

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: [Traffic Commissioners](#), HC 1365

Monday 2 July 2018

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Members present: Lilian Greenwood (Chair); Jack Brereton; Grahame Morris; Luke Pollard; Graham Stringer; Daniel Zeichner.

Questions 1 - 103

Witness

[I](#): Richard Turfitt, Senior Traffic Commissioner

Examination of witness

Witness: Richard Turfitt.

Q1 **Chair:** Welcome and thank you for coming along today. For the benefit of our record of proceedings, would you please introduce yourself?

Richard Turfitt: I am Richard Turfitt. I am the senior traffic commissioner for Great Britain. I am also the traffic commissioner for the east of England.

Chair: You've got two hats on.

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

Q2 **Chair:** The truth is that lots of people, who I am sure are watching this on Parliament TV, will never have heard of traffic commissioners and will not know what their main responsibilities are. What does a typical working day look like for a traffic commissioner?

Richard Turfitt: Shall I start by explaining what the role is a little bit, and then, hopefully, what the day comprises will make more sense?

Chair: That would be great.

Richard Turfitt: Traffic commissioners have quite a few jurisdictions. The main one is the licensing of the operators of public service vehicle businesses and HGV businesses. To operate a business with anything over a gross plate of 3.5 tonnes requires an operator's licence. To operate any vehicle with over nine passenger seats requires a PSV licence. Those are the licensing functions. The majority of licensing applications are processed in a centralised office in Leeds. Any queries about applications are sent to traffic commissioners electronically.

About 90% of traffic commissioner time is spent in hearings. We sit as single-person tribunals to hear contentious applications, and to consider regulatory action against existing operators when it is said that they have failed to live up to the standards expected of them.

Q3 **Chair:** Tell me again how much time you said that takes up.

Richard Turfitt: Probably about 90% of the time is dealing with electronic submissions—what you might call box work if we were judges in the tribunal service. I personally sit about four days a week, with two or three sittings a day. Once a month, we have a full day of driver conduct cases for those holding vocational entitlements.

There are many facets to the job. Forgive me if I miss any. There are other tasks such as hearing applications for the return of vehicles that have been impounded by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, and considering the suitability of goods operating centres. Those living in the vicinity of a site can object to an application being granted. It is slightly different from a planning application, as you would imagine.



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We are also the registrars for bus timetables, although that is more like being a postbox. We can impose financial penalties if operators fail to run to time.

Q4 Chair: There is quite a lot in there. You have said already that you are both a traffic commissioner for one region and the senior traffic commissioner. Can you explain, with your "senior" hat on, what additional responsibilities that brings? Are you like a chief executive? Do you set strategy? Are you more of a figurehead? How does it work?

Richard Turfitt: I am not a chief executive. We are a collection of separate public bodies. As senior traffic commissioner, I have very limited statutory powers, but they are quite important. I am more akin to a chairman of a strategic board or a president of a tribunal chamber. The main powers are to issue guidance on how the law and case law should be interpreted, and statutory directions as to how it ought then to be implemented as part of the application process or in the course of tribunal proceedings.

Q5 Chair: You are the senior guiding person to your colleagues. Would that be right?

Richard Turfitt: It is a good description and one I hope that we meet. One of your unlucky officials tried to wade through the statutory documents, the guidance and the directions. They are very thick. It is a bit like a mixture of tribunal rules, a legal textbook and some process instructions to the staff. They are not the easiest or most accessible documents, and I apologise to your poor official.

Q6 Chair: That would be Nerys. We rely on you to help steer us through some of the complexities in a nice simple way. Do you have strategic goals across all the regions?

Richard Turfitt: We do. We have survived two triennial reviews, with some positive suggestions coming out of them. One of them was to try to decrease the burden on the compliant or responsible applicant who wants to get it right, so that businesses are not held up waiting for application decisions and can grow their businesses and, hopefully, employ more people in the business.

We work quite hard on that. We have worked with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, which is the body that employs the staff in the office of the traffic commissioner. It provides us with our IT, our accommodation and everything we need to do the jobs, bar the knowledge.

Q7 Chair: As a traffic commissioner, do you directly have staff to support you in your role, or are they all DVSA staff who support you in your role?

Richard Turfitt: They are all DVSA employees.

Q8 Chair: Are there staff in each region who support the traffic commissioner for the region?



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Richard Turfitt: There are currently seven traffic area officers for eight traffic areas. Wales is in motion at the moment. I suspect you might have questions about that. The majority of the staff are employed in processing the licensing applications that now come in electronically. There has been a significant investment in a new IT system. About 90 staff are based in the licensing office in Leeds, and between about nine and 11 staff, on average, in each of the traffic area offices.

Q9 **Chair:** Are you saying that most of their time and resources are spent dealing with licensing applications?

Richard Turfitt: The 90 staff in Leeds are for licensing. The staff in the traffic area offices deal with casework, putting together the hearings. They are called public inquiries; that is what the statute terms them. It might be a contentious application or it might be a regulatory case where the presiding commissioner is considering taking some action against the operator's licence.

Q10 **Chair:** Coming back to your role as senior traffic commissioner, how do you balance the different priorities of the different aspects of the job you have just described, whether it is responsibilities for safety, compliance, fair competition and the environment? How do you set a strategic direction on that?

Richard Turfitt: The strategy itself is two-pronged. Putting it simply, one is modernising the licensing system to speed up applications; and the second is to try to get the suspected serially and seriously non-compliant before a hearing, for action to be considered as quickly as possible. We have set ourselves a number of milestones under each of those strategic objectives. The fair competition element is through consistent application of the operator licence requirements, so that no operator feels that they might gain a commercial benefit by cutting corners and thus impacting on the safety of roads and their operations.

Q11 **Chair:** You described the 90 staff in Leeds who specifically work on licensing, and then the regional staff in small teams of maybe a dozen.

Richard Turfitt: Very small, yes.

Q12 **Chair:** Do the regionally based staff work on one specific area of responsibility, or do they work across the board?

Richard Turfitt: There are specialisms in the application office. For instance, public service vehicles have a team, which is divided into sub-teams dealing with bus registrations. The main group is for the PSV applications.

There is a team that deals with multiple licence holders, which are operators with licences in more than one traffic area. We set up a lead traffic commissioner to ensure consistency of approach. There is a devoted team for that because that type of operator tends to change



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vehicles, and maybe personnel, more often than the one-licence operator.

Q13 **Chair:** Is that a specialist team in Leeds?

Richard Turfitt: Yes. Then there are teams that are divvied up to represent the different geographical traffic areas. There is a team for Scotland, which is shared, strangely, with the western traffic area. They are at opposite ends of the country, but it is because of the numbers of operators and applications.

Q14 **Chair:** I know that bus operators have to pass on their proposed timetable and register routes. You said that you have a responsibility, or an ability, to give financial penalties for failing to adhere to timetables.

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

Q15 **Chair:** How on earth do you manage to do that across the whole country?

Richard Turfitt: We rely, as we do for most regulatory cases, on reports provided to us by the DVSA. It has bus operator account managers, specially trained examiners who go out and look at the punctuality arrangements for individual operators. They look at individual routes over set periods, which the DVSA allocates: we do not. If the reports are bad, they are referred to us first, to decide whether we want to call them to a hearing.

Q16 **Chair:** How many hearings have you had in recent times for failure to be punctual?

Richard Turfitt: Not that many. Would you mind if I check the figures?

Chair: No.

Richard Turfitt: I am being supplied with the up-to-date statistics.

Q17 **Chair:** It feels like an almost impossible task, given the number of bus journeys.

Richard Turfitt: It is difficult. First of all, it is not possible for DVSA to monitor every route over many weeks, so it targets its attentions. There may have been complaints received. We may have received complaints, which we pass on to DVSA. Inevitably, any report will be a snapshot. I say this politely. I am a lawyer by training and those representing bus operators will of course seek to challenge and say, "The snapshot you've got is not representative," or that there are reasonable excuses.

Excuse me. I now have the figures. There have been eight hearings in the last year.

Q18 **Chair:** How many hearings overall have traffic commissioners held? Give us a feel for that.



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Richard Turfitt: We had about 200 regulatory hearings last year, and probably about 250 applications heard.

Q19 **Chair:** I imagine there are more than eight late buses.

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

Q20 **Chair:** You said that some of the things that might prompt the DVSA to do some investigation might be routine, and some might be prompted. If I was a bus passenger unhappy with the punctuality of my bus operator, I would not think of contacting the traffic commissioner. Do you think people know that that is a route they should be going down? Do you publicise your role to the public, or is it really only publicised to the industry?

Richard Turfitt: No, I do not think members of the public know enough about us. Until recently, we had one member of staff dealing with all our communications and our efforts to educate both the industry and potential stakeholders. That has now gone up to a magnificent two, but we have started quite a lot of communications work recently.

Inevitably, it has to be targeted. We have been running campaigns such as brake performance and testing. A lot of that is in conjunction with the DVSA, but there is more to do. I cannot argue with you.

Q21 **Chair:** Would you worry that, if you actually publicised that function, you would end up with work you could not manage? Is that a consideration or not?

Richard Turfitt: Every complaint we receive should receive a response. Inevitably, any complaint we receive has to be considered and processed properly, and it deserves a response. I am not saying that we are perfect, but, yes, it would cause us some more work.

Q22 **Jack Brereton:** I would be interested, certainly initially, to know how many of those cases were successful. It is important to understand how many of the cases you have taken forward have been successful. The main point I want to ask is whether you think there does need to be reform of this. Obviously, in some cases it can encourage quite illogical behaviour. For example, I have been on services when buses are running too early and they have to wait at timing points, which means that all the people on the bus have to just sit there for 10 or 15 minutes until it can make up time. That does not give a good service to those already on that bus. I would be interested to understand whether you think the current timetabling system is effective, and whether you think it could be done more effectively at a more regional or local level. What you are currently doing is very much on a national level.

Richard Turfitt: I will take the last point first. They are considered regionally. We have regionally based traffic commissioners precisely for that reason. In my own area, I know about certain problems and challenges down the road. I know where the roadworks are. That is the



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point of having a locally based traffic commissioner. We pick up information. We meet operators and members of the public.

Could it be more effective? At the moment, we have what is referred to as the traffic commissioner's window, which is that no bus should be more than one minute early or five minutes late. That is fine if you are running to the old, traditional registered timetables. One of the concerns my colleagues and I have started discussing—I hope they will excuse me referring to them—is the fact that that is a rather clunky mechanism for measuring and holding operators to account. If that is all the operators are concentrating on, are they actually providing a flexible enough service? Does it represent the way in which modern passengers approach the services? It also does not really reflect the way services are being provided either.

I recently met Anthony Smith from Passenger Focus. He was talking about how interesting it was that the passenger demographic has now changed. In terms of numbers, the largest users are young people, and they have an entirely different approach to the use of buses, through smartphones. He came up with a really interesting question that they ask: "Does the app deserve a place on my phone?" It is an entirely different approach.

When I get some resource, part of our next move is to look at statutory document No. 14, on local bus services. I stress that that currently applies to England and Wales outside London. Obviously, as the changes from the Bus Services Act come into play, we will be dealing with fewer bus registrations.

Q23 Jack Brereton: Would you suggest a more flexible approach, particularly in urban areas where we have a regular service every 10 or 15 minutes on a route? Could there be more flexibility around timings?

Richard Turfitt: The 10-minute registered services are flexible within the registration. Some of the most interesting models are those being developed in rural areas, where there is a combination of services, not necessarily ones that are registered with us. There are different provisions, and the question is how we adopt regulation to allow that type of flexible service to develop. Probably the six-minute window hanging over the operator is in danger of slanting or frustrating that type of development.

Q24 Jack Brereton: It is very interesting that you should suggest that it is the every 10-minutes services. It was actually an every 10-minute service that I was stopped on, so it may be that the industry does not necessarily recognise as well as you suggest that they are not applicable.

Richard Turfitt: They always tell me that they are, fairly vocally.

Q25 Daniel Zeichner: My apologies for missing the start of your evidence. I remember coming to see you a couple of years ago and you gave me a full explanation. Some of my questions are, I suspect, rather similar.



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I want to go back to the point about the checking of the regularity of bus services. Many bus users will be delighted at that idea. I seem to remember you telling me that, in times past, there used to be fleets of men and women with clicker machines checking up on all of that. What happened? When did that go away, and how did we get to where we are now?

Richard Turfitt: I think fleets was probably overstating it. I apologise if I said it, but I am sure I did not.

Q26 **Daniel Zeichner:** It was probably my recollection.

Richard Turfitt: There used to be bus compliance officers. It is true that there is a different approach to bus compliance monitoring in Wales. As I understand it, there are still the equivalents of bus compliance officers. They were employed by what was then VOSA. There was a decision that they could employ greater flexibility and better use of resource if the examiners were multiskilled—terrible term—so that they were capable of being deployed for different jobs as and when the work required it. The BOAM system—bus operator accounts management—has developed, and is still developing. They have a national co-ordinator who keeps an eye on standards. It was not a traffic commissioner decision. I am not washing my hands of it.

There were eight hearings last year, but we receive more reports than that. Of the eight hearings, there were three where financial penalties were imposed; two where restrictions were imposed on the actual licence, restricting what they were able to do; and three where no further action was required.

Q27 **Grahame Morris:** Mr Turfitt, you have told us about the staffing levels; there are 90 in Leeds and 10 or a dozen in each of the regional offices. In the last annual report the traffic commissioners presented, you stated that the commissioners were understaffed and under-resourced. Did you mean at the centre or in the regions?

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

Q28 **Grahame Morris:** At the centre, in the regions, or both?

Richard Turfitt: The challenge for us at the moment is getting staff recruited quickly enough to fill the posts. These are posts that have already been paid for, in the main by operator licence fees. When we sit with posts unfilled, standards suffer. That is translated into the time it takes for applications to be completed and listed.

We have struggled in some regional offices and at the centre to get recruitment done quickly enough. We have also faced challenges and opportunities through the new IT system. It has made it a lot easier for operators and applicants to complete applications; it will not allow them to submit incomplete applications without a prompt. Linking the IT system with the Companies House register has thrown up a very large



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number of licences on which some action should have been taken because the entities have changed. We are trying to support applicants using the new IT system with a telephone service to assist them. It is part of the digital assist initiative. That has put further pressure on the central licensing office.

Q29 Grahame Morris: You gave some particular examples. You mentioned IT and the time it takes to complete applications when you do not have sufficient staff. In the previous triennial review—there is one due this year—one of the recommendations was improvements to the IT systems. Have you completed them all?

Richard Turfitt: The vehicle and operator licensing system came online, and since then we have seen rapid decreases in average application times. One of the successes for us is that we have started publishing average application times online, so that the industry and wider stakeholders can see how well we are doing. An HGV application, in the last three months I have data for, was taking just under five weeks to process. A public service vehicle is slightly longer, taking just over seven weeks.

Q30 Grahame Morris: In your previous answer, you mentioned the relationship to the licence fee. When you as traffic commissioners are setting the licence fee, do you do it in a way that reflects the resource you require?

Richard Turfitt: We do not set the licence fee. That is for the Department. I know you have the report in front of you; currently the PSV licence fee is very much less than the HGV fee. The HGV fee is about £650. The PSV fee is about £209. The renewal fee is £401 for HGV. The renewal fee for PSV is subsumed into test fees.

Q31 Grahame Morris: If the Department is setting the fees, and you still feel that you are being under-resourced, both centrally and regionally, what are the main risks of continued under-resourcing, particularly for passenger and road safety? You mentioned that it will take longer to process applications, but are there any specific risks to passengers and road safety if the under-resourcing continues?

Richard Turfitt: Let me correct a misapprehension because I think it would be wrong not to. Our staff have been working extremely hard to quicken the application process. We were talking about nine or 12 weeks before this work started. We have achieved a lot with what we have. The managers in the office of the traffic commissioner tell us that this is achievable provided we can get the posts filled.

Colleagues have been getting together to think about what will be in the annual report to be published later this year. Our main challenge at the moment is the recruitment challenge and the processes that have to be gone through. Posts exist, but at the moment managers have to go back for approval to fill the posts themselves. When the operator licence fee has already paid for the service, it can be frustrating.



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Forgive me if I have cut across.

- Q32 **Grahame Morris:** You have anticipated my next question. Could you clarify this? The three-yearly review is due to come up. You mentioned IT a little earlier. I am not sure whether those improvements have already been delivered. Are there particular improvements or changes that you want to see arising out of the publication of the next triennial review?

Richard Turfitt: I can tell you what we are working on now. You asked about road safety. We are trying to move towards getting serious cases listed within 12 weeks. We have made good progress. Just under 90% of regulatory cases are listed within 12 weeks. I would like to see that improved. If there is a road safety element, we need to get the cases into public inquiry, hear the evidence and determine whether the operators should be removed from the business. We have a whole range of tools. It is not just about removing somebody from the business. It can be about taking deterrent action that has a material impact but which prompts them to change their behaviours.

The other thing we are doing at the moment is looking at our sanctions effectiveness, so that we can see what gets us the longest period of sustained compliance.

- Q33 **Grahame Morris:** There were terrible accidents involving second-hand reconditioned tyres on PSV vehicles, weren't there?

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

- Q34 **Grahame Morris:** Would that come within your remit?

Richard Turfitt: The PSV operator would, yes. The issuing of the guidance falls to DVSA because it is technical. Two of my colleagues work with DVSA as liaison on the enforcement point, and there is some work going on to add to the current "Guide to maintaining roadworthiness". There is a risk-assessment approach to tyre age, and depending on which axle they are used on.

- Q35 **Grahame Morris:** In terms of your recommendations, or what you would like to see, if there were additional powers you would like the traffic commissioners to have, would that be one example?

Richard Turfitt: Arguably, there is scope within the operator licence requirements already. I talked about requirements being attached to the operator's licence. There are conditions, and also undertakings which operators give. One of them is to ensure that vehicles are kept in a fit and roadworthy condition. That promise is already there. We need to make sure that the standards are current and that we communicate the standards. For instance, the "Guide to maintaining roadworthiness" has just been reissued. It is, to use its phrase, strong guidance. It has a lot of very practical advice to operators in language that, hopefully, their fitters can all understand and apply. The test standards have just changed, and so has the categorisation of defects.



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- Q36 **Grahame Morris:** Should the traffic commissioners, rather than the DVSA, have the power to say that, on minibuses or public service vehicles carrying more than nine passengers, they should not use remoulds or second-hand tyres? Is that a power you should have?

Richard Turfitt: That requires a level of technical expertise that the commissioners do not employ at the moment. I am very lucky to have a wide spread of experience; I have an engineer in the team. That type of work requires a committee or a group of engineers to work with experts from industry and the motor manufacturers to get all the standards set.

- Q37 **Grahame Morris:** As the senior traffic commissioner, what would be the three issues uppermost in your mind? Is it recruitment and staffing for smooth operation? What are the three big issues for you?

Richard Turfitt: We have, first, to deliver what we have promised to do. We are two years into a three-year strategy to reduce application times and make all of that smooth; and to get the cases in within 12 weeks. We need to be properly resourced to do that. We need to have all the staff in place.

Part of the wish list in the last triennial included tribunal rules. Rather than expecting tribunal users to wade through a pack of documents like this—sorry, Ms Davies—we should have a set of rules that are accessible for those who are involved, and indeed for those who observe our proceedings.

We have to start preparing for the future. Now that the insurance issues have been sorted out, we need to start preparing for things like autonomous and semi-autonomous vehicles, and how the regulatory regime might change for that.

We have got through this hearing without mentioning the “B” word. Obviously, we will need to move quickly to ensure that our statutory guidance and the regulatory regime is in a fit position to implement whatever Parliament determines.

- Q38 **Chair:** You have talked a bit about resources and the adequacy of them. This might seem a rude question, but until 2015 you used to publish the salaries of traffic commissioners, and now you do not. How much do traffic commissioners earn?

Richard Turfitt: They will be published with the next annual report.

- Q39 **Chair:** That is helpful. How much do traffic commissioners earn? What is the salary?

Richard Turfitt: It is about £96,000 at the moment.

- Q40 **Chair:** And the senior traffic commissioner?

Richard Turfitt: That is a difficult question for me to answer at the moment, because it has still not been set. I have been in post for 12 months. I get what my colleagues get at the moment.



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Q41 **Chair:** You should be talking to your trade union on that one.

Richard Turfitt: I have a trade union, but it is not necessary. Things were rushed because of the general election, and we are still trying to catch up.

Q42 **Chair:** Listening to your answers to date, it seems like a really complicated architecture.

Richard Turfitt: It is.

Q43 **Chair:** I have two questions. First, do the benefits of the complexity outweigh the costs, and can you give us any examples? Secondly, if you were starting with a blank sheet of paper, would you design it this way? Could roles and responsibilities be better defined or delineated?

Richard Turfitt: I have a habit now of taking the last thing first, and I am going to do that again. I am a lawyer by training. With a blank sheet of paper, would I design a regulatory system like this? No. There are certain parts of it that combine a licensing authority with a tribunal and, instinctively, I am not sure that fits, but it works. The responses to the two previous triennial reviews demonstrate the level of support from the industries and from wider stakeholders. Maybe part of that is because we are not the highest profile regulators, but it does work. For a cost of about £13 million, you are regulating about 72,500 goods businesses and just under 9,000 PSV businesses. You are getting a deterrent effect through the regulatory hearings, but the majority of operators are absolutely committed to getting it right.

Q44 **Chair:** You say it works, and I am not disputing that it works, but how do you measure that effectiveness?

Richard Turfitt: That is one of the problems and one of the challenges for us. How do you measure success of a regulatory regime, when most of its success is through deterrence, when things do not come to pass? We have talked in a couple of annual reports about relative road safety figures across Europe. They are good, but that does not mean that we can be complacent.

A large part of the success of our role is in what we call gatekeeping, checking that applicants are who they say they are and that there is not some kind of criminal or other activity in the background. We must also check that people coming into the industry are equipped to meet the requirements. These are sophisticated businesses. The vehicles are pretty sophisticated these days, so it is important that the tests take place and we do not just nod people through.

We are doing the work. We are a bit delayed on the sanctions effectiveness, but we will be reporting back within the next 12 months, so perhaps I might be so bold as to come back and talk to the Committee when we have those results. Perhaps you would like to challenge me on them; I am sure you will.



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Chair: We would like to turn to the role of the traffic commissioners in relation to the Department, the DVSA and the courts.

- Q45 **Daniel Zeichner:** You will know that recently the Committee did an inquiry into community transport and some of the issues around licensing.

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

- Q46 **Daniel Zeichner:** At the same time, we looked at some of the relationships with other organisations. One that came up was the relationship with the traffic commissioners. You have touched on this a bit already, but in general how would you characterise your relationship with the DFT?

Richard Turfitt: It is probably the strongest it has been for many years. As the Chair has already identified, it is a very complicated structure. It is not the easiest thing to understand, not even for civil servants. Traffic commissioners can sometimes come across as a little precious about their independence—particularly the independence of the tribunal process. We are lucky; we have a very good sponsorship team at the moment.

It is interesting. We have two separate industries. There is a freight team and a buses and taxis team that we deal with in the Department. The sponsorship at the moment is with the freight team.

- Q47 **Daniel Zeichner:** Clearly there is a resource issue.

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

- Q48 **Daniel Zeichner:** In terms of your powers and guidance, when you need those things from the Department, do you get them or are you conscious that you are probably not going to get them so you do not ask?

Richard Turfitt: I am a good public servant.

- Q49 **Daniel Zeichner:** You are realistic.

Richard Turfitt: Yes; you have to be. We are a relatively small outfit, trying to do the best we can with a limited income. That income is dictated a little bit by the impact on industry. As industry feels the pressures, the licensing income might go down, but it makes us a bit more responsive.

When we ask for things, yes, we get support. The DVSA procured the IT system. I know I keep going on about it, but it was a significant investment, and it has been very well received by the industries and applicants using it, according to user satisfaction surveys.

- Q50 **Daniel Zeichner:** Maybe you have already got the sense from Members here of the possibility that something could be done to impress on bus operators the need for better punctuality and so on. You quite reasonably point out that you do not have the resources. Couldn't you be tougher in asking for more? At the moment, it is very hard for consumers. Bus



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passengers in Cambridge are telling me that they cannot get to work any more because three buses in a row get cancelled. They would love you to have the teeth to do something about it.

Richard Turfitt: We can only take action where we have evidence. We will take action when we get the evidence, whether it is an unsafe operator or an operator not running to time. There has to be a degree of proportionality in every tribunal decision, because that is what the law requires. I cannot say that, if they failed to run two buses, I would put an end to the business. I do not think that is what many bus passengers would say. I have been in that situation in Cambridge.

It relies on the evidence provided to us. I am not passing the buck to the DVSA. It is important that they have the time and space to gather the proper evidence, otherwise the case will fail when it comes to public inquiry.

Q51 **Daniel Zeichner:** Does the Department make demands of you that you think are reasonable or unreasonable? Are you able to comment on that?

Richard Turfitt: The Department's expectations of us are reasonable. They are also willing to listen when we push back. Traffic commissioners have a history; we speak our minds and have done so publicly in the past. The fact that we are not shouting about things at the moment indicates that we are working with our partners.

I would like to see more cases from the DVSA. I would like to see stronger evidence from them, but, hopefully, that is an indication of a strong-minded regulator.

Q52 **Daniel Zeichner:** I have a slightly different question. It is on HGV parking. My understanding is that part of your role is the environmental sustainability of centres designated as parking locations. In May 2018, the roads Minister made a statement to the House of Commons about how the DFE was planning to tackle fly parking. Were you involved in that at all, or consulted on it?

Richard Turfitt: I need to distinguish the statutory role, which is about operating centres. That is where the vehicle is parked and normally kept when it is not in use. Parking issues often occur when the vehicle is still in use; for instance, the driver has parked because of drivers' hours compliance. It is a big difference.

Q53 **Daniel Zeichner:** Which bit are you responsible for?

Richard Turfitt: The operating centre, when the vehicle is parked and not being used. The driver comes back to base, the vehicle is not in use and the driver has gone home.

Q54 **Daniel Zeichner:** What actions have you taken to make sure that you discharge your responsibilities on that side of it correctly? What do you do?



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Richard Turfitt: On application, local residents have the ability to object and oppose the grant of the licence for an operating centre. It is limited, but they can object, effectively, on the basis of sight, sound, smell and vibration. There are also statutory objectors who include local authorities and police forces. They are able to object on a far wider basis.

We do not hear from statutory objectors enough. That could be because issues are being dealt with through the planning authorities.

Q55 **Daniel Zeichner:** Do they know that you do it?

Richard Turfitt: Yes, they do. The local authorities are signed up. The statute requires us to publish details of applications, and those are sent out electronically. That is how it is distributed among local authorities.

Q56 **Daniel Zeichner:** That kind of assessment seems a bit different from some of your other things. Do you have the technical expertise to deal with it, or do you have to get others to assist?

Richard Turfitt: We can call on specialist traffic examiners. They come out and do measurements, for instance, at the point of access and egress, to work out the turning circle and the impact. As a matter of best practice, if we are going to a public inquiry, I do a site visit, usually unannounced, because I do not want the site tidied up. If there are issues about capacity, you do not want the smell of new paint or things looking too bright and shiny. You actually want to see how it is going to operate.

Q57 **Chair:** On the suitability of centres, air quality has shot up the political agenda. People are going to park HGV vehicles in those centres and it is difficult to have a replacement for those sorts of diesel vehicles. Is air quality on your mind in assessing suitability? Are you looking at what else is in the vicinity?

Richard Turfitt: Yes, it is part of a wider picture. Obviously, a lot of the operating centres are far away from anything else or they are in industrial areas. In an industrial area, it would be very difficult to distinguish air quality impact in the use of a site as an operating centre.

AdBlue emissions-cheat devices are very much on the radar at the moment, mainly because of a pilot being run by the DVSA. It has thrown up a very large number of those devices being found on vehicles. If they are in use, of course they circumvent the need for AdBlue in the vehicle and the effectiveness of the catalytic converter to remove noxious emissions.

Q58 **Chair:** You are very conscious of air quality issues.

Richard Turfitt: We are at the moment. There are a lot of reports in the trade press about action that is being taken on individual cases. From the way the cases are reported, you would think it was the only issue the operator was facing at public inquiry. Looking at most, if not all, of the cases, there are other issues, other things to do with the management or



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maintenance of vehicles, which have piqued the interest of the presiding commissioner.

Q59 **Luke Pollard:** I have a lot of questions to get through in a very short amount of time, so I will be firing them at you.

Richard Turfitt: I will try to give much shorter answers.

Q60 **Luke Pollard:** Last week, the DVSA appeared in front of us on the BMW recall issue. What surprised me about the evidence was just how problematic the organisation seems to have been over the past couple of years, in terms of not realising what powers it actually had to enforce. Is your experience of working with the DVSA a positive one? Do you think that the organisation gets what your role is and resources you accordingly?

Richard Turfitt: Bits of it do; bits of it don't. I keep coming back to the Chair's comment. It is a very complicated legal set-up with us. On the enforcement side, two of my colleagues engage with it very well and very regularly. They work together on things like the "Guide to maintaining roadworthiness", and through regular liaison meetings. They attend a DFT compliance forum that airs a lot of the issues.

Q61 **Luke Pollard:** Do your responsibilities as organisations overlap? They are very complementary, but would you say they overlap in certain areas?

Richard Turfitt: No, they do not overlap. It is absolutely right to describe them as complementary. I cannot do much without a DVSA examiner having investigated, for instance, a maintenance failure. I need their evidence for me to hold a public inquiry and to have a tribunal hearing.

Q62 **Luke Pollard:** Are there any examples where you think the flow of information could be smoother or swifter between the DVSA and yourselves?

Richard Turfitt: Yes, but we are working on that all the time. Cases are communicated electronically. The improvements are small, but they are being implemented all the time. Basic things like document labelling help the tribunal staff to prepare the case quicker, so that it gets listed quicker; as does making sure that the lines of inquiry are properly understood by the examiners and what type of thing would result in a strong tribunal finding. Every enforcement authority at the moment is facing the same challenges at the moment—things like the single justice procedure in the magistrates courts.

I am a magistrate. What traditionally used to go before the magistrates are the cases that an examiner, a junior police officer or a health and safety inspector would cut their teeth on. The single justice procedure in the magistrates court means that those types of cases are not going



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before the courts now. They go to a single justice, and decisions are made on the papers.

- Q63 **Luke Pollard:** Earlier, you spoke about one of your main roles being taking action against non-compliant HGV and PSV drivers. How do you identify and take action against those non-compliant drivers? Is it by receiving information from the DVSA and then processing it?

Richard Turfitt: This is a slightly different jurisdiction. We deal with cases referred to us by the Secretary of State, by DVLA.

Mr Morris, I am sorry. I have suddenly thought of something I would like: the IT from DVLA.

- Q64 **Grahame Morris:** You mentioned that.

Richard Turfitt: It is the DVLA's IT. It is slightly different from the one the DVSA has given us.

- Q65 **Grahame Morris:** I will add it to your wish list.

Richard Turfitt: Thank you very much.

The IT is clunky. We often get vocational entitlement referrals, which is the part of the driver's licence when a driver applies to become an HGV or PSV driver; or, for instance, foreign exchange applications. It could also be when somebody who has been disqualified from driving by the criminal courts is coming to the end of the disqualification. We have to determine whether their vocational entitlement should be restored.

- Q66 **Luke Pollard:** It is a route via both the DVLA and the DVSA.

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

- Q67 **Luke Pollard:** Do their systems speak to each other?

Richard Turfitt: Yes.

- Q68 **Luke Pollard:** But there is scope for improvement in data sharing. Is that what you are trying to suggest?

Richard Turfitt: Yes. The system our staff have access to is called DLIVE90. That is the year when it was brought into service.

- Q69 **Luke Pollard:** That is a DVLA system.

Richard Turfitt: Yes, but their other systems are bang up to date. I am going to put a plug in now. A couple of years ago, the DVLA did a lot of work talking to industry about the new system and how they could access driver licence checks and get the code. It was really positively received by the operators at the events I attended.

- Q70 **Luke Pollard:** I was 10 in 1990, so it is a shockingly old system. When it comes to HGV and PSV drivers, is there a set of rogue operators that you are trying to deal with, or are operators just failing to renew? Is there a



sense of actually avoiding the rules on a deliberate basis?

Richard Turfitt: The majority of operators are in varying degrees of compliance, and then, to use the term that Professor McCrory picked up in the regulatory review all those years ago, there are the rogues. It is the rogues that persuade us each time that it is necessary to do gatekeeper checks. The identity of the entity applying might be changing all the time. There might be different faces put up, but in the background there are the same people seeking to use an operator's licence for no good, or seeking to run it in such a way that they do not meet the basic safety standards.

Q71 **Luke Pollard:** Do you have the power to strike people off—say, a company director? Do you have the power to say, "You can no longer apply for any of these licences or be involved with a company that is"?

Richard Turfitt: Yes. If you revoke an operator's licence, you can disqualify the holder. If it is a company, you can disqualify the company, but you can also disqualify the directors for a defined or indeterminate period from holding or being involved in the management of an operator's licence. What that does not do is stop fronts. We are having to get more and more sophisticated about that.

Q72 **Luke Pollard:** We have been made aware of the case of a UK operator setting up in Bulgaria despite having been refused an operator's licence in the UK. Are there things that your organisation can do to try to stop that kind of abuse?

Richard Turfitt: The way it works at the moment is that there is significant investment in what is called the national register. It is not my responsibility; it belongs to DVSA. When we take decisions, they are recorded on the national register and there is interconnectivity between each member state's national register. That would have been available to the authorities in Bulgaria. We do checks and use national register interconnectivity to check when names come up or there is some suspicion about where they come from.

Q73 **Luke Pollard:** You mentioned the "B" word earlier. Have you been given any reassurance that you will still be able to access information sharing across EU member states after Brexit?

Richard Turfitt: I am not directly involved, but I understand that departmental officials are working on it, and that the relationships are getting a lot of attention. Occasionally, I am wheeled out to meet equivalents in other countries—sometimes member states and sometimes not.

Q74 **Luke Pollard:** My colleague in Garston and Halewood has been running a campaign for quite some time about old tyres, and trying to have them outlawed on PSV vehicles. This is something that the Government have seemed not that keen on. From your point of view, is there a genuine problem with old tyres being reused on PSV vehicles, and do you think



that legislative action against that might be useful?

Richard Turfitt: Again, I am going to have to bow to technical engineering expertise. I understand that the research was done by DVSA. They looked at it, and the research did not support an outright ban. What is going to be brought forward is guidance on using a risk-assessment tool. You need to think about which axle of the vehicle they are on and whether they have been recut—the issues Mr Morris mentioned. That guidance will be coming forward very soon. I know that, because my two colleagues have been asked to cast an eye over it.

Q75 **Luke Pollard:** You cover HGVs. One of the areas that has been brought into HGV regulation is batched on site concrete.

Richard Turfitt: Volumetric mixers.

Q76 **Luke Pollard:** I am sure that most Members here have a company in their patch that is not very happy about being brought into it. From your point of view, has the case been sufficiently proven that batched on site vehicles should not be a special category but should be in HGV? In terms of how you are seeking to regulate, have you made any special plans around that yet?

Richard Turfitt: We have made plans for the increased number of operators we may be looking at. One of our number has been deployed to deal with those applications, so that we can offer a consistent approach as they come online.

I do not really feel that I can answer much about policy decisions. They are not mine. I know that they were in response to identified issues with roadworthiness. Obviously, the Department had to address the concerns that were naturally expressed by the industry about the ability to test some of those vehicles. Some of them are very large indeed. The Department has been working with industry representatives over some period to try to address their concerns.

Q77 **Luke Pollard:** On data sharing, my understanding is that when there is an accident involving an HGV in London, and there has been a safety breach, the London traffic commissioner is automatically notified, but that is not the system that other traffic commissioners around the UK use. Would you be in favour of adopting the London and south-east model of automatic notification for the rest of the country?

Richard Turfitt: The London model is quite different. There is buy-in from the DVSA, from the Metropolitan police, considerably, and from TfL. That freight partnership is working extremely well. Their reports indicate that they now have significant intelligence on high-risk operators. There are not those resources in the other regions. There are similar arrangements. Police Scotland is very good at reporting incidents to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner in Edinburgh.

I think I have avoided your question by answering a different one.



Luke Pollard: I think we have the answer you were avoiding; thank you.

Chair: We are going to look at the relationship with local authorities.

Q78 **Jack Brereton:** I have experienced this from the other side because I was previously cabinet member for transport on a local authority. In my experience, there has not been much engagement between the traffic commissioner and local authorities, so I am keen to know what you are doing to improve your links to local authorities.

Richard Turfitt: It is a challenge. I am sorry if I sound like a broken record, but I am going to use the resource word again. I have a different experience with some local authorities, for instance in my patch. I hear from some regularly and some I do not. I actually went out to visit some, but as the caseload builds up you cannot be in all places at the same time. The public inquiries get priority because they are a sign of a business waiting to expand or one that needs to be removed for safety reasons.

I am reliably told that my colleague, Mr Denton, had a meeting in Birmingham only last week, if that helps. I also go out—I know I am not alone in this—when the local authority is in a different area, on a different side. On the bus side, we organise education, and networking events for their best bus operators. Traffic commissioners are frequently invited to present as part of those evenings. I try to make it a rule to stay the whole evening so that I get the maximum benefit. Having said that, I stood up the last one, in Hertfordshire, because at 7 o'clock that evening I was still sitting on a case, but needs must.

Q79 **Jack Brereton:** What would be the regular reasons why the traffic commissioner was engaging with local authorities?

Richard Turfitt: Two reasons: first, to encourage them to take a more active part when it comes to applications and to object if they have concerns about a particular operator; and, secondly, to assist them with their bus provisions.

Two weeks ago, I spoke at a conference organised by APSE. Their transport professionals were all gathered together in Nottingham. It was a good opportunity to hit 100-plus of them, because they are operators as well. We were able to communicate with them through that.

Q80 **Jack Brereton:** Do you feel that those discussions were successful?

Richard Turfitt: No. It is a start. It is not the answer to everything. The delegates at the APSE conference identified the need for us to communicate with chief executives and cabinet members to talk to them about operator licence requirements, both as operators themselves and as regards what they can expect of operators based in their geographical responsibilities.

Q81 **Jack Brereton:** What would you see as your main challenges in improving relations with local authorities more widely?



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Richard Turfitt: Their resource and our resource: time. Everyone is being pulled in so many different directions at the moment. It is a challenge. It is not something you can do once and then tick a box and walk away. It is the same with every sector we cover, and we cover many sectors—for instance, scaffolders and waste operators. We need to educate them at the moment. We need to communicate yet again with accountants. I know that sounds strange, but we find that so many operators are advised to change entity, and then they forget to notify us and they get themselves into terrible trouble. Those are just a few of the communication challenges we face. As I say, we have doubled our communications team in size, but we have a lot of work to do.

- Q82 **Graham Stringer:** I want to go back to the answers you gave Luke earlier. As I understood your answers, you were saying that most of the problems you had with bus operators were to do with technical non-compliance rather than the safety of the buses. Is that right?

Richard Turfitt: No.

- Q83 **Graham Stringer:** I must have misunderstood. Tell me what it is.

Richard Turfitt: In a year, about 1.5% of bus operators find themselves at public inquiry. Of that 1.5%, 70% of those operators at public inquiry will have some direction made against the operator that has a material impact. Most cases are not single issue. There will be across-the-board maintenance or driver management issues. Sometimes, with bus operators, it will involve punctuality. There may be issues with the transport managers. It is very rare to have a single issue case, and the majority of those are to do with financial standing and the moneys that need to be present.

- Q84 **Graham Stringer:** I did not quite understand, but that is helpful.

Richard Turfitt: I am sorry if I am not clear enough.

- Q85 **Graham Stringer:** It was my misunderstanding. What estimate would you make of the number of buses in operation that are not safe?

Richard Turfitt: That is very difficult for me to estimate. It is probably more a question for the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

- Q86 **Graham Stringer:** But you talk to them, don't you, and get your information from them?

Richard Turfitt: Yes. I can give you the stats again on those that end up at public inquiry. Those are the ones that are serious enough to deserve a referral from DVSA. We do not get every report of a prohibition notice or fixed penalty notice being presented. There is a duty to inform the Secretary of State, which is DVSA, of any failure that affects the security of occupants or other road users. That does not come to us; it goes to DVSA.

- Q87 **Graham Stringer:** How many bus operators have you disqualified



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because of health and safety reasons? When I say “you”, I mean all traffic commissioners.

Richard Turfitt: I can tell you how many were disqualified last year, because I have just got the up-to-date figures. Of the 161 operators that came to public inquiry, 26 were disqualified and 32 transport managers were disqualified.

Q88 **Graham Stringer:** Were they large bus companies or small operators?

Richard Turfitt: I do not have the stats for that, but it is a range. As far as I am aware, it is not the big five, but a range of small and medium size.

Q89 **Graham Stringer:** Can you give us an example of what would get them disqualified?

Richard Turfitt: First, they need to be revoked. The process of revocation is that there has to be sufficient evidence, to the civil standard, that licence requirements have been breached. We then go through a balancing exercise at the tribunal, with positives and negatives. It starts with an Appeal Court question: “Is this an operator that is capable of ensuring future compliance?” We then move to the next question: “Is this an operator that needs to be taken out of the industry?” That will generally be very serious non-compliance—a bending of the rules or a risk to safety. It could be both. If you revoke them, you are required to consider disqualifying them.

Q90 **Graham Stringer:** It is some time ago, so you may not even know about it, but when FirstGroup were putting out buses and the wheels fell off them, they were not disqualified. That always struck me as being a dangerous business—sending out buses not just with tyres that were not right, but with wheels that fell off—but they were not disqualified. Would they be disqualified now?

Richard Turfitt: I am not going to prejudge a case, and certainly not a single case. If that happened tomorrow and First found themselves at a public inquiry, it would prove extremely difficult for anybody to have a fair hearing.

Wheel losses are rare, but still too prevalent. They tend to have catastrophic results, as we know, not just for passengers but for the moving components that hit pedestrians and people waiting at bus stops. My colleagues view that very seriously. Sometimes, those situations come down to the carelessness of one individual or driver, or they may be indicative of wider systemic failures.

Q91 **Graham Stringer:** In maintenance?

Richard Turfitt: Yes. I am sorry if I sound like I am hedging my bets.

Q92 **Graham Stringer:** You are a lawyer; you are entitled to.



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Richard Turfitt: You say the sweetest things. I am also a former health and safety prosecutor. I spent a decade doing that.

Q93 **Graham Stringer:** This is not meant to be critical of you. I have listened to an hour and a quarter of questions and evidence, and it seems to me that you are a part of a system that does not really have the information or the resources to guarantee that registered buses are where they say they should be and when they should be, and that does not guarantee the safety of the public and passengers. Would you think that was fair?

Richard Turfitt: No, I do not think that is fair. When it comes to safety, nobody has ever set out a system where we police every operator. The operator licence system is based on trust. The operators sign up to maintaining standards that the industry and the trade associations all commit to meet, and try to assist their members to meet.

We treat that very seriously. It is why we spend a lot of resource and a lot of our time checking at application stage that they are capable of meeting what they say they are going to deliver. But we could not go in and examine every business. You used health and safety as an example. It would be impossible to do that for every business in the country. Every time there is a trigger, the business needs to be looked at.

The DVSA has introduced its operator compliance risk score, where adverse incidents have negative scoring, and positive things like test pass rates. That helps it to target. It has introduced an earned recognition scheme, which will also help it to target its resources better. When patterns start to develop, when there are similar prohibition notices or similar encounters or adverse findings at test, we need to intervene, first, through the agency going in to have a look at it, and then, if there is sufficient evidence, it needs to come to us.

On bus registrations, you heard me say earlier that the industry is changing. The mode of operation is changing rapidly. I do not mind putting my hands up and saying that the statutory document is beginning to look very out of date. It does not reflect the way the industry is providing different services.

I have to find the resource to do that work. I hope it will happen this year. Industry does not like it. The industry does not even like being called to a hearing, so that is a deterrent in itself. Operators do all sorts of things to try to persuade you not to call them to a hearing. Once they are called to a hearing, their details are published. One of my colleagues talks about a lawyer begging her not to publish her decision or circulate it more widely among, for instance, local authorities.

There is a deterrent in simply asking questions and having the managing director of the local company come to a preliminary hearing and asking them, "Tell me about your systems because I have had these adverse reports. Tell me what you are going to do to improve, and tell me how you are going to demonstrate that to me in three or six months."



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There is soft influence as well as hard. The numbers on bus fines are not huge, but the interventions are greater and more effective.

- Q94 **Graham Stringer:** One of the changes in the legislation is the 2017 Bus Services Act. Has that caused a change in your work? Are you expecting it to cause your work to change? Can you tell us what has happened and is happening?

Richard Turfitt: We are just seeing how the different approach advocated by the Act is beginning to bite. As we know, there are the first shoots of potential franchising. The information-gathering powers are just being used. One of my colleagues has had to consider whether the requests for information were reasonable. That is part of the new role for traffic commissioners.

It is wait and see at the moment, Mr Stringer. Probably that is not a very satisfactory answer, but when the Local Transport Act came in it took some years for us to work out, and it was many years before the first quality contract scheme was considered. Yes, we are prepared. I know I have to update our guidance to reflect that, but I am quite happy to learn from my colleagues' experience of dealing with even just the information-gathering powers, before I put pen to paper.

- Q95 **Graham Stringer:** Changing the subject completely, if I was going to hire a haulage company, how could I check that they were appropriately licensed and in compliance?

Richard Turfitt: We have a publicly available search facility of operator licence records. You can go in there and search. You can do searches through addresses or through trading names. What we do not do is provide vehicle details.

We are starting to publish our written decisions when we take regulatory action. The outcomes of public inquiries have always been published, and that is done electronically as well.

- Q96 **Graham Stringer:** Lilian asked you at the start of the session how you communicated to the public. There is an acceptance that not many members of the public know very much about you. Do you have any plans to improve your communication strategy?

Richard Turfitt: Yes. I can tell you what we have done. Going back to March last year, we joined in the Think campaign on mobiles. We were given about 25,000 leaflets, which we targeted at professional drivers attending driver contact hearings, because mobile phone usage is still unacceptably high among professional drivers.

In October, we launched our first digital news service. We have about 9,000 subscribers signed up to that. Admittedly, they are industry subscribers, but we have been able to get various messages out. I mentioned the brake testing campaign. That was done in November jointly with DVSA, following a lot of the lessons learned. Mr Morris



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mentioned a very sad case. You will recall the Bath tipper case, which was sentenced in January 2017, although my colleague had removed that operator's licence back in 2015. The decision was embargoed until the criminal sentencing was over.

Combined, we had about 344,000 articles picked up by Associated Press. We have done some more work on operator licence application times. There is publication of traffic commissioner written decisions. That is quite resource intensive. We have all been hit by GDPR implementation. That caused us to go back and test all our systems, as well as having the new VOL system tested. At the moment, our comms have been very internal and a bit navel directed. We need to do better with our wider stakeholders and how we serve the public.

Q97 **Jack Brereton:** On bus routes, how many applications do you refuse each year?

Richard Turfitt: On bus registrations, we have to accept them, given full notice, which was 56 days; obviously the registration times have recently changed in England. We cannot refuse changes to bus registrations as long as they meet the criteria. What we can do is refuse short-notice applications under regulation 7.2.

Q98 **Jack Brereton:** Even if there were significant safety grounds, you would have no powers to refuse.

Richard Turfitt: I could do something on the operator's licence. I would look at the operator's licence if there were safety concerns. I could impose a condition that would prevent, for instance, the operator from registering services.

Q99 **Jack Brereton:** I find it quite concerning that you do not have powers to refuse an application even if there are significant safety grounds that a bus service could not be run on the route.

Richard Turfitt: There is the ability to use traffic regulation conditions.

Q100 **Jack Brereton:** Yes, I understand that.

Richard Turfitt: I understood that you were not talking about that. If we had safety reports, I would perhaps not be looking at it from the point of view of the registrations. I would want to stop them operating if it were that much of a concern. I would want to look at whether this is an operator—

Q101 **Jack Brereton:** I would not agree. Often, we have situations where bus companies propose routes on streets that are inappropriate in some cases for the service to run on. There do not seem to be any real powers for yourselves to prevent a service being run on that route.

Richard Turfitt: But there is the power for local authorities to use TROs.

Q102 **Jack Brereton:** I understand that. I am asking whether you think you should have more powers in that regard.



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Richard Turfitt: We might, but we would then need more resource to check the routes, whereas local authorities, I hesitate to suggest, are better placed to make that type of assessment. Often the roads themselves may be restricted because of works authorised by the local authority.

Q103 **Jack Brereton:** But that could mean we have a route that is granted by yourselves, but yet has a road where a TRO is in place so the route could not be facilitated.

Richard Turfitt: But the local authorities are given notice of bus registrations. The move in England is to try to encourage more partnership working. They have to give 28 days. Local authorities now have the additional power to require information. Admittedly, that is really with the object of securing alternatives. The local authority receives that information. I do not think I have satisfied you.

Jack Brereton: No.

Richard Turfitt: I am sorry I cannot offer much more. On the face of it, with current resources, that system works best.

Chair: Thank you very much for giving evidence today. That concludes our session.