Thank you for your reply. Firstly apologies for this late submission, I only noticed that this was coming up when I saw it on the Holyrood website today. I am a long time user of firearms, a former examiner for the Deer Management Qualifications and have served on the Board of the former Grampian Police. I have a continuing interest in the licensing of firearms and a wish to see the process made more efficient and more effective.

There are a number of points relevant to this issue that I would wish to make to the Committee. The licensing of air guns could very easily become a nightmare from an administrative point of view.

Most air guns do not have a serial number so to license them it will be necessary to have them engraved with a discrete number. How is this going to be done and who pays for it? Presumably the owner.

The firearms licencing departments in most police areas have been greatly reduced in capacity so unless there is a substantial increase in the number of knowledgeable persons available to cope with the new licencing system it could easily degenerate into the sort of debacle we have seen recently with the Passport Office. The emphasis there is on ‘knowledgeable’.

I presume the air guns will be added to the existing Shogun systems already in use, is the software capable of handling such an increase in volume?

If people wish to give up an air gun will there be compensation paid?

From the point of view of increasing efficiency and reducing administration, there will be many air guns held by people who already have either a Firearms Certificate or a Shotgun Certificate. Given the relative power of those firearms there should be no need to scrutinise the holders for possession of an air gun.

In the above cases it would save a huge amount of time and effort if the air gun was simply added to either the existing FAC or SGC.

While on the subject of FAC and SGC, for the future it would seem reasonable to combine these, most run concurrently anyway. If a person owns a firearm and has been deemed suitable to hold such, there should be no bar to them also holding a shotgun or an air gun. Combining them on one certificate would also seem to be a sensible way of reducing paperwork. Alternatively totally eliminating paperwork by issuing a card instead of a paper certificate would greatly reduce cost and improve efficiency.

There is a huge potential here for either producing the greatest ‘fankle’ seen in a long time, or starting down a path of increasing efficiency and better customer service.

I would welcome the opportunity to make these points to the Committee in person.

Yours sincerely,
M J Raeburn