

FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
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Via email: democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk

Henry Downey
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Dear Mr Downey

Thank you for your letter of 18 February regarding the regulation of private parking in Northern Ireland, and calling for an independent Parking Ombudsman.

Unfortunately, DoJ's interest with regard to private parking relates solely to the licensing of Vehicle Immobilisation operatives through the Security Industry Authority. The purpose of this is to ensure public safety, and the Department has no responsibility for any wider aspects of parking policy.

The regulation of parking in England and Wales is handled in a different way than in Northern Ireland. The Parking on Private Land Appeals (POPLA) which I believe you are referring to, were introduced by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which does not apply in Northern Ireland. This legislation also introduced the concept of "keeper liability" which allows companies who are members of an Accredited Trade Association to obtain "keeper details" from the DVLA to pursue the keeper of the vehicle for such charges. Keeper liability is therefore fundamental to the POPLA process.

The British Parking Association was asked to extend POPLA to Northern Ireland but would only consider doing so if keeper liability was introduced. The introduction of keeper liability is not a matter for the Department of Justice.

I hope this goes some way to addressing your concerns.

Yours sincerely



PETER MAY