a more focused approach to the problem would be beneficial to their organisation.

Most of those attending stated that the work of the Arson Task Force would positively impact on their organisations aims and objectives. Many of the delegates highlighted the fact that dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour was high on their list of priorities.

The benefits of a focused approach to vehicle arson repeatedly highlighted by delegates were:

- **Reduce number of fires**
- **Reduce crime**
- **Reduce fear of crime**
- **Reduce anti-social behaviour**
- **Promote a safer/cleaner community**
- **Reduce costs to partners**

As a result of the event day The Arson Task Force will be producing a strategy document to address the problem of vehicle arson. The strategy will incorporate many of the issues identified by delegates and be based upon the themes raised throughout the event.

The main themes of the strategy will incorporate the findings highlighted in this report

These are:

Data and information exchange
Identify ways to collate all data on fire and hold this in one place to which all relevant users have access.
Also establishing formal ways of exchanging intelligence and information on the factors of arson, including offender's victims and locations and also those potentially at risk.

Partnership Working
Commitment from partners to work towards arson reduction.
Maintain regular contact with partners to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to arson reduction.
Ensure that relevant partners identify roles within their own organisations so that agreements entered into now will continue in the future.

Funding
Identify funding to ensure both the continuity of the Task Force and the schemes or initiatives implemented by it.
Consider ways to join up existing budgets to address issues such as vehicle removal.

Policy (vehicle recovery)
Adapt existing policies to speed up the removal of abandoned vehicles.
Ensure that between the partner agencies that there are no gaps in service with regard to abandoned vehicles.
Where appropriate join up existing policies or create new ones to address issues such as the sources of abandoned vehicles.

The Arson Task Force would like to thank all who attended the event for their valuable input. It was evident that those attending had a genuine concern regarding arson reduction this was illustrated by the enthusiasm shown in both the workshops and general discussions. In addition the event provided a good opportunity for interaction with other agencies and a chance to gain an appreciation of others responsibilities and limitations.

Finally if you have any comments to make specifically regarding this report or with regard to the issues of vehicle arson or abandoned vehicles the Arson Task Force would invite you to make contact through the administrator.
Contact details are shown on the letter accompanying this report.

Appendix C

Report from

M. Dixon
MJD Associates

Dealing with Abandoned and Arsoned Vehicles

The Car Clear Scheme

APPENDIX C

Dealing With Abandoned and Arsoned Vehicles

In June 2003 a report titled, Dealing with Abandoned Vehicles, was presented to members detailing the issues faced in Carlisle.

Since then, the Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership has been working closely with the Commercial and Technical Services department to seek best practice to deal with the problem of abandoned and arsoned vehicles.

This culminated in a problem solving event held in September 2004 when police officers, fire officers and local government officers from Carlisle and Cumbria attended a seminar to examine the extent of the problem and to learn from best practice around the country.

One scheme in particular has come to the fore; Car Clear.

The initiative was developed in Bristol and is a partnership between the local authority, police and fire service. The scheme is recognised as Best Practice by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. By removing vehicles quickly, the initiative has reduced the incidents of vehicle arson and has helped to address the issue of crime and the fear of crime.

The objectives of the partnership, are to reduce the incidents of abandoned and arsoned vehicles and to improve the quality of life for the communities most affected.

To achieve this, a strategy was implemented that revolved around four main elements.

- Community Awareness: Informing people of the problem and offering ways of helping to reduce it.

- Targetting Offenders: Entering Schools and educating the key offending group of 14-16 year olds and applying peer pressure by discussion and awarness.

- Reducing the supply of Unroadworthy Vehicles: Offering the public ways of surrendering their vehicles which was cost effective to them.

- Vehicle Removal Schemes: Introducing fast track removal schemes.

The central part of the Car Clear strategy is vehicle removal, concentrating on the early identification of vulnerable vehicles and their speedy removal. A number of schemes are in place, two of which removes vehicles within 30 minutes and are operational 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

As a consequence of the success of the strategy, in the first full year of operation in Bristol, vehicle arson was reduced by 20% and vehicle crime fell for the first time in five years.

Car Clear is now being developed nationally and has attracted major development funding from the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister. Potential other sources of external funding are also available.

Following the meeting in September, it was agreed that options to develop Car Clear should be pursued, including external funding streams to develop the initiative, firstly as a pilot scheme and then potentially County wide.

To better understand the scheme and the implications for Carlisle, the Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership has appointed M J D Associates to advise on the development of the scheme and to assist in the production of a comprehensive policy that deals with abandoned and arsoned vehicles on a multi agency level.

A director of M J D Associates was responsible for developing Car Clear in Bristol and is now working with the Cheshire Arson Task Force and Penzance District Council to develop the initiative across Cheshire and Cornwall respectively. It is believed that this knowledge, experience and understanding of the scheme would be beneficial to the Council as a comprehensive policy is developed.

For policy development to be successful, it is necessary for each agency to understand the processes involved in each element of the strategy and to agree their respective roles and responsibilities

What follows, details how Car Clear was developed in Bristol and then explains what needs to be done, by whom and the resources needed to develop Car Clear in Carlisle.

Based on the Car Clear model, set out below is:

- each agencies role and responsibility for the principal removal schemes.
- the key elements to raising community awareness.
- how the key offender group was targeted.
- the schemes developed to reduce vehicle supply.
- the methodology and level of resource necessary to operate a dedicated telephone line.
- the training requirements.

Removal Procedures

Police/Fire Scheme

This scheme relies upon the police to identify and check vehicles, including DVLA and PNC checks and by using the powers of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, the scheme allows the immediate removal of any vehicle which in the identifying police officers opinion is likely to be vandalized or set on fire. These vehicles are removed by the police removal contractor within 30 minutes of identification during any twenty four hour period and immediately crushed.

For vehicles to be crushed immediately they must satisfy the following criteria:

- A vehicle which has a previous keeper or an owner who denies ownership.
- Has an involved in crime marker on the PNC.
- Is not displaying a valid excise license.
- Is of low value.

The scheme uses the police removal contractor and recovery agents.

Community Vehicle Scheme

It was recognised by the Car Clear partners in Bristol, that 'Community Vehicles', which are illegally operated, often for criminal purposes, are ultimately abandoned and arsoned to destroy evidence. This scheme involved removing such vehicles identified as no registered owner, not taxed and has an 'involved in crime' PNC marker within 30 minutes of notification.

The scheme uses the police removal contractor and recovery agents. This scheme is wholly operated by the police.

Raising Community Awareness

Raising Community Awareness is a key ingredient to the success of the initiative. Giving people access to dedicated contact points and information and offering them ways to reduce the problem, proved to be very effective.

The actions used in the strategy include:

Vandalised Hotline

A dedicated Vandalised Hot Line, operated by the police, was established. This provided the public with a single point of contact and avoided people being passed between agencies.

In Bristol, this equated to 6 -7 calls daily to each of the three divisions. Investigating each call became a normal part of the daily routine for divisional police officers.

Information Booklet

An information booklet was produced and delivered in targeted neighbourhoods.

Each booklet contained information on the scale of the problem, contact points and information on Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch.

Initially, the booklets were delivered in the identified and agreed Hot Spot areas. As the project grew, a total of 47000 booklets were produced and delivered in areas across the former Avon County Council authorities.

Targeting Offenders

It is important to educate the key offending group about the consequences of their actions, both on themselves and the communities most affected. To achieve this, year 10 pupils are being targeted through the Avon and Somerset Impact Road Show, which deals with vehicle crime. In a 1 to 1.5 hour session, pupils are faced with various scenarios, including vehicle arson, and work through the likely outcomes on all the people affected.

Youth Inclusion Projects

In Chester, the partnership has employed a youth worker through Crime Concern, to work with the Junior Youth Inclusion Programme specifically on fire reduction issues. The intention is to work with nominated children and their families through a range of diversionary and developmental activities designed to increase young peoples awareness of the risks associated with fire.

Reducing Vehicle Supply

Car Auctions and the Local Motor Traders

Car Clear has sought to reduce the supply of very cheap cars to the public, some of which end up abandoned, torched or used in local crime. This has been achieved by entering into agreements with the local motor trade and car auction companies. This is in addition to offering the public the facility to have their vehicle removed and disposed for a fee and amnesties, whereby vehicles in a given neighbourhood are removed free of charge.

Commercial Traders Scheme

Abandoned vandalised vehicles are a problem to private business and landowners as well. As a result of the publicised success of the project, Car Clear was approached by private businesses to set up a scheme for the removal of vehicles from their land.

The scheme deals with abandoned vehicles of no value and removal and disposal is guaranteed within 48 hours. A fair commercial rate is charged for this service.

To achieve this, a protocol is in place with the Police, whereby vehicle checks are done to establish if the vehicle is abandoned and to confirm it is not stolen or of Police interest.

This scheme is the most readily adaptable for Housing Associations and other private landowners to give permission to enter onto their land and remove abandoned vehicles.

Income Generation

The schemes detailed in the sections above provide an income stream for the Car Clear Partnership. In other areas of the country, the last know owner is pursued for the cost of removal and storage thereby providing a further income stream. In Easington County Durham for example, this principal is vigorously pursued and produces up to £25,000 annually.

Resource Requirements

Table 1 below details a series of issues that need to be addressed to implement Car Clear, by whom and the resources required. It is based on how the scheme operated in Bristol and Chester.

Table 1 – Resource Requirements

	WHAT	BY WHOM	RESOURCE
1	Police/Fire Scheme	POLICE/LOCAL AUTHORITY	POLICE CONTRACTOR
2	Community Vehicle Scheme	POLICE	POLICE CONTRACTOR
3	Enquiries to DVLA and PNC checks	POLICE/LOCAL AUTHORITY	POLICE
4	Public Hot Line telephone number to report abandoned vehicles. Average 1-2 calls per day	POLICE CALL CENTRE	ESTABLISH SERVICE AND OPERATE WITH EXISTING POLICE RESOURCES.
5	Booklet highlighting the dangers of vehicle arson and abandoned	POLICE/FIRE/LOCAL AUTHORITY	EXTERNAL FUNDING

	vehicles.		
6	Poster campaign/ youth worker/ education campaign in local schools	POLICE/FIRE/LOCAL AUTHORITY	PRODUCTION OF POSTERS EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH WORKER
7	Media campaign to draw attention to the problem and the initiatives	POLICE/FIRE//LOCAL AUTHORITY	EXISTING PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICES
8	Collect 'end of life' vehicles from private addresses for a small charge and/or implement an amnesty in Carlisle	LOCAL AUTHORITY	LOCAL AUTHORITY
9	Reducing Vehicle Supply Schemes	TO BE AGREED	TO BE AGREED
10	Data Sharing	TO BE AGREED	BESPOKE SOFTWARE SYSTEM

Policy Development

For the development of a comprehensive abandoned vehicles policy to be successful, the agencies need to:

1. agree the legal interpretation for Car Clear.
2. agree the resource requirements in Table 1.
3. identify external funding streams.
4. adapt the Commercial Traders Protocol to apply to removing vehicles from Housing Association and other major land owners land as appropriate.
5. agree an implementation plan.
6. identify the personnel to be trained and the sessions organized.
7. agree how data should be shared in order to streamline service enquiries and monitor the process from vehicle identification through to disposal.

The resources required to do so appear to largely exist, using processes and procedures that are already in place and that need minimal adaptation. For example, DVLA and PNC checks are already undertaken by the police, who have an existing communications centre. Checks are undertaken by the city

council to establish ownership when appropriate and storage and disposal routes are in place. The police have procedures in place with their contractors to remove vehicles within 30 minutes of identification.

Training Requirements

Key personnel will need to be trained in order to operate the new procedures effectively. This should include police officers, city council staff and fire officers.

The training includes:

- an explanation of the scheme and why it is being implemented.
- the legal backgound.
- how the scheme is to be operated.
- reporting procedures.
- scheme administration.

Data Sharing

In order to streamline public enquiries and monitor the process from vehicle identification to disposal, Carlisle City Council has had discussions with WPC Software, who provide a system that can be accessed by all agencies in support of Car Clear. Consideration should be given to examining further this option.

External Funding

To develop Car Clear in Carlisle, external funding sources should be sought. The most successful schemes across the country have obtained funding to develop a pilot scheme to measure effectiveness and once proven, then sought further funding to develop the scheme across the district and county.

The Arson Control Forum of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided Fire Authorities and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with many millions of pounds of development funding for such schemes. The scheme would also be eligible to apply for other government funds from other departments.

Michael Dixon
Director
M J D Associates
Rose Cottage
Cleeve Hill
Ubley
Bristol BS40 6PE
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Fax: 01761 463691
Email: mdixon@mjdasc.fsworld.co.uk

December 2004

APPENDIX D.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
Wheelclamping Operations Unit
Crime Reduction Group
3 Sandringham Park
Swansea Vale
Llansamlet
Swansea
SA7 0XZ

Telephone 01792 765117
Fax 01792 765151
GTN 1226 5117
Email julie.powell@dvla.gsi.gov.uk
Website http://www.dvla.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference:

Date:

Dear

WHEELCLAMPING FOR VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY EVASION

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Agency's wheelclamping scheme.

To ensure that the scheme is operated in a consistent manner the Agency has drawn up a code of practice (a copy of which is attached) which all councils participating in the scheme will have to sign up to. Failure to comply with any of the conditions will result in withdrawal of the powers.

In return for wheelclamping unlicensed vehicles the council will retain all wheelclamping fees (including de-clamping, impounding, storage fees and fees from auctioned vehicles up to the value of fees incurred by the council), except for surety payments (payment made against getting a tax disc), which will either be returned to the keeper on production of tax disc or to the Agency if not claimed.

Detailed working instructions along with training will be provided by DVLA.

If you wish to sign up to the code of practice, then please sign at the foot of the letter and return to the Agency in the enclosed envelope. My staff will then make the necessary arrangements for the Council to proceed with the scheme.

Yours sincerely

Julie Powell
Crime Reduction Group

Council wish to participate in the DVLA wheelclamping scheme and agree to sign up to all the terms and conditions in the code of practice.

Signed : _____ Date: _____
On behalf of Council

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CODE OF PRACTICE/ AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WHEELCLAMPING OF UNLICENSED VEHICLES.

1. The council will act as partners with DVLA and will operate within the regulations set out in the Vehicle Excise Duty (Immobilisation, Removal and Disposal of Vehicles) Regulations 1997 (as amended).

2. The council officers will spot unlicensed vehicles and use the online abandoned vehicles web link to authorise unlicensed vehicles 24 hours per day, as per the instructions in annex A.

If the online link is not available, the council can contact DVLA to seek authorisation to clamp. This information will be returned in the form of 4 messages:

a. Authorised to clamp or instantly lift

b. Not authorised to clamp but issue CLE2/6

c. Not authorised

d. Stolen Vehicle

2. In order for the offender to be prosecuted it is essential that the council official issue a CLE2/6 on the vehicle and send a copy to DVLA's Local Office for prosecution action to be taken forward.

3. When authorisation to clamp is given, then the council will immobilise the vehicle and issue a CLE2/6. An information leaflet and warning notices should be placed on the windscreen of the vehicle. Ideally, the authorisation of clamping and the actual clamping of a vehicle must take place as one action to reduce the risk of the owner returning to the vehicle and driving away.

4. DVLA should be informed of all actions taken on a vehicle at the end of the day. This information must be passed to DVLA in accordance with the instructions in Annex B.

5. If payment is made to release the vehicle, then the council should undertake to de-clamp the vehicle within two hours.

6. When payment is made at the pound or via the telephone, the appropriate paperwork should be completed.

7. If payment is not made within 24 hours of clamping, the vehicle should be soft-lifted and removed to the pound within the next 24 hours.

8. The vehicle pound must be secure, well lit and reasonably accessible.

9. The council should inform DVLA, Police and Trace-Line of the impounding of the vehicle.

10. When the vehicle is impounded, a detailed inspection of the vehicle should be undertaken and a vehicle inspection report completed.

11. Each vehicle will need to be evaluated and the information sent to DVLA to enable the vehicle to be categorised i.e. of value or not. This information must be passed to DVLA wheelclamping section in accordance with the instructions in Annex B.

12. Vehicles of value will need to be stored for a minimum of 14 days and vehicles of no value will need to be stored for a minimum 8 days.

13. No vehicle will be disposed of without authorisation from DVLA.

14. All vehicles disposed of by crushing should be disposed of within 7 days of the council receiving the authorisation. Once disposal is completed, the council should return the V876 that accompanies the authorisation of disposal to DVLA. This information updates the vehicle record.

15. All disposals via crushing should be completed on a licensed vehicle disposal site, and should reflect the current legislation.

16. Vehicles that are auctionable should be submitted to a reputable auction house for auction.

17. The council will provide a telephone number for the payment line and this should be manned from 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday.

18. Any problems or disputes will be resolved within 24 hours.

19. The council will be responsible for any damage to a vehicle whilst it is lifted on to their removal vehicle and during transportation to the pound.

20. The council will be responsible for all vehicles whilst in their custody in their vehicle pound.

21. The council will be able to instantly soft lift all vehicles i.e. remove the vehicle to the pound within the first 24 hours after authorisation if :

a. On agreement with DVLA

b. On police advice

c. If the officers are in danger

c. If the clamp has been previously stolen or there has been a high percentage of stolen clamps in a particular area.

22. The council will retain all wheelclamping fees: -

De-clamping £80
Impounding £160
Storage at £15 per day.

It will also retain all auction fees to the value of the council's costs.

23. A surety payment of £120 is payable against getting a valid tax disc. This money is refundable if a tax disc is produced. Any unclaimed surety payment should be sent to DVLA on the 15th day, and include details of the vehicle that it relates to.

24. After a vehicle has been impounded for 24 hours, DVLA will write to the registered keeper giving notification of where the vehicle is held and instructions on how to obtain possession.

25. DVLA will inform the Associations ABI HPI and FLA of all vehicles impounded, and respond to their instruction on any interest by their members.

26. There will be occasions when the de-clamping or release of a vehicle will be made free of charge e.g. terminal illness, car on the way to MOT etc. Only the Agency will make these decisions and each case will be assessed on its merits.

27. All training will be provided by DVLA. On site support will be available during the start of the scheme, and will continue thereafter by consultation via telephone and periodic visits by a member of DVLA staff.

28. DVLA will provide the authorisation to dispose of the vehicle after all actions have been taken.

29. All stationery will be provided by DVLA.

30. The regulations state that an appeal against wheelclamping can be made. All appeals will be dealt with by DVLA and its decision will be final.

31. All disputes over private land will be dealt with by DVLA. The council will be expected to provide detailed maps of what land is maintained at public expense. Again DVLA's decision will be final.

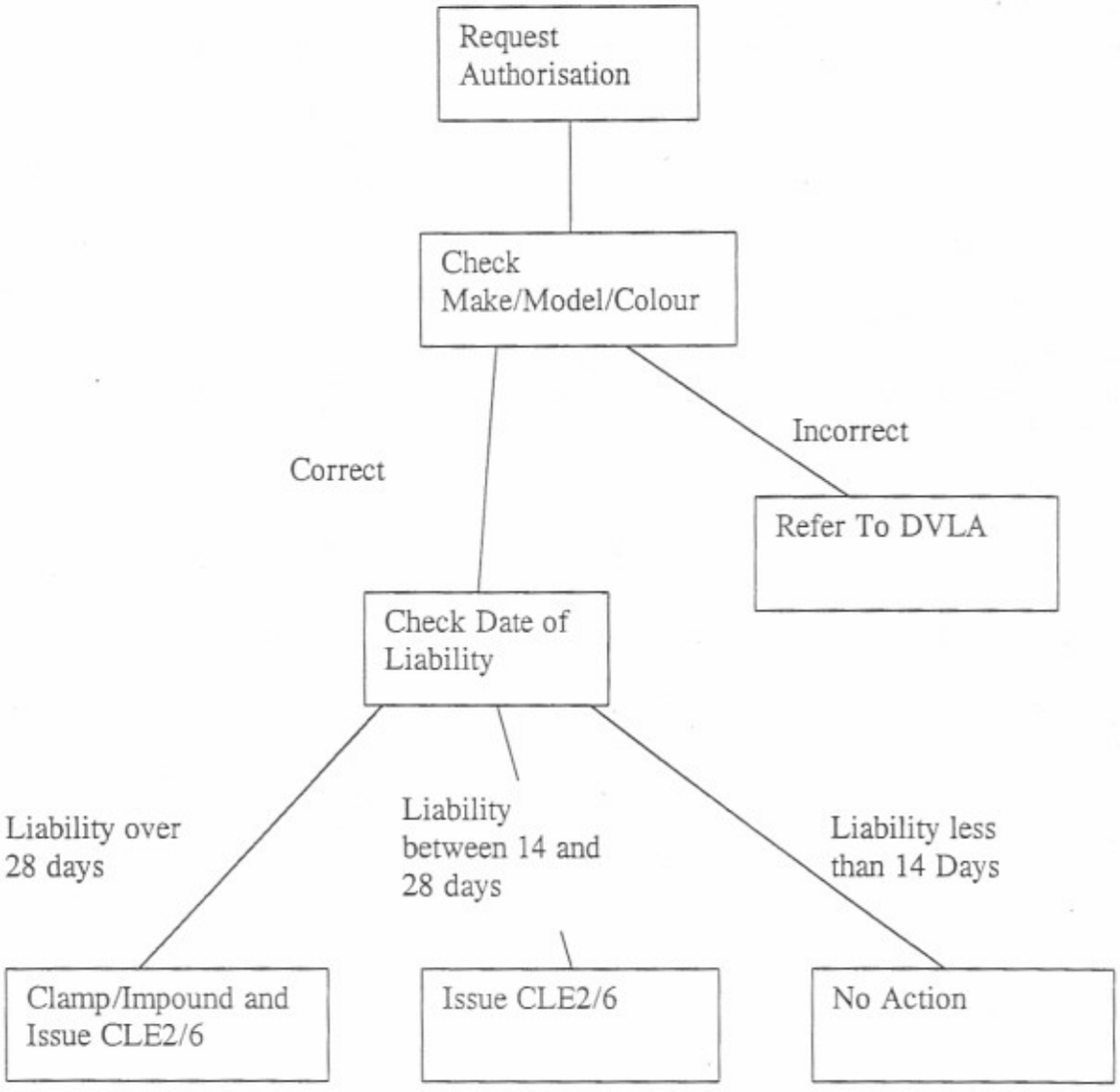
33. Any publicity entered into should be first agreed with the DVLA to ensure that a consistent message is being put forward.

ANNEX A

Before seeking authorisation check the following:

1. The vehicle is not displaying a valid tax disc.
2. There is no valid blue disabled badge displayed.
3. The vehicle is not historic – registered before 1/1/1973 (L suffix or older).
4. The vehicle is stationary on the public highway.
5. Complete wheelclamping checklist.

Input Vehicle Registration Mark for an enquiry using "Unlicensed Vehicle" from the dropdown menu.



ANNEX B

Whelclamping Instructions for Local Authorities

Where an unlicensed vehicle is clamped

- A Daily log and Download must be sent to DVLA on the day of clamping (Day 1). Where this is not possible, the fax/download must be sent by 9.30am the following morning.
- A fax must be sent on Day 2 advising what action has been taken in respect of each vehicle. This must include impounded vehicles, declamps and stolen clamps. Where the vehicle has been impounded a valuation must be included.

Where an unlicensed vehicle is impounded (Instant Lift)

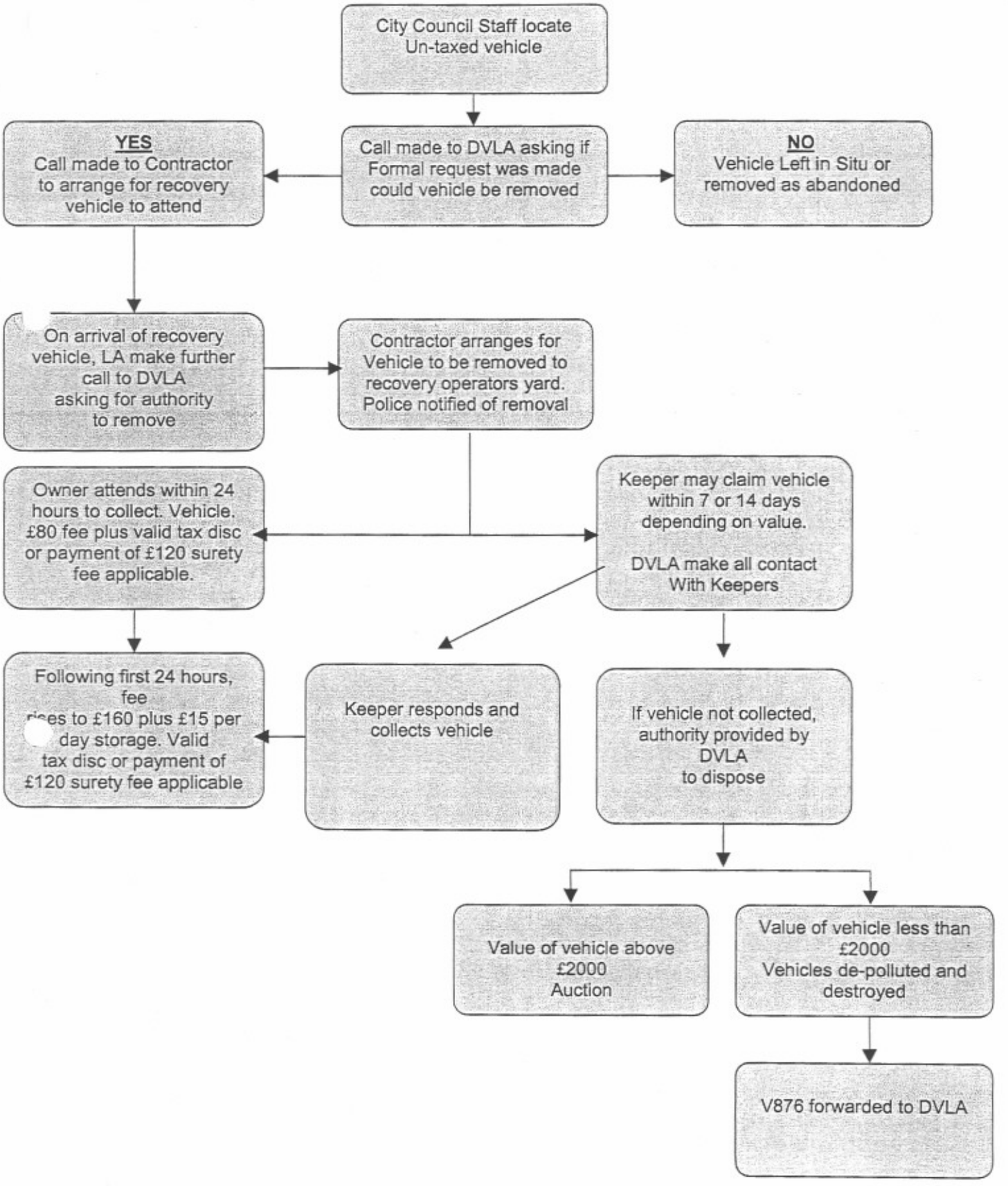
- A Daily log and Download must be sent to DVLA on the day of impounding (Day 1). The Daily log must include an evaluation for each vehicle. Again, where this is not possible, the fax and download must be sent by 9.30am the following morning.

Notes

- Our fax number is 01792 765151
- Our email address is Wheelclamping.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk
- The Spreadsheet must be sent in the correct format and must not be amended. If you require instructions on completing the spreadsheet or a blank spreadsheet, please contact Steve Jones on 01792 765325.

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

PROPOSED DVLA UN-TAXED VEHICLE REMOVAL PROCESS



APPENDIX E.

BETWEEN:

(1) ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL of Allerdale House Workington Cumbria CA14 3YJ (the Borough Council) and

(2) CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL of The Courts Carlisle Cumbria (the County Council)

1. Recitals

1.1 Under the terms of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 (the Act) it is the duty of the Borough Council to remove motor vehicles which have been abandoned in their area (the Borough Council's Duties) and it is the duty of the County Council to store and dispose of those motor vehicles (the County Council's Duties)

1.2 It has been agreed that under the terms and conditions contained in this agreement the Borough Council will administrate the implementation of the County Council's Duties.

2. Definitions

The following terms shall have the following meanings:

2.1 'Commencement Date'

2.2 'Expiry Date':

2.3 'Payments': the sum of ch year in respect of the implementation of the County Council's Duties and the sum of each year in respect of the administration of the County Council's Duties.

2.4 'Term': from the Commencement Date until the Expiry Date

3. Appointment

3.1 the County Council appoints the Borough Council to provide for the implementation and administration of the County Council's Duties for the Term in return for the Payments.

3.2 the County Council permit the Borough Council to sub-contract any or all of the County Council's Duties.

4. The Borough Council's Obligations

4.1 Services to be provided by the Borough Council

4.1.1 the implementation and administration of the County Council's Duties

4.1.2 the appointment of a contractor to provide for such of the County Council's Duties and the Borough Council's Duties as the Borough Council shall deem appropriate ('the Contractor')

4.1.3 the management inspection and payment of the Contractor

4.2 Secrecy

Not at any time during or after the Term to divulge or allow to be divulged to any person any confidential information supplied to the Borough Council by the County Council other than to the Contractor

4.3 **Indemnity**

To indemnify and keep indemnified the County Council from and against any and all loss damage or liability (whether criminal or civil) suffered and legal fees and costs incurred by the County Council resulting from a breach of this agreement by the Borough Council including:

4.3.1 any act neglect or default of the Contractor

4.3.2 breaches in respect of any matter arising from the supply of the County Council's Duties resulting in any successful claim by any third party

4.4 **Insurance**

To maintain at its own cost a policy of insurance to cover the liability of the Borough Council in respect of any act or default for which it may become liable to indemnify the County Council under the terms of this agreement

5. **The County Council's Obligations**

5.1 **Payment**

In consideration of the services to be rendered by the Borough Council under this agreement the County Council agrees to make the Payments within 14 days after the Commencement Date and thereafter by each yearly anniversary of the Commencement Date until the Expiry Date

5.2 Secrecy

Not at any time during or after the Term to divulge or allow to the divulged to any person any confidential information supplied to the County Council by the Borough Council

6. **The Contractor**

6.1 The Borough Council will appoint the Contractor through its own tender and contract process (the Contract)

6.2 The Contract will be renewable at the end of each twenty four month period and the Borough Council may re-negotiate the Contract and/or appoint a new contractor without consultation with the County Council (the New Contracts)

6.3 The Contractor will be identified to the County Council prior to the commencement of the Contract or the New Contracts

6.4 A copy of the Contract and the New Contracts will be provided to the County Council

7. **Income**

The Borough Council shall be entitled to retain any income from motor vehicles which have been sold after the removal and/or storage under the Act

8. **Administration**

The Borough Council shall keep such records as the County Council shall reasonably require to enable the terms of this Agreement to be monitored

9. **Complaints**

The Borough Council shall notify the County Council of any complaint received in respect of the services provided under this Agreement

10. **Miscellaneous**

10.1 **Warranty**

Each of the parties warrants its powers to enter into this agreement

10.2 **Force majeure**

Both parties shall be released from their respective obligations in the event of national emergency war prohibitive governmental regulation or if any other cause beyond the reasonable control of the parties or either of them renders the performance of this agreement impossible

10.3 **Severance**

If any provision of this agreement is declared by any judicial or other competent authority to be void voidable illegal or otherwise unenforceable or indications to that effect are received by either of the parties from any competent authority the parties shall amend that provision in such reasonable manner as achieves the intention of the parties without illegality or at the discretion of the Borough Council it may be severed from this agreement.

10.4 **Whole agreement**

Each party acknowledges that this agreement contains the whole agreement between the parties and that it has not relied upon any oral or written representation made to it by the other or its employees or agents and has made its own independent investigations into all matters relevant to it

10.5 **Supersedes prior agreements**

This agreement supersedes any prior agreement between the parties whether written or oral and any such prior agreements are cancelled as at the Commencement Date but without prejudice to any rights which have already accrued to either of the parties

10.6 **Joint and several**

All agreements on the part of either of the parties which comprise more than one person or entity shall be joint and several and the neuter singular gender throughout this agreement shall include all genders and the plural and the successor in title to the parties

10.7 **Termination**

Either party may terminate this Agreement at any time by written notice if the other party shall fail or neglect to observe and perform any of its obligations under this Agreement having previously been served a written notice of such failure or neglect and having failed to remedy such failure or neglect within a reasonable period (not being less than 28 days) as specified by the party concerned

10.8 **Consequences of termination**

The termination of this Agreement shall not effect any liability for any monies due to either party before or following the date of termination and in the event of Payments having been made annually in advance by the County Council the Borough Solicitor shall return to the County Council 1/12th of the Payments for each full month between the date of termination and the next yearly anniversary of the Commencement Date

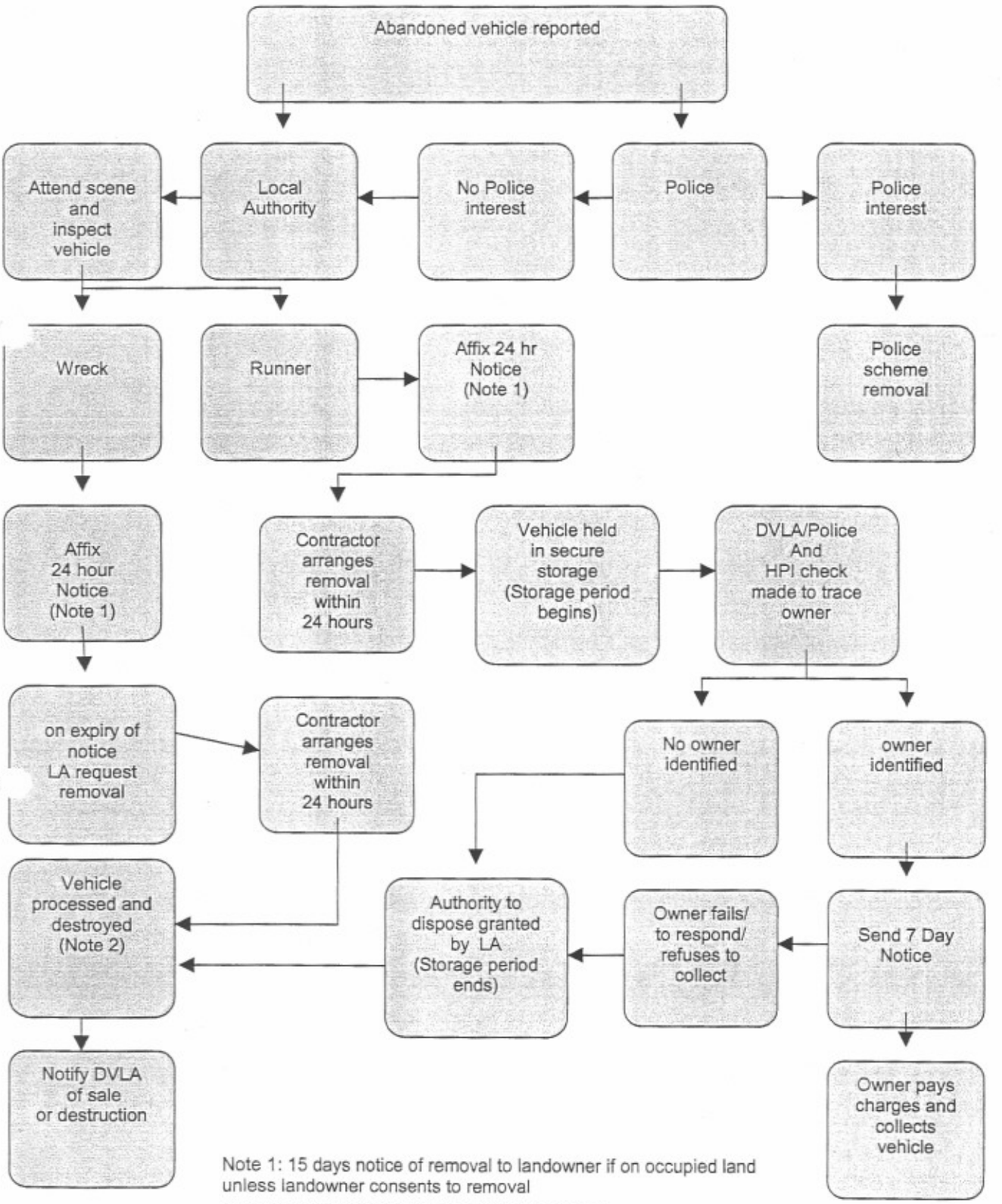
10.9. **Contract (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999**

Both parties agree that nothing in this Agreement shall confer on any third party any right to enforce or any benefit of any terms of this Agreement

APPENDIX F

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

PROPOSED ABANDONED VEHICLE PROCEDURE



Note 1: 15 days notice of removal to landowner if on occupied land unless landowner consents to removal

Note 2: Vehicle Excise Duty must have expired

APPENDIX G.

Cleaner Safer Greener Communities

Cleaner Safer Greener Communities: Removing Nuisance Vehicles

November 2004

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Ministerial Foreword

This document sets out our proposals for addressing the increasing number of nuisance vehicles and outlines the Government's strategy for ensuring we avoid the predicted increases.

Each year over 2 million vehicles reach the end of their useful life, the majority of which are disposed of legally in authorised facilities.

A minority are illegally disposed and abandoned on our streets and public spaces. The last ten years has seen a dramatic increase as a result of numerous changes including more complex car maintenance, periodic falls in price of scrap metal, environmental disposal standards and societal attitudes. The consequence has been a rising number of vehicles that once left on the street attract crime, anti-social behaviour and arson.

Arrangements for dealing with this type of waste were largely created in the late 1960s but have been added to over the last thirty years. Recent changes include reducing notice periods and enabling local authorities to act on untaxed vehicles, aimed at removing barriers to action and speeding up the process of removal.

We want to go further. We are determined to take action on the minority of people who blight neighbourhoods by dumping vehicles. That is why the actions in this plan aim to refresh the powers available, champion better practice and deliver stronger enforcement. We already know what works, we just need to apply it more widely.

We want to see more responsive action on nuisance vehicles, removing the cause early through tackling unlicensed vehicles – and tackling the consequences where vehicles are left on the streets and public spaces before more serious problems arise. Moving to this proactive system where people do not risk driving unlicensed vehicles and where there is no excuse not to dispose of vehicles properly, will deliver cleaner, safer, greener public spaces and reduce costs.

The Rt Hon Keith Hill MP
Minister of State (Housing and Planning)

Section 1: Introduction and aims

- **Nuisance vehicles are those that have no registered keeper, or are abandoned or are not displaying a current tax disc. They have increased in numbers significantly over the last five years.**
- **Nuisance vehicles hamper the Government's drive towards creating sustainable communities. They degrade the quality of the local environment, attract crime and anti-social behaviour and are the result of irresponsible motoring.**
- **We need to reduce the numbers of nuisance vehicles. Although local authorities have lead responsibility many other agencies have a role to play.**
- **Our overall objective is to support local authorities by preventing vehicles becoming nuisance and enabling early removal of those that remain.**
- **We are not starting from scratch – we have already taken action and by working together we will continue to build on good practice and learn from current initiatives.**
- **We need to do more within existing resources to reduce overall costs through prevention and increase the likelihood of those responsible paying for their actions.**

Why nuisance vehicles matter

1.1 People want to live in neighbourhoods that are clean, safe and green. We all use and are affected by the quality of our local environment. And we know people prioritise action to improve the quality of their local area.

1.2 The Government set out its vision for *'Living Places'* in October 2002 with the aim of making a noticeable difference in quality of life in every community by improving public spaces. We are delivering a range of actions across Government, including the *'Sustainable Communities Plan'* to transform run-down parks and public spaces and maintain public spaces better. *'Together'* the national action plan to tackle anti-social behaviour and improvements to the vehicle licensing system.

1.3 In July 2004, we introduced national Public Service Agreement (PSA)[1] targets to lead the delivery of cleaner, safer and greener public spaces and improve the quality of the built environment and to reduce crime by 15%. Action on nuisance vehicles is a key part of delivering these targets.

1 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) set out each department's aim, objectives and key outcome-based targets. They form an integral part of the spending plans set out in Spending Reviews. Technical Notes set out how performance against each of the PSA targets will be measured. Details can be found at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance

1.4 Nuisance vehicles are not a new phenomenon. They have been around since the 1960s but their numbers have increased rapidly recently due to a variety of factors. These include changing scrap metal values, increasing cost and complexity of maintaining vehicles, higher environmental standards for disposal and some people keeping vehicles off the vehicle record so that they can avoid the costs of legal motoring, then abandon the vehicle to avoid detection.

1.5 Nuisance vehicles weaken people's confidence in their neighbourhood and work against our objectives for stronger and safer communities. They:

- ***reduce the quality of the local environment***. 25 per cent of people think abandoned or burnt out cars are a very big or fairly big problem in their area;

- ***attract anti-social behaviour***. Studies show a nuisance vehicle quickly attracts 'incidents of destructive contact';

- ***are a target for deliberate vehicle fires***. Deliberate vehicle fires account for four fifths of all vehicle fires and, in the Avon Fire Brigade area, vehicle arson accounts for over 50% of call outs;

- ***have links to criminal activity***. Abandoned vehicles have sometimes been used in crimes, such as ram-raiding, smuggling and burglaries, or have attracted motoring fines greater than the value of the vehicle;

- ***may be hazardous waste***. End of life vehicles often contain hazardous waste materials and need to be disposed of correctly. The End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Directive requires new treatment and disposal standards which are currently being introduced;

- ***impose significant costs***. The direct costs to local authorities of investigating, removing and disposing of abandoned vehicles was £26m in 2002/3. Vehicle arson costs the UK society £230m a year to clean up, remove and address; and

- ***reinforce other motoring concerns***. Nearly all abandoned vehicles are unlicensed and uninsured drivers are estimated to add £30 to every motor insurance policy. Uninsured vehicles are also less likely to have a valid vehicle excise duty and MOT, and more likely to be involved in road accidents.

Where we are now

1.6 There was a ten-fold increase in the number of abandoned vehicles reported to the DVLA as destroyed by local authorities between 1998 and 2002[2]. Defra's annual Municipal Waste Management Survey for England has collected data on abandoned vehicles since 2000/01 showing an increase of a third to 310,000 vehicles by 2002/3, although the rate of increase has slowed in the last year.

1.7 It is estimated that 4.5% of vehicle excise duty is lost through evasion, equating to about 1.75 million untaxed vehicles. The majority of these vehicles have no registered owner, making it more difficult to trace and prosecute those responsible if they cause a nuisance.

1.8 Responsibilities for tackling nuisance vehicles fall mainly to local authorities, but the police, fire and rescue service and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) also have various interests and responsibilities that have developed over the last forty years. In practice, effective action is dependent on agencies working together. Where agencies are working together they are delivering results.

1.9 This Government is committed to working with local authorities and others to reduce the menace of nuisance vehicles, create better places and reduce crime. We have already introduced:

- ***Stronger measures to make people pay for vehicle crimes***. Those who do not tax a vehicle will receive an automatic fine – we no longer need to see a vehicle on the road to prove an offence has been committed.

- ***Wheelclamping of unlicensed vehicles*** through DVLA's national scheme, which we will double in capacity and devolving powers so local authorities can also remove untaxed vehicles.

- ***Measures to speed up vehicle removal*** by reducing the notice period before vehicles can be removed and extending police powers, through the Police Reform Act 2002, to accredited officers, such as local authority staff, to enable immediate vehicle removal in certain circumstances.

- ***Piloted new approaches***, including support for Operation Cubit partnerships and Operation Scrap-it across London, vehicle arson reduction schemes, car clearance schemes and Local Public Service Agreements.

2 Measuring the Impact of MVRIB Initiatives on Abandoned Vehicles, Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, University of London, 2003

- ***Proposals that from 2007 vehicle manufacturers become responsible for providing 'free take-back' of End of Life Vehicles***. This would be through convenient networks of Authorised Treatment Facilities under the terms of the EC End of Life Vehicles Directive. In the interim, Government has provided local authorities with an additional £25m per annum since 2003/4 to help meet the growing cost of tackling abandoned vehicles;

- ***Reviewed how to cut the current high level of uninsured driving***. Professor Greenway of Nottingham University reviewed and produced recommendations on reducing the current high level of uninsured driving in the UK on which we are currently consulting; and

- ***Introduced a power to seize vehicles*** being used carelessly or inconsiderately or off-road without authority and in a manner causing alarm, distress or annoyance through the Police Reform Act. We are working with ACPO to ensure this is used as effectively as possible.

CASE STUDY: The cost of deliberate vehicle fires

In an average **WEEK** in England & Wales, arsonists cause around 3,600 fires and a cost society £40m.

The Arson Control Forum, established in 2001, works to stop arson increasing. It brings together stakeholders such as the fire service, local authorities, the police service, insurance companies & government departments.

Deliberate vehicle fires account for nearly two thirds of all deliberate vehicle fires. But although the number of deliberate fires in motor vehicles has almost doubled since 1994, the year ending on 30 June 2003 saw the first recorded fall in this category since 1997 – down by 3% to 71,500. As each deliberate vehicle fire costs £4,200 this represents a saving of £9.25m.

One of the reasons for the fall are the 29 car clearance projects supported by the Arson Control Forum. These remove abandoned and derelict cars before they are subject to arson. Research shows that these projects have proved highly cost-effective – it is estimated that for every £1 invested savings total £16.

Details of the Arson Control Forum can be found at www.odpm.gov.uk

1.10 The following specific measures are making an impact on nuisance vehicles, leading to real reductions in the number of abandoned vehicles in some areas, increasing rates of vehicle licensing and reducing the overall costs to the agencies involved.

- **Continuous registration** came into effect on 1 January 2004 and monitoring shows that in the first five months, the number of disposal notifications were up 20% on the previous year, SORN up 3 fold, and vehicle licensing up 10%. The additional disposal notifications and SORN declarations will have a direct impact on improving the accuracy of the vehicle record, and the extra licensing applications will reduce the level of VED evasion.

- The first five years of national scheme wheelclamping unlicensed vehicles has encouraged over 500,000 keepers to register their vehicles and generated £68m in additional revenue. During 2004/05 the scheme will doubled in size to clamp 100,000 vehicles a year; 28 local authorities and 1 police force have already taken on the DVLA powers and discussions are continuing with over 50 more.

- **Operation Cubit** in Kent removed 5,000 vehicles in the first year, reducing abandoned vehicles by 30% and increased the rate of vehicle licensing. The DVLA is participating in over fifty schemes during 2003/04.

- Analysis of the 31 projects supported by **Arson Control Forum's New Project Initiative** shows that by September 2003 they had removed over 34,000 vehicles; 28,427 of which had been abandoned, untaxed or burnt out and 5,786 were surrendered in amnesty schemes. The Vehicle Arson Reduction Initiative in South Wales enables agencies to work together with a single contractor who aims to arrive at nominated vehicles within 30 minutes for their removal at no cost to the local authorities.

Where we want to be

1.11 We want to prevent the projected 80% increase in nuisance vehicles to 560,000 by 2007[3] and deliver real reductions instead. In doing so we will build on what works to deliver sustainable changes through a robust framework for action which moves away from short-term area initiatives to comprehensive and sustained action.

1.12 While the primary aim of the action plan is to reduce the number of nuisance vehicles, it has a range of other complementary objectives:

- to improve the quality of local environments;

- to reduce associated anti-social behaviour;

- to reduce vehicle arson;

3 Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, UCL, 2003, Measuring the Impact of MVRIB Initiatives on Abandoned Vehicles, London.

- to encourage motorists to re-license their vehicles; and
- to tackle criminality associated with the use of untaxed vehicles.

1.13 These objectives cut across the responsibilities of agencies at both national and local level. We want to enable authorities to deliver responsive services, showcase good practice and support better practice by creating the right framework for action.

1.14 At national level we will better co-ordinate our actions, reduce the number of unlicensed vehicles and support local action on nuisance vehicles through reformed powers.

1.15 We increased resources to local authorities across the UK in SR02, with £25m a year available to help meet any increased costs incurred through implementation of the EC End of Life Vehicle Directive. Additional support is available from a range of central programmes for action on nuisance vehicles.

1.16 It is not only about resources, the right tools must also be available. Further reforms to the system will be considered to learn from existing good practice and knowledge of barriers to action in order to work more effectively and efficiently.

1.17 By simplifying the process for removing nuisance vehicles, including those where the local authority is dependent upon the support and partnership of other agencies, and ensuring quick removal we can prevent more serious problems occurring.

1.18 We will expect our national agencies to work with local partners in delivering results recognising local authorities have lead responsibility for taking action but can be supported by national agencies and central departments.

1.19 Many authorities already have good measures in place to tackle abandoned and nuisance vehicles and have been successful in reducing the scale of the problem. We will learn from these measures and support their wider application.

How we will get there

1.20 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will lead on implementation of the action plan but all the departments with an interest will share responsibility for delivery. This includes the Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Department for Transport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Trade and Industry and their agencies.

1.21 The actions we will take will;

- **ensure greater enforcement** action, through supporting the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to encourage more local authorities to act as its agents and co-ordinating local action;
- **reform the powers, rights and responsibilities** in relation to nuisance vehicles so local authorities are able to remove any vehicle they consider a nuisance and to recover their costs building on the clean neighbourhoods consultation;
- **Champion change** in tackling nuisance vehicles through guidance to local communities that want to take action; and
- **spread knowledge and showcase good practice** of what works to change practice through an advisory service to help authorities benefit from the expertise already available;

Nuisance vehicles in 2000	Nuisance vehicles in 2008
Nuisance vehicles are an increasing problem.	Nuisance vehicles are declining.
People perceive nuisance vehicles as a growing problem.	People perceive nuisance vehicles as a declining problem.
People report nuisance vehicles several times.	One report leads to visible action.
People may wait several weeks before the vehicle is removed.	Nuisance vehicles can be removed within 24 hours.
Nuisance vehicles attract acts of anti-social behaviour and vehicle arson is increasing.	Opportunities for anti-social behaviour and vehicle arson are reduced by immediate removal.
People perceive it safe to avoid licensing their vehicle and VED evasion runs at 4.5% or 1.75 million vehicles.	People do not risk keeping an unlicensed vehicle and VED evasion has been cut to less than 2.5% and less than 1 million.
Keepers of nuisance vehicles escape penalties and the number of vehicles untaxed for more than 3 months, uninsured and with no current keeper is estimated to be 1 million.	Keepers of nuisance vehicles are punished, with the number of vehicles untaxed for more than 3 months, uninsured and with no current keeper falling to less than ½ million.
Costs to local authorities are increasing.	Costs to local authorities are declining.

Section 2 – Greater enforcement and reform

- **Removing nuisance vehicles quickly removes opportunities for additional anti-social behaviour and demonstrates action is being taken.**
- **We should encourage and support authorities to adopt DVLA powers to tackle untaxed vehicles as part of their approach.**
- **A simpler system is needed so that all authorities can act on nuisance vehicles more quickly and effectively.**

Greater enforcement

CASE STUDY: Using new technology

The North London Strategic Alliance (NLSA) comprising Enfield, Haringey, Barnet and Waltham Forest councils is piloting a new mobile working solution to tackle nuisance vehicles.

Funded by ODPM, the alliance is using new handheld technology to combine mapping of nuisance vehicles and other environmental crimes with GPS and GPRS technology so that neighbourhood wardens can report the location and nature of issues without needing to return to the office to process and forward reports.

In addition to improving the effectiveness of the on-street presence, the central database which captures the information enables the authorities to analyse data to identify problem areas and trends.

More information is available at www.nlsa.org.uk

2.1 The benefits of removing nuisance vehicles quickly are recognised by all involved: benefits come mainly from not having to deal with associated problems such as anti-social behaviour and vehicle arson.

2.2 Once a nuisance vehicle is reported, the person responsible for that vehicle must be quickly established. Over the last two years we have provided local authorities the opportunity to establish free links to the DVLA vehicle record to check vehicle keepership and tax status immediately. The link can now also be used to check on vehicles used for other forms of anti-social behaviour such as fly-tipping.

2.3 Although the majority of local authorities now have access either through this link or through their local police force, there are some areas without links, which means checking the status of vehicles is slower than it needs to be.

The DVLA will continue to offer authorities free access to the vehicle record to enable them to deal with nuisance vehicles more quickly.
ACTION 1: Authorities without access to either the DVLA or local police computer will be expected to establish such links.

2.4 Some authorities have piloted approaches to introduce access to the DVLA record direct from hand held devices available to operatives in public spaces. We announced in July 2004 that as part of the cross Government *Cleaner Safer Greener* agenda a further £2m would be available for capital investment in deprived areas to tackle anti-social behaviour. This might include support for purchasing the necessary equipment to permit on street access.
ACTION 2: If deemed a local priority, Neighbourhood Renewal partnerships will support grant applications from deprived areas for extending access to the vehicle record to accredited on-street operatives. CDRPs will also consider supporting grant applications in the light of local priorities as set down in their Crime and Disorder and Misuse of Drugs Strategy and associated targets as negotiated with their Government Office or the National Assembly for Wales.

2.5 Unlicensed vehicles are a major contributory factor to nuisance vehicles. Evidence suggests nine out of ten or more abandoned vehicles removed by local authorities were unlicensed.

2.6 The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is responsible for vehicle licensing across the UK. In the past, weaknesses in the system meant too many vehicles 'fell off' their database (the vehicle record) and could not be easily traced. The introduction of Continuous Registration has seen increases in disposal notices, SORN declarations and vehicle licensing. Once vehicles enter the record they should now remain in the system until they are disposed of at an authorised facility, resulting in a more accurate vehicle record.
ACTION 3: The DVLA will ensure the vehicle record is 97.5 per cent accurate or better by July 2005.

2.7 In addition, we have amended the Means Information Form to check information on vehicle keepership which people declare when coming to court as this provides an additional opportunity to check the vehicle record and confirm details.

2.8 Continuous Registration will stop more vehicles becoming unlicensed but there are estimated to be 1 million vehicles that have been unlicensed for more than three months, are uninsured or without a current keeper, known as the 'vehicle underclass'. Recent research has shown these vehicles are most likely to be abandoned. Uninsured driving is also estimated to cost each motorist in the UK £30 on their insurance as they are more likely to be involved in incidents. Therefore, reducing this pool of vehicles is essential to our objectives and the DVLA has a target to halve the size of the vehicle

underclass by January 2007. This will be supported by the announcement we made on 11 August 2004 on further measures to tackle uninsured driving.

2.9 It has a range of initiatives aimed at capturing unlicensed vehicles. The national wheel-clamping scheme to remove untaxed vehicles from the streets has over the last five years encouraged ½ million keepers to register their vehicles. During 2004/05 the capacity of the scheme will double, enabling clamping of 100 000 untaxed vehicles a year. Other supporting initiatives include the fleet of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) vans to identify and aid prosecution of drivers of unlicensed vehicles.
ACTION 4: The DVLA will support local action on untaxed vehicles, clamping 100,000 vehicles a year by 2008.

CASE STUDY: A Partnership Approach to Nuisance Vehicles

In recent years the DVLA and the police and fire services have assumed a greater role in tackling nuisance vehicles. The DVLA has powers and responsibilities for dealing with unlicensed vehicles. As most abandoned vehicles fall into this category, those powers can be used to deal with some vehicles much more swiftly.

- A pilot study in Newham involved the DVLA's powers being devolved to them. This allowed the Council to clamp untaxed vehicles and remove them after 24 hours. Newham's concerted action reduced the road tax evasion locally from 20% to 5% in a year, but more importantly also reduced the number of abandoned cars by 10%. This was in sharp contrast to other councils in London. After the success of the pilot, 29 authorities have taken up the powers.

- Birmingham City Council has a system to share information about abandoned vehicles with other agencies such as the police. Part of their strategy involves disregarding the time constraints of statutory notice periods in some circumstances. The police check a vehicle on the Police National Computer (PNC), and if it is of no interest to them, details are passed to the Council within 24 hours. The fire service can deem a vehicle to be at risk of arson, and advise that it be removed immediately.

2.10 Since 2002, local authorities have also been able to act as agents of the Secretary of State and assume the powers of the DVLA to wheel-clamp untaxed vehicles. This enables local authorities to take action on a wider range of nuisance vehicles, while also retaining clamping and release fees and avoiding more costly abandonment.

2.11 So far 29 authorities, including one police force area, have assumed the DVLA powers. Some authorities are reluctant to assume the additional

powers due to the additional investment required in storage and enforcement. But assuming the powers can lead to an avoidance of costs and is supported by Government. It can also increase the opportunities for cost recovery. The Government is keen to ensure that those authorities assuming the DVLA powers do so at minimal costs and is considering changes to procedures so that unredeemed sureties from unlicensed vehicles may be retained by the removing authority rather than the DVLA. We will also increase the fees that can be charged for releasing wheelclamps and for storage.

2.12 We would encourage additional authorities to assume the DVLA powers and will make this a priority for the agency to work with local authorities in promoting the benefits.
ACTION 5: The Government will minimise the overall cost to authorities assuming DVLA powers and encourage greater take up.

2.13 Abandoning a vehicle is a serious offence that carries a maximum £2,500 fine or three months in prison, although the average fine is substantially less. Since January 2004, Magistrates have also been able to disqualify from driving for any period people convicted of abandoning a vehicle. We want to see these powers more widely used.

2.14 It has been difficult for some authorities to secure successful prosecutions for abandonment. We need to both raise courts' understanding of the damage caused by abandoned vehicles and to help ensure that local authorities know what evidence will enable them to secure convictions.
ACTION 6: The Government will work with the Magistrates Association to continue to raise courts' awareness of the seriousness of environmental crimes and range of possible penalties, particularly using the anti-social behaviour response courts to promote good practice in disposing of these cases.

2.15 For fine repayment penalties, we would encourage magistrates to consider environmental regeneration projects in recognition of the blight caused by abandoned vehicles.

2.16 We have introduced new offences in relation to vehicle keepership that are aimed at reducing the incentives to keep vehicles outside of the registration system. And with increased action on enforcement, the risk of being charged with vehicle abandonment is also increasing.

Reforming powers and responsibilities

2.17 Current legislation focuses on vehicles that have been abandoned, but untaxed vehicles and those left on the street in a state of disrepair can also cause nuisance to members of the public and/or lead to the degradation of a locality. In addition, the legislation is complex and can make it difficult for

local authorities to act quickly and effectively. The Government therefore intends to replace it with new measures that would provide local authorities with the tools they need to deal with abandoned and nuisance vehicles. The measures outlined below are contained in the consultation document 'Clean Neighbourhoods', published on 15 July, and we are currently considering the responses to this.

2.18 In strengthening the deterrents, simplifying the system and increasing the likelihood of being caught we are targeting the minority of vehicle owners who do not respect the rules. This minority imposes costs on every other driver and the communities they blight.

ACTION 7: Subject to the outcome of consultation, the Government will strengthen authority powers and improve the legislative system for action on nuisance vehicles at the earliest available opportunity.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, local authorities will be given the power to remove a vehicle which:

- has no registered keeper; or
- is abandoned; or
- is not displaying a current tax disc.

It will no longer be necessary to fix a notice to a vehicle which meets these conditions before removing it. This will help to reduce the incidence of vandalism and arson that often follows the fixing of notices. These provisions will apply to vehicles on the highway or on land to which the public have access, and to vehicles on other land without the permission of the occupier.

It will be made an offence to be responsible for or have used a vehicle removed as a nuisance vehicle; anyone convicted could be fined up to a maximum level 4 (£2,500). There will be a statutory defence for an owner who could show that his vehicle was stolen and subsequently abandoned. In most circumstances, it will be possible to discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty; we would expect local authorities to be able to retain the proceeds. For serious or multiple offences, prosecution will result.

Where a local authority removes a vehicle, the keeper or their representative will be able to reclaim it on payment of the fixed penalty, together with the costs of removal and storage. They will also have to show that they were properly insured. A surety will be payable if there is no valid tax or MOT for the vehicle. This will be refunded if valid documents are presented within a prescribed time. Vehicles not released within a given period will be destroyed or otherwise disposed of.

2.19 We also intend through an early legislative opportunity to introduce an offence of using an incorrectly registered vehicle and, as part of the crack down on insured driving, to:

- Give the police the power to seize and, in appropriate cases, destroy vehicles that are being driven uninsured;
- Link the DVLA's Vehicle Register and the Motor Insurance Databases, allowing police to know which vehicles on the road are uninsured; and
- Allow fixed penalties for people who ignore reminders that their insurance has expired.

Section 3 – Championing change and showcasing good practice

- **Public perception is that the problem of nuisance vehicles is increasing.**
- **We are not starting from scratch. There is already a wealth of good practice and knowledge on tackling nuisance vehicles that we can build on.**
- **Pilots have shown what can work in practice. We need to capture and learn from these outcomes at local and national level.**
- **The current complex system can be confusing and poorly communicated.**

Championing change

CASE STUDY: www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk

The Government supports many initiatives to deliver cleaner, safer, greener communities, including action on nuisance vehicles. This can mean its difficult to know where to access information.

In July 2004 we launched a new web portal to bring together in formation on these initiatives at www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk

The site provide links to the information and support that is available and will continue to evolve to provide communities and local partners with the information they need to tackle local priorities.

3.1 A quarter of people think abandoned vehicles are a very or fairly big problem in their area. We need to change public perceptions and target vehicle owners to explain their responsibilities as motorists.

3.2 People already report nuisance vehicles when they appear – but about three times as many vehicles are reported abandoned as are removed. This is due to multiple reports or mis-reporting of the same vehicle but also because some vehicles are moved once notices are applied.

3.3 It is not sufficient to simply improve the removal of nuisance vehicles without trying to prevent them becoming a nuisance and reducing the scale of the problem. That is why we are taking action on unlicensed vehicles but we also need to encourage more people to dispose of vehicles properly.
ACTION 8: The Government will support the development of community focused resources to support action on nuisance vehicles where it is a local priority.

3.4 In July 2004, we launched a new signpost to Government information and initiatives on local environmental quality issues at www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk

3.5 It must remain convenient to dispose of vehicles legally to minimise the attractiveness of illegal dumping. DTI is responsible for implementation of the EC End of Life Vehicles Directive and introduced the first batch of transposing regulations in November 2003, which raise the environmental standards to be observed at authorised facilities.

CASE STUDY: Building on community interest

A workshop in the East Brighton NDC area used residents' interest in abandoned cars to engage people in neighbourhood management.

Local people worked with University of Brighton staff and a steering group, including the Neighbourhood Management Team, the Community Development Team and a resident. The Police, Community Safety Team and Housing and Environmental Services Team were on hand to provide information. The outcome has been highly positive:

- An unwanted car amnesty (involving a free removal service) reduced the number of cars abandoned by keepers put off by the costs of disposal.
- Abandoned vehicles are removed more quickly, with dangerous vehicles removed within 24 hours.
- A revised abandoned vehicle notice makes marked vehicles less obvious to potential joy riders and vandals.
- In partnership with the Police and DVLA, the Neighbourhood Management Team, deals with untaxed vehicles. Following an initial pilot on a single day, a week long operation was mounted which enabled untaxed vehicles to be clamped and removed on the estate. Over 500 tickets were issued for untaxed vehicles and 70 vehicles were removed.

3.6 The Government is proposing that from 2007 vehicle producers be required to provide 'free take back' of end of life vehicles (ELVs) to last owners/keepers at convenient networks of authorised treatment facilities. When dealing with abandoned vehicles, Local Authorities will similarly be eligible for free take-back.

3.7 Until such time we will work with authorities to encourage surrender schemes that take back old vehicles, building on the third of authorities that already do so. In advance of the introduction of producer free take back we will need to raise awareness with the public.

3.8 In additional to Local Strategic Partnerships, the Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP's) can provide a forum in which concern about nuisance vehicles can be addressed. Local authorities, police and police authorities, fire authority and primary care trusts are all 'Responsible Authorities'[4] in these partnerships. This will facilitate those with responsibility and access to information and powers acting together to co-ordinate action. Over the next two years £11m will be distributed annually across each CDRP in England and Wales to increase their capacity to deal with anti-social behaviour. We recently consulted on proposals to require CDRPs to give consideration to environmental crimes in the strategies.

ACTION 9: The Government will encourage CDRPs to co-ordinate action on nuisance vehicles, as part of their crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and misuse of drugs strategies, where it is considered to be a local priority.

Showcasing good practice

3.9 The system for dealing with nuisance vehicles is complex and over time misunderstandings have developed that need to be tackled. We need to ensure all those dealing with nuisance vehicles understand the extent of what they can do and what they can not do. We also need to ensure the potential to do more is understood.

CASE STUDY: Operation Scrap-it

In April 2004, the Association of London Government, supported by the Home Office, launched Operation Scrap-it, which aims to tackle nuisance vehicles across London.

Over the next two years the project will support all authorities across London to provide comprehensive action on tackling nuisance vehicles, including offering a vehicle surrender and take back service, advertising and campaigns and stronger enforcement and prosecution of offenders.

So far.....

Operation Scrap-it is one of a number of programmes supported through the Home Office campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour. More details are available at www.together.gov.uk

3.10 Many authorities have excellent systems in place for identifying, removing and disposing of nuisance vehicles. The Government has also supported a wide range of initiatives over the last five years aimed at reducing the impact of nuisance vehicles, from which many lessons have been learnt.

4 The Police and Fire Authority only became a Responsible Authority in April 2003 and Primary Care Trusts likewise with effect from 30 April 2004, as required by Section 97 of the Police Reform Act (2002).

3.11 We also wish to encourage authorities to support each other and share experience. Those authorities that are delivering real reductions have tried and tested approaches that could be more widely applied.
ACTION 10: The Government will showcase good practice and establish an advisory service where authorities can provide knowledge and support each other to deliver better practice.

Section 4 – Measuring performance

- **Abandoned vehicles were predicted to rise to over 500000 vehicles by 2007[5].**
- **Our objective is to prevent an increase from current levels and deliver a real reduction of 25% to less than half the projected total.**
- **We will also introduce in 2005/06 a new BVPI(X21) and develop a methodology for collection to benchmarking of performance.**
- **We will know we succeeding when less people perceive nuisance vehicles to be a fairly or very big problem in their neighbourhood.**

4.1 Accurate information on the level of nuisance vehicles is needed to improve service delivery and help shape our response. Estimates of the number of abandoned vehicles and projections of future trends have varied widely, but the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science report on the impact of measures on abandoned vehicles predicted that overall numbers would exceed ½ million by 2007.

4.2 In the last three years, the Annual Waste Management survey has estimated the number of abandoned vehicles, based on local authority returns. This has shown the overall number to have increased by approximately one-third to over 310,000 vehicles in the last two years, although the rate of increase is slowing.

4.3 From April 2004, details of abandoned vehicles removed by local authorities will be recorded consistently across England and Wales by the WasteDataFlow system run by Defra and the Environment Agency. This will provide robust data on which to measure our success in delivering a 25% reduction from the levels estimated in 2003/4 by 2008. If achieved this will be less than 50% of the predicted total.
ACTION 11: We will measure performance based on the WasteDataFlow system to achieve a 25% reduction.

4.4 As part of the refresh of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment we are currently considering how to better reflect local authorities responsibilities for delivering cleaner, safer, greener public spaces.

5 Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science.

4.5 We are also planning to introduce a new Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI(X21)) to measure the time taken to remove abandoned vehicles after the expiry of the relevant notice period. The notice period currently varies according to the vehicle and where it is, so this is intended to measure the performance once it is clear a vehicle should be removed.

4.6 In introducing the BVPI we are also keen to ensure that we support local authorities develop a methodology that enables the data to be easily collected and benchmarked with similar authorities.
ACTION 12: The Office of National Statistics, in the context of the Neighbourhood Statistics Service will work with local authorities to advise on an approach to data collection that supports service improvement and allows for benchmarking of results.

4.7 Another measure of the outcome of this action plan will be if people's perceptions of nuisance vehicles are changing. The British Crime Survey records perceptions of whether abandoned vehicles are a problem in a local area and we will monitor performance against this measure as well.

Section 5 – Sources of support

- **Mainstream resources are available for tackling nuisance vehicles.**
- **Crime and disorder reduction partnerships can help co-ordinate the resources and actions of key partners.**
- **The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund will enable local areas to go further and to set stretched targets.**
- **In deprived areas additional resources are available through our programmes for neighbourhood renewal.**
- **The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is also complementing local delivery.**

Mainstream support for local delivery

5.1 Local authorities have lead responsibility for action on nuisance vehicles and the Government makes resources available through the Environment, Protection and Cultural Services block of the general Revenue Support Grant (RSG).

CASE STUDY: Operation Cubit, Kent

Operation Cubit has been very successful in dealing with abandoned, untaxed and nuisance vehicles. Formed in January 2003, the Kent Cubit Partnership has:

- Dealt with over 5,000 vehicles;
- Led to 12,330 vehicles being licensed that would not otherwise have been;
- Reduced the number of abandoned vehicles by 30%.
- Achieved high degrees of public and political support; and
- Reduced vehicle fires by 15%.

Operation Cubit has been independently evaluated by Home Office and Crime Concern. The Policing Standards Unit has recommended Cubit as good practise to all Police Forces and Crime and Disorder Partnerships.

5.2 Where it is a local priority to do more and improve performance on tackling nuisance vehicles there are a range of additional sources of support that local authorities can consider to enhance delivery.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

5.3 Under 'Together', our programme to tackle anti-social behaviour, we have increased funding to every Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRPs) in England and Wales to strengthen their response.

5.4 CDRPs are ideally placed to tackle nuisance vehicles, where they are a problem, as they bring together to key community safety agencies ('responsible authorities') namely local authorities, the police and police authorities, fire authorities, as well as primary care trusts. Experience shows that these key agencies working in partnership with other local statutory and voluntary agencies and members of the community can deliver results on reducing nuisance vehicles.

5.5 Statutory guidance has been provided for partnerships on the completion of their crime and disorder and misuse of drugs audits and strategy. The guidance is available as a toolkit on both the crime reduction and tackling drugs web sites and makes it clear that partnerships need to include a strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour, including issues of local environmental quality, as part of their overall strategy. The guidance also provides information on measuring anti-social behaviour and collecting and analysing data in the context of the audit and strategy process so that partnerships can be clearer about the extent of issues including nuisance vehicles.

Safer and Stronger Communities Fund

5.6 The New Safer and Stronger Communities Fund announced in the Spending Review 2004 (SR04) will be rolled out across all local authorities in England from April 2005 and will be a minimum of £210m, £220m and £230m for the three years 2005/6, 2006/7 and 2007/8 respectively.

5.7 The Fund will bring together ODPM funding streams on wardens, neighbourhood management, community empowerment and liveability with Home Office funding streams on building safer communities, anti-social behaviour and be agreed through Government Offices. As now, funding will be allocated to different areas in accordance with Government's assessment of need and national priorities. However, the Fund will be administered in a new way, as a mini-Local Area Agreement, to drive forward the principles of the Devolved Decision Making review, contribute to the rationalisation of multiple funding streams, enhance local flexibility and help to reduce bureaucracy.

5.8 The mini-LAA will be negotiated with all of the councils in the area and their partners, including the individual CDRPs. It will be possible for the agreement to specify amounts that the partners agree are to be used for particular purposes, by particular bodies or in particular areas if they wish to do so.

5.9 Central Government will set the high level national priorities for the Fund, drawing on PSAs and other targets, in particular the new national PSA target that has been set to tackle 'liveability' issues and deliver cleaner, safer, greener local communities and Home Office PSA targets on crime.

5.10 Local authorities and their partners will set local priorities based on the Community Strategy and the work of the LSP and its constituent bodies, in particular the CDRP.

5.11 Working on the basis of these central and local priorities the Government Offices will broker an agreement on the priority outcomes to be achieved locally. Deciding how these priorities will be delivered will be in the hands of the local authority and its partners.

CASE STUDY: Car Clear Partnership, Bristol

Car Clear is a partnership between Avon and Somerset Police Force, Avon Fire Brigade and the 4 Unitary Authorities of Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. Following a pilot, the project was extended across the whole of Bristol and Avon in February 2002.

The success of this Partnership has led to it being fully funded locally and it no longer depends on funds obtained from Government.

The Partnership objectives, which has permanent police and fire officer support, are to reduce vehicle arson and improve the quality of life for the communities most affected.

The strategy revolved around four main elements.

- Community Awareness – and offering ways of helping to reduce it.
- Targeting Offenders – entering schools and educating the key offending group of 14-16 year olds.
- Reducing the supply of Unroadworthy Vehicles by offering cost effective ways of surrendering unwanted vehicles and Protocols with Motor Traders and Motor Auctions to reduce the sale of vulnerable vehicles.
- Vehicle Removal Schemes which concentrate on the early identification of vulnerable vehicles and their speedy removal. Three schemes are in place, two of which remove vehicles within 30 minutes.

The partnership utilises Police and Local Authority powers. Calls to the Vandalised Vehicle Hotline amount to over 500 per month in Bristol alone. By removing abandoned vehicles quickly and sending them to be immediately crushed, over 400 vehicles per month have been dealt with. In the first twenty-two months 4,800 cars were removed within 30 minutes and 5,752 cars were removed within 24 hours. From February 2002 to April 2003 the project has achieved a reduction in vehicle arson of over 20%.

5.12 Further guidance will be updated regularly on the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund and Local Area Agreements. This can be found at www.odpm.gov.uk/localvision and will be updated regularly.

Strengthened Local Public Service Agreements

5.13 Where local partners agree additional Safer and Stronger Community outcomes, they could also be incorporated in the Local Public Service Agreement and a target that 'stretched' performance beyond what other funding would have enabled them to achieve. Local authorities will then be eligible for a reward grant for success in achieving the extra performance.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

5.14 Alongside the mini-LAA on Safer and Stronger Communities, Local Strategic Partnerships may identify reducing nuisance vehicles as an outcome which forms a key part of the strategy for neighbourhood renewal in their area. Where this is the case, the cross-cutting Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) could be used to supplement the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund on improving liveability outcomes.

5.15 NRF funding will of course continue to be directed at other local priorities as well as those coming under the Safer and Stronger Communities block.

The Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency

5.16 The Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency (DVLA) is responsible for tackling unlicensed vehicles and while it does not provide local authorities with additional funding for tackling nuisance vehicles it's activities, powers and presence can complement local action.

Voluntary and Community Sector

5.17 The voluntary and community sector organisations (VCS) are frequently well-placed to help deliver public services, especially where their close understanding of local communities and of the needs of particular groups of the population enables them to provide more responsive and personalised public services

5.18 Spending Review 2004 announced the continuing investment in the *Future*builders fund and a refocusing of the £30 million a year 'Invest to Save – Inclusive Communities' fund, to develop the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery and to increase community engagement.

5.19 The collection, removal and disposal of nuisance vehicles provides a range of opportunity for community involvement, intermediate employment and more responsive services that should be explored and supported.

Application to Wales

5.20 The Welsh Assembly Government supports the aims of this document to reduce the incidence of abandoned cars. It is committed under its sustainable waste management strategy – "Wise About Waste" – to looking at ways of reducing the amount of time taken to remove abandoned vehicles and encourages a co-ordinated approach to enforcement action with this and related environmental crimes such as fly-tipping. As much of this relates to devolved issues, the Assembly Government can contribute towards the success of this strategy through the use of its powers to make regulations and issue guidance and will work with the UK Government to ensure that this strategy is successful in achieving its aims.

Application to Scotland

5.21 The Scottish Executive supports the aims of this document. Many of the important measures in this document will apply across the UK, notably those which fall to the DVLA. The Scottish Executive welcomes these measures, and will seek to ensure further effective working between Scottish local authorities and the DVLA. Most areas of environmental policy are devolved to the Scottish Parliament and Executive. The Executive is considering a distinct set of actions in these devolved areas, appropriate to Scottish circumstances. It will be for the Scottish Executive to make an announcement of any proposals it makes for Scotland in due course.

Annex 1: Shared delivery plan

Action	Lead	Outcome by 2008
Greater enforcement action		
ACTION 1: Authorities without access to either the DVLA or local police computer will be expected to establish such links.	DVLA	All authorities will be able to check the status of nuisance vehicles immediately.
ACTION 2: If deemed a local priority, Neighbourhood Renewal partnerships will support grant applications from deprived areas for extending access to the vehicle record to accredited on-street operatives. CDRPs will also consider supporting grant applications in the light of local priorities as set down in their Crime and Disorder and Misuse of Drugs Strategy and associated targets as negotiated with their Government Office or the National Assembly for Wales.	NRU	On-street operatives are able to check the status of nuisance vehicles immediately.
ACTION 3: The DVLA will ensure the vehicle record is 97.5 per cent accurate or better by July 2005.	DVLA	Less than 2.5% of vehicles on the road are untaxed and the vehicle record is at least 97.5% accurate.
ACTION 4: The DVLA will support local action on untaxed vehicles, clamping 100 000 vehicles a year by 2008.	DVLA	Increased revenue from vehicle licensing and removal of untaxed vehicles.
ACTION 5: The Government will minimise the overall cost to authorities assuming DVLA powers and encourage greater take up.	DVLA DfT	Local authorities take action on untaxed and abandoned vehicles. Fees and charges represent a greater proportion of the cost of removal and storage.

Action	Lead	Outcome by 2008
ACTION 6: The Government will work with the Magistrates Association to continue to raise courts' awareness of the seriousness of environmental crimes and range of possible penalties, particularly using the anti-social behaviour response courts to promote good practice in disposing of these cases.	HO, DCA and Defra	Magistrates use a range of penalties to ensure those causing a nuisance are punished.
ACTION 7: Subject to the outcome of consultation, the Government will strengthen authority powers and improve the legislative system for action on nuisance vehicles at the earliest available opportunity.	Defra	Local authorities have the power for immediate removal of nuisance vehicles.
Championing change		
ACTION 8: The Government will support the development of community focused resources to support action on nuisance vehicles.	ODPM	Local communities and authorities work in partnership to prevent vehicles becoming a nuisance.
ACTION 9: The Government will encourage CDRPs to co-ordinate action on nuisance vehicles, where it is a local priority.	Home Office and Defra	CDRPs and local crime reduction strategies co-ordinate and tackle nuisance vehicles.
ACTION 10: The Government will establish an advisory service where authorities can share knowledge and support each other to deliver better practice.	ODPM	Authorities and practitioners have a network of support and good practice to draw on in developing their approach.

Action	Lead	
Measuring performance		
ACTION 11: We will measure performance based on the WasteDataFlow system to achieve a 25% reduction.	Defra and Environment Agency	Defra and Environment Agency Accurate data on numbers of abandoned vehicles.
ACTION 12: The Office of National Statistics will work with local authorities to advise on an approach to data collection that supports service improvement and allows for benchmarking of results.	ONS and NRU	Communities and authorities will have the evidence to understand the scale and nature of the problem in their area, and assess performance to similar neighbourhoods.

Annex 2: Contact Information

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Tel: 020 7944 4400

Cleaner Safer Greener Communities – Liveability Policy Division
Removing nuisance vehicles quickly impacts on overall quality of the environment and reduces anti-social behaviour and the incidence of deliberate vehicle fires.

Home Office

50 Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9AT
Tel: 0870 000 1585

Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
Removing nuisance vehicles quickly reduces anti-social behaviour. Launched Operation Scrap-it trailblazers to tackle abandoned cars in London and Liverpool in partnership with the Association of London Government and Liverpool City Council respectively. From October 2004 these projects will ensure that all vehicles confirmed as untaxed or abandoned will be removed within 72 hours of reporting.

Department for Transport

Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 8300

Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group
Responsible vehicle ownership, continuous registration and vehicle crime reduction. Work closely with their agency, the DVLA who are responsible for the delivery of policy.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6DE
Tel: 020 7238 6000

Local Environmental Quality Division
Removing nuisance vehicles quickly impacts on overall quality of the environment. Dealing with abandoned vehicles as waste.

Department for Trade and Industry

151 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 9SS
Tel: 020 7215 5000

Waste Policy and Vehicle Recycling Section
Implementation of the End of Life Vehicle Directive