Thank you for your letter of 2 May, in which you seek clarification on a number of issues regarding the Scottish Safety Camera Programme.

Structure, Funding and Organisation of the Scottish Safety Camera Programme

The Scottish Safety Camera Programme is an initiative designed to reduce the number and severity of road accidents that occur as a result of excessive or inappropriate speeds on Scotland’s roads. The Programme is delivered through eight local Safety Camera Partnerships each of which has membership drawn from local authorities, police forces, the trunk roads network and various other agencies such as the health and fire services who have an interest in reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads.

The operation of the Partnerships is funded solely from the hypothecation of the income from fixed penalty notices issued under the rules of the Programme and is governed by strict HM Treasury rules. Under these rules the partnerships can only deploy a safety camera at sites that meet specific criteria including accident history, vehicle speed and traffic flow.

There are two streams of governance which ensure the correct implementation of these rules – the Scottish Safety Camera Programme Office and the Scottish Safety Camera Advisory Board (SAB). The Programme Office provides policy development and management of the Programme and provides support to partnerships, monitors finance and performance, and co-ordinates research and national communications.

The Programme Office reports to the Scottish Safety Camera Advisory Board (SAB) which meets quarterly. The Board is responsible for advising the Scottish Executive on all operational issues for
the Safety Camera Programme and also for monitoring and advising on the activities of the Programme Office.

Membership of SAB is drawn from the Scottish Executive (including the Crown Office, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Road Safety Campaign), the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), the Society of Chiefs of Transport Scotland (SCOTS), District Courts Association, COSLA, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and a representative from the Scottish Safety Camera partnerships. Other places on the Board are filled on a rotational basis by a representative from key motorising organisations such as the AA Motoring Trust, the British Motorcyclists Federation and the RAC Foundation. Observers also attend from the Scottish Programme Office, HM Treasury, Department for Transport and the Driving Standards Agency.

The former Secretary of State for Transport announced last December that the hypothecated fine revenue funding mechanism would end throughout the UK on 31 March 2007. In England safety camera activity and the partnerships will be integrated into the wider road safety agenda and the funding for this will be allocated to the corresponding local authorities. The funding will not be ring fenced for the operation of safety cameras as each local authority will determine the level of resource required to deliver the range of road safety measures that it considers necessary to address local road safety concerns.

The hypothecated fine revenue system will also end in Scotland on 31 March 2007 and options for the future funding and structure of safety camera activity are currently being developed. HM Treasury has indicated that following the end of hypothecation, the Scottish End of Year Flexibility (EYF) will be increased by the netted-off amount on the basis of the most recent audited figures. This amount will be rolled forward to the 2008/2009 baseline when there should be Barnett consequentials in the Spending Review.

**Financial implications for local authorities of changes to the Safety Camera Programme**

At present the local authorities, through the District Court function, collect the fixed penalty fines arising from the operations of the various Safety Camera Partnerships as well as all other fixed penalty fines, e.g., parking fines, dropping litter, etc. HM Treasury rules for the Safety Camera Programme require that only the actual costs of the collection of speeding fixed penalty fines can be recovered from the hypothecation of fixed penalty income. However, under a separate agreement with HM Treasury the District Courts can retain 10% of the amount collected for other non speed related fixed penalty notices. At present the actual cost of collecting the speeding fixed penalty notices is less than the 10% allowance allowed by HM Treasury for the collection of other fixed penalty notices of the same value. Consequently, from the 1 April 2007, there should be no loss of income to local authorities for the collection of speeding fixed penalty notices. It is worth mentioning, however, that the number of fixed penalty notices issued for speeding and red light running is reducing as the Safety Camera Programme becomes more successful. As a result the unit cost to process each speeding fixed penalty notice may increase. This increase will, of course, be balanced to some extent as the total number of other fixed penalty notices processed by the District Courts increases and the unit cost of processing reduces generally as a result.

As you will be aware the process of court unification will have the effect of removing from Local Authorities the responsibility for collecting and enforcing fines that currently require to be paid to the District Court. That task will be taken on by the Scottish Court Service (SCS) as it takes responsibility for the entire summary court system. Initially there had been no intention to transfer fine collection work in respect of safety camera fines to SCS, as that was subject to the separate funding regime established under the hypothecated scheme. Now that it is clear that the system of
hypothecation will come to an end it will be necessary to reconsider that position and this is a matter that we will take forward. In the event that this function does transfer to the Scottish Courts Service the associated costs would also transfer from local authorities to the Scottish Courts Service on a sheriffdom by sheriffdom basis. As has already been made clear local authorities currently receive the actual cost of the collection work from the partnerships and after 31 March 2007 they will receive payment for this function directly from HM Treasury. Any future transfer of this function to the Scottish Courts Service would therefore lead to the transfer of only the amount normally provided to local authorities for the collection of the penalties.

Implication for road safety campaigns

You asked for clarification on the impact of any change to the Scottish Safety Camera Programme on the ability of local authorities to undertake road safety campaigns. Local authorities have the autonomy to decide what proportion of their funding to allocate to road safety campaigns. This has in the past been completely separate from road safety activities carried out by Safety Camera Partnerships. We hope in the future to achieve greater synergy between the Scottish Safety Camera Programme activity and the wider road safety agenda.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Bash wishes

CATHY JAMIESON