

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and
Connectivity
Michael Matheson MSP



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[REDACTED]
General Secretary
Scottish Police Federation
Headquarters
5 Woodside Place
Glasgow G3 7QF

By email: [REDACTED]

Our ref: 2019/0004511

TH March 2019

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your letter of 8 February addressed to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousaf MSP, setting out in detail your concerns on behalf of your members regarding the workplace parking levy. As this matter is part of my Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity portfolio, I am responding.

The Scottish Government has committed to supporting an agreed Green Party amendment to the Transport (Scotland) Bill that would enable local authorities to introduce a workplace parking levy. It is important to make clear that this will be a power for local authorities, should they wish to use it. There is no question of local authorities being required to adopt a workplace parking levy, it will be a matter for local councils to consider in light of local circumstances. Any impact would depend on how a scheme is introduced at a local level by local authorities using these discretionary powers. It will be for local authorities wishing to implement a workplace parking levy to carry out appropriate assessment of the impact.

Scottish Government support for the Green Party's amendment will be contingent on the exclusion of hospitals and NHS properties. Other details of how workplace parking levies will operate, including exemptions, will be considered as part of the Stage 2 amendment discussion and scrutiny. In England and Wales, where there is already statutory provision for councils to introduce such schemes, Nottingham is the only local authority to have done so. To be clear, workplace parking is a levy on the workplace and not the worker. Once the legislation comes into effect, any proposed scheme would of course have to go through the usual local government processes including consultation, scrutiny and approval.

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We will continue engagement with a range of interested parties which will inform our thinking as we take forward discussions with the Green Party to agree a workable and sound amendment for Stage 2 of the Transport Bill. The Bill will be subject to the normal parliamentary scrutiny and approval process including any additional amendments and safeguards.

The Scottish Government position has always been that we would not introduce the social responsibility levy during the lifetime of the public health supplement and until the economic circumstances are right. Although the public health supplement has ended, the Scottish Government does not believe that the current economic circumstances in the sector are suitable for the introduction of a social responsibility levy on licensed premises, with pubs in particular reporting severe difficulties.

If it would be helpful, my officials would be happy to meet with you to discuss the development of the workplace parking levy. Please contact [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

I hope this is helpful.

Bert ...
Michael Matheson
MICHAEL MATHESON

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SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION
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Humza Yousaf
Cabinet Secretary for Justice
Scottish Government
Room 1W.11
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

Ref: CS/KB

8 February 2019

By email: CabSecJustice@gov.scot

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Workplace Parking Levy

I write on behalf of our members who are vehemently opposed to this levy and are lobbying me in large numbers to embark on a vociferous campaign of opposition.

As you know, police officers work 24/7. Shift start and finish times are rarely aligned with public transport timetables, and indeed in many areas public transport is virtually non-existent. Even where public transport is available the inherently unpredictable nature of police work means police officers are often called to duty before rostered start times, and frequently work beyond rostered finish times. In such circumstances public transport has long since stopped running, or has yet to hit the roads for the day. I would welcome your views on how this ought to be managed if police officers are to be penalised for seeking to accommodate the working of unpredictable hours by travelling to work by car?

The mobile nature of the police officer workforce means police officers may be posted to any location at the direction of the Chief Constable. Police officers can be posted with little or no notice to a new place of duty and be left with no alternative but to take their cars to get there. Police officers places of duty can change essentially at any time (and on more than one occasion during a single working day). Uniform and equipment must be transported back and forth (before having to return it to the original station for safekeeping at the end of their duty). I would welcome your views on how this ought to be managed if they are to be penalised for seeking accommodate the needs of the job by doing so by car?

You will also be aware that the current terrorism threat assessment is severe with a specific severe threat identified against police officers. In response to this threat police officers are advised not to travel to work in visible uniform. I would welcome your views on how this ought to be managed if they are to be penalised for seeking to keep themselves safe by travelling to work by car?

Further to the significant threat to officer safety and security from terrorism. Police officers can also be targeted by those they come into conflict with during their tour of duty. Every year there are literally dozens if not hundreds of examples of police officers and their vehicles being targeted by disgruntled 'customers'. The likelihood of officers themselves being targeted increases exponentially if they are forced to take public transport (along fixed routes and at fixed times) to and from their places of work. This also increases the likelihood of the targeting of their homes.

Unfortunately, secure parking is available to only a small number of police officers. By no means is every police officer provided with any kind of parking space at their place of work. Especially during normal working hours when office workers are on duty there is little or no parking available. At other times, officers are occasionally allowed to use office parking for safety reasons.

If the Workplace Parking Levy included in the Scottish Budget comes to fruition and affects the police it will be a bureaucratic nightmare to calculate who owes what. In any event any expectation this ought to be met from a depleted service budget is as iniquitous as any suggestion police officers should have to pay for the dubious privilege of putting themselves in harm's way to keep the citizens of Scotland safe.

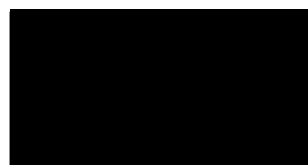
The Police Service of Scotland is by design a national police service. Whilst we understand the desire to allow flexibility to local authorities to raise money to suit their needs it would be perverse that some officers in some parts of the country would face levies different to those in others, and whilst performing essentially identical roles within the one organisation.

We understand NHS workers will be exempt and further that teachers may not have to pay this levy. For all of the reasons given, I ask that the police be exempt from this tax.

The SPF has previously suggested a social responsibility levy be created to allow local authorities to raise revenue. We maintain this is a fundamentally sound suggestion and consider it would be welcomed by local authorities and communities alike.

I know our members are looking forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely



General Secretary

*Please reply to: Scottish Police Federation, Headquarters, 5 Woodside Place, Glasgow, G3 7QF
Tel: 0141 332 5234 Website: www.spf.org.uk*

Extract from a draft Keynote Speech to be made by Chair Andrea MacDonald on Wednesday 27 March at the SPF Centenary Celebration, received as an attachment on an email to Scottish Government on 18th March, email is out of scope as it does not refer to the workplace parking levy.

“Our General Secretary wrote to you recently about the Workplace Parking Levy and highlighted the risks faced by Officers and specifically the terror threat against them. To date we have not received a reply other than to advise that you had, inexplicably, passed this matter of Police Officer safety to the Minister for Transport, Michael Matheson.

We wrote to **YOU** about a matter of safety for Scotland's Police Officers, either **YOU** value their safety or **YOU** do not.

Imposing this parking levy does **NOTHING** to mitigate the risks Police Officers face, nor is it realistic to expect a desperately underfunded Police Service to bear that burden.

YOUR Government created Police Scotland, removing all influence over Police funding from local authorities.

It is ironic, that the process of different local authorities taking different approaches to **GIVING** money to the Police Service was so unreliable that it had to come to an end, and is now to be replaced by a method that creates even greater financial instability by **TAKING** money from the Police Service.

Cabinet Secretary, I appeal to you to bring this to an end and tell Conference that you value our safety and will oppose this levy on Police Officers and the Police Service.”