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PAC-R-1320

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20 March 2014



Mr Ted McEnery
Clerk to the Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re: PAC Meeting of 30 January 2014 – Request for Supplementary Analysis

Dear Mr McEnery

At the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on Thursday 30 January 2014 held in private session, which dealt with matters arising from the examination of Chapter 7 – Management of the Fixed Charge Notice System, I was requested to provide some additional analysis.

The additional information requested is set out in the attached note, and relates to an analysis of cancellation rates by source of the fixed charge notice. A draft of this note has been reviewed and cleared by the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána.

I hope this will be of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

2012 Report on the Accounts of the Public Services

Chapter 7 Management of the Fixed Charge Notice System

Supplementary Analysis: Cancellation rates by source of fixed charge notice

Chapter 7 of the 2012 Report on the Accounts of the Public Services examined the management of the fixed charge notice system. The additional analysis reported in this note was carried out in response to a request at the meeting of the Public Accounts Committee on 30 January 2014 (in private session) for analysis of cancellation rates by source of the fixed charge notice.

Fixed charge notices issue following detection either by intercept or non-intercept methods. Intercept cases are recorded on notepads or hand-held devices by gardai. Non-intercept cases relate to detections by speed cameras, operated by An Garda or by GoSafe. As a result, non-intercept cases relate exclusively to speeding offences, while intercept cases relate to a range of offences including speeding, illegal parking, use of mobile phone while driving, non-display of current valid tax disc, etc.

Chapter 7 was based on analysis of fixed charge notice cases for 2011 and 2012. Until April 2012, the fixed charge notice system allowed for a very limited number of reasons for termination to be recorded – most were therefore classified on the system simply as ‘cancelled’. Following an IT PULSE update on the 28 March 2012, more detailed reasons were recorded on the system, which allows for a more useful analysis of the data. For the period April to December 2012, almost 300,000 notices were issued, with just over 15,000, or 5.2% being terminated. See Figure 1 below.

The percentage of cases terminated was higher for non-intercept (speeding camera) cases than for intercept cases. However, there was no material difference between the sources in respect of termination rates for exceptional/discretionary reasons i.e. after exclusion of terminations due to

- processing system errors — such as an incorrect townland name or incorrect registration plate number, which cannot be successfully prosecuted
- Juvenile Diversion Programme (JLO) cases
- statutory exemptions — these relate principally to emergency vehicle and individuals producing a disabled parking permit following receipt of a notice.

Figure 1 Number of notices generated and terminated, April to December 2012

	Intercept cases		Non-intercept cases		Total
	Handheld	Notepad	Garda camera	GoSafe camera	
Offences detected	90,997	68,383	83,257	50,731	293,368
Number of offences terminated	3,642	3,133	5,326	3,171	15,272
	4.0%	4.6%	6.4%	6.3%	5.2%
Offences terminated due to					
processing errors, JLO directions, or for statutory reasons	2,162	1,431	3,796	2,300	9,689
	2.4%	2.1%	4.6%	4.5%	3.3%
exceptional and discretionary reasons	1,480	1,702	1,530	871	5,583
	1.6%	2.5%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%

Source Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General