

Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC
Chair of Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

21/03/25

Dear Lord Carlile,

Re: NI Protocol & Windsor Framework and its impact on the motoring industry

We are writing to you on behalf of the motor industry in Northern Ireland in relation to an issue which has the potential to be hugely damaging to the industry in the province, and which we feel has not been taken seriously by those with the power to influence the matter at a Parliamentary level.

The motoring industry in Northern Ireland represents all major vehicle brands in a dynamic retail sector which is responsible for 14,000 jobs and delivers significant economic impact and we, the signatories to this letter, represent the largest retail motoring dealerships within the region.

As a result of the Northern Ireland Protocol and Windsor Framework agreements, EU law continues to apply in Northern Ireland for the purposes of vehicle type approval and registration of new vehicles, GB National Type Approval applies for new vehicles registered in GB since February 2024, with transitional arrangements ending at the end of 2025.

The requirement for manufacturers to comply with 2 different type approval regimes to sell vehicles in the 4 regions of the United Kingdom, will ultimately be detrimental in Northern Ireland for consumer choice, cost of ownership and Benefit in Kind taxation. In turn this will be damaging to the industry in Northern Ireland putting many jobs at risk. The attached briefing paper outlines the issue in detail and proposes solutions.

As an industry group we have corresponded with and met with elected MPs and MLA representatives of all major parties in Northern Ireland to highlight the issue, supported by the National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) of the United Kingdom.

As a group of senior executives from the industry in Northern Ireland, Donnelly Group, Agnew Group and Charles Hurst Group had the opportunity to meet on the 22nd of January with Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Lilian Greenwood MP, Minister for the Future of Roads, and officials from the Department for Transport with responsibility for Type Approval to discuss the issue.

The meeting was constructive and there was a broad consensus that the industry articulated the issue correctly and identified the potential jeopardy if the situation is not resolved, but despite this no solution was offered and there appears to be no motivation to explore the industry's proposals.

We also had the opportunity to meet with Gavin Robinson MP, leader of the DUP, and Lord Dodds, to brief them on the outcome of our meeting with Hilary Benn.

Lord Dodds proposed that this issue should be referred for consideration to the newly formed House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee.

We are writing to you as chair of the Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee to request that this issue is considered in your next meeting.

As an industry, we would be delighted to provide further clarification on our paper and provide evidence to the committee as required. We also have the support of several of the leading manufacturers in the UK market.

We very much look forward to your response.

Dave Sheeran
Group MD
Donnelly Group

Brian Robinson
Franchise Director
Agnew Group

Jeff McCartney
Operations Director
Charles Hurst Group