FINANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Finance and Constitution Committee Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being sent to those organisations that have an interest in, or which may be affected by the Transport (Scotland) Bill FM.

In addition to the questions below, please add any other comments you may have which would assist the Committee’s scrutiny of the FM.

Consultation

1. Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

East Ayrshire Council responded to the Transport Scotland March 2017 consultation on “Improving Parking in Scotland”.

2. If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?

There will be financial burden on East Ayrshire Council in relation to the enforcement of the pavement parking and double parking element of the Bill. It is noted that Transport Scotland will publish a Parking Standards Document which will provide details on the approach to be taken on making local exemptions to this element of the Bill. Until such time this document is published, it is not possible to estimate the cost of implementing this section of the Bill. Should East Ayrshire Council consider that exemptions be taken forward then there is significant risk that the cost will escalate substantially from the estimates in the Financial Memorandum.

East Ayrshire Council considers that there will be significant and unquantified financial burden to fully implement and enforce the parking ban.

It is considered that the costs have been understated in the Financial Memorandum, as it states that those Councils who already have decriminalised parking enforcement will be able to undertake this at minimum cost. There is no evidence available to confirm this to be accurate, and on this basis, it is necessary to take the view that the costs of extending the decriminalised parking enforcement through assessing local exemptions, implementing these exemptions and enforcing them will be substantial.

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

Adequate time was allowed to reply to the consultation exercise. However, from a financial perspective there is insufficient detail to determine the impact on East Ayrshire Council particularly on the pavement parking and double parking element of the Bill.
Costs

4. If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.

5. Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?

6. If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?

7. Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill’s estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?

In reply to questions 4 to 7, East Ayrshire Council considers that in respect of pavement parking and double parking, that since a number of assumptions have been made then there is uncertainty on the accuracy of these figures. At this stage, it is not possible to state whether the Scottish Government financial assumptions which have been made will reflect the actual costs to East Ayrshire Council. In addition, should there be additional cost to East Ayrshire Council in implementing the Bill it is not clear why the Council should meet this potential financial burden.

Similarly, there will be a financial outlay required to install the necessary signing and lining for roads and streets exempted from the pavement parking and double parking ban. In relation to potential local exemptions, it is stated in the Financial Memorandum that Aberdeenshire Council expects to have 10 locations with exemptions, and the City of Edinburgh Council anticipates nine. It is from these two Councils, which is clearly a limited sample, that the costs for implementing have been determined. It is considered that this sample size is insufficient to allow this degree of extrapolation for the whole country. Indeed, when reviewing the East Ayrshire Council area it is expected that the number of locations requiring exemption will be much greater than these two Councils. On this basis, it is considered that the anticipated cost for each local authority to undertake assessments of £25,000 is substantially understated. These assumptions have been made without the Transport Scotland “Parking Standards Document” being available, and therefore, East Ayrshire Council must take the position that to undertake the necessary assessments is extremely understated, and that further work is required on the financial implications to the Bill for Councils.

For the Transport (Scotland) Bill it is essential that the Financial Memorandum is explicit in stating that any additional financial burden to be met by Councils to implement the legislation will be fully funded by the Scottish Government.

Wider Issues

8. Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?

9. Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?
As stated above, it is essential that this legislation does not place any additional financial burden on Local Authorities to deliver. The Financial Memorandum captures many elements of potential cost but until full details are available it is not possible to state whether all costs are captured.