

ALG – CONSULTATION ON LEVELS OF PENALTY FOR DECRIMINALAISED TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS AND LEVELS OF ADDITIONAL PARKING CHARGES

The views of The AA Motoring Trust

The AA Motoring Trust is opposed to London local authorities taking on powers to enforce decriminalised “moving” traffic offences. The AA Trust does not believe London local authorities have the skills, competency or trust of the public to carry out these important tasks fairly and effectively.

It is of course right that these offences should be detected and enforced, to deter further offences. But the whole emphasis should be on detection and deterrence whereas the public perception of enforcement is as a revenue generator and not a means of reducing congestion, safety and traffic flow and parking infringements. A major failing of the decriminalised parking enforcement system is that it is not transparent, many local authorities lack customer care skills, and difficult cases and errors are often handled badly. These points are not just made from motorists’ groups, independent parking and traffic adjudicators have also made them, as have previous secretaries of state. Giving even more powers to some London authorities, that have already displayed incompetence, should not be allowed.

The imposition of different levels of penalties for moving offences inside and out of London is unsound. Whilst it can be argued that tough sanctions should be applied to some parking and bus lane offences, it is wholly inappropriate to introduce decriminalised powers for moving traffic offences. Drivers who commit one of the moving offences specified in the consultation are as dangerous and anti-social in Aberdeen as they are in London – so the enforcement process and penalty should be the same.

The proposal to introduce a Band A penalty level on the southern side of Harrow Way, or retain a different penalty level on the north side, is totally illogical and risks bringing parking law into disrepute.

In conclusion, the AA Trust believes that it is now essential for the Mayor, Transport for London and the ALG to produce updated parking and traffic enforcement guidance for London and the rest of England. The guidance should be subject to full consultation and should contain statutory elements, for example, the victims of improper enforcement or processing errors should be awarded compensation for the time and trouble they are caused defending themselves against irresponsible or error prone local authorities.

Note: ALG – Association of London Governments