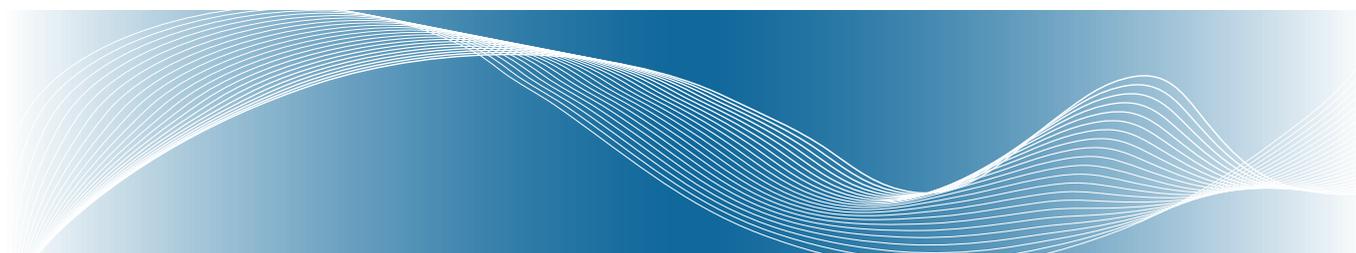


Impact Assessment

Annex C

History of DVLA Local Offices (LOs) and Area Enforcement Centres (AECs)



History of DVLA Local Offices (LOs) and Area Enforcement Centres (AECs)

The DVLA (then called the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre – DVLC) began operations in 1974 to centralise the responsibilities of the County Councils for the registration and licensing of motor vehicles. The Centre also began to provide data to other government agencies and to supply vehicle registration details to the police, to maintain the Police National Computer (PNC) in Hendon.

The DVLA maintains the central vehicle record, issues registration documents and licensing reminders, oversees the payment of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), and pays refunds of duty when they are due.

Local Offices

The Agency is supported in its role by a network of LOs. Originally, there were 81 Local Vehicle Licensing Offices (LVLOs), responsible for the registration of new and imported vehicles and licensing transactions not handled by Post Offices. The LVLOs also dealt with export licensing arrangements, trade registration plates, cherished transfers and carried out the local VED enforcement duties. In 1974, about 2,500 Post Office branches were able to issue VED ‘tax discs’.

Since 1974, many of the Agency’s internal processes have been automated and other services can be provided online. As a result, the structure of the DVLA’s local services network has changed and its size has been steadily reduced.

In 1985, the number of LOs was reduced to 53. By then, about 95% of all VED licensing transactions were completed at one of more than 4,000 Post Offices. To reflect the changing nature of their work the LVLOs were renamed Vehicle Registration Offices (VROs).

In 1995, DVLA introduced Automated First Registration and Licensing (AFRL), which enabled car manufacturers and dealers to register vehicles electronically, without the need to involve a VRO. The local network was reduced again, to 40 offices. Since 2000, they have been referred to as Local Offices. In 2008, the Luton Local Office was closed bringing the network down to 39. Since the introduction of AFRL, the Agency has continued to provide more services electronically, including the introduction in 2004 of Electronic Vehicle Licensing (EVL), and more still are in the pipeline.

After a review of the LO functions in 2009, the network has been developed to focus on providing an initial face-to-face contact for customers, with more of the associated processing work being centralised. Centralised Processing Units (CPUs) were established in Manchester, Swansea and Northampton to handle personalised registration transactions from across the network. A centralised operating model was also developed for the future management of enforcement casework.

VED Enforcement

The LOs role in the enforcement of VED has also evolved since 1974, especially in recent years, to reflect new licensing and registration requirements and other ways of identifying evaders.

In 2003 and 2004, Continuous Registration Enforcement Centres (CRECs) were established in Bournemouth, Glasgow and Northampton. These dealt with the enforcement of the new regulations that require motorists either to license a vehicle or make a Statutory Off-Road Notification (SORN).

Each LO continued to have its own VED enforcement team until November 2007, when the Local Office Group was separated into the Local Services Network (LSN) and Enforcement Division (ED). Enforcement work was regionalised into 12 Enforcement Centres co-located with the Local Offices in Birmingham, Bournemouth, Chelmsford, Exeter, Glasgow, Leeds, Newcastle, Northampton, Nottingham, Preston, Sidcup and Swansea.

LO enforcement staff either transferred to LSN, or to the new Enforcement Centres. The Enforcement Centres in Bournemouth, Glasgow and Northampton were predominantly staffed by people from the CRECs.

In 2010, the Swansea and Northampton Enforcement Centres were closed. Swansea staff transferred to DVLA and Northampton staff were transferred to the newly created Northampton Central Processing Unit.