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Consultation on Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for Parking Enforcement

Analysis Report

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Acknowledgements

Transport Scotland would like to thank all of the individuals and organisations who took the time to consider and respond to this consultation.

Abbreviations/Glossary

- Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)
- Local Authority (LA)
- Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE)
- Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)
- Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO)

Introduction

Transport Scotland has undertaken an analysis of the responses to the public consultation on Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for parking enforcement which was published on 24 October 2025. It sought views from stakeholders and interested parties on the levels of charges and whether this level should change.

Background

Since 1997, 23 local authorities in Scotland have introduced decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) regimes into their areas. These regimes enable local authorities to administer their own parking penalty charge schemes to encourage compliance with on-street parking controls.

Parking policies are an essential part of a local authority's traffic management strategy as they are designed to effectively manage the traffic network, improve and maintain traffic flows whilst reducing congestion.

The integration of enforcement powers and parking policy enhances a local authority's accountability to its residents, through better monitoring of the effectiveness of the parking controls in place to ensure that their parking policy is responsive to public needs.

For enforcement to be effective, penalty charges for parking infringements need to be set at an appropriate level. Following on from a rise in the maximum level of charge in 2023, we committed to a further review in the coming years.

The Consultation

The consultation was designed to gather the views of stakeholders and individuals on the levels of penalty charges and whether the levels should change.

Three questions were posed in total. The questions focused solely on the levels for PCNs.

The consultation period ran from 24 October 2025 to 30 January 2026 and was published on both Transport Scotland's website: [Penalty Charge Notice \(PCN\) Levels for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement | Transport Scotland](#) and the Scottish Government's Citizen Space website: [Penalty Charge Notice \(PCN\) Levels for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#). Interested parties could submit responses online, by email or by post.

Overview of Responses

The final number of responses received was 101. Of these, 8 were submitted by local authorities, 17 from organisations, and 76 were listed as individuals.

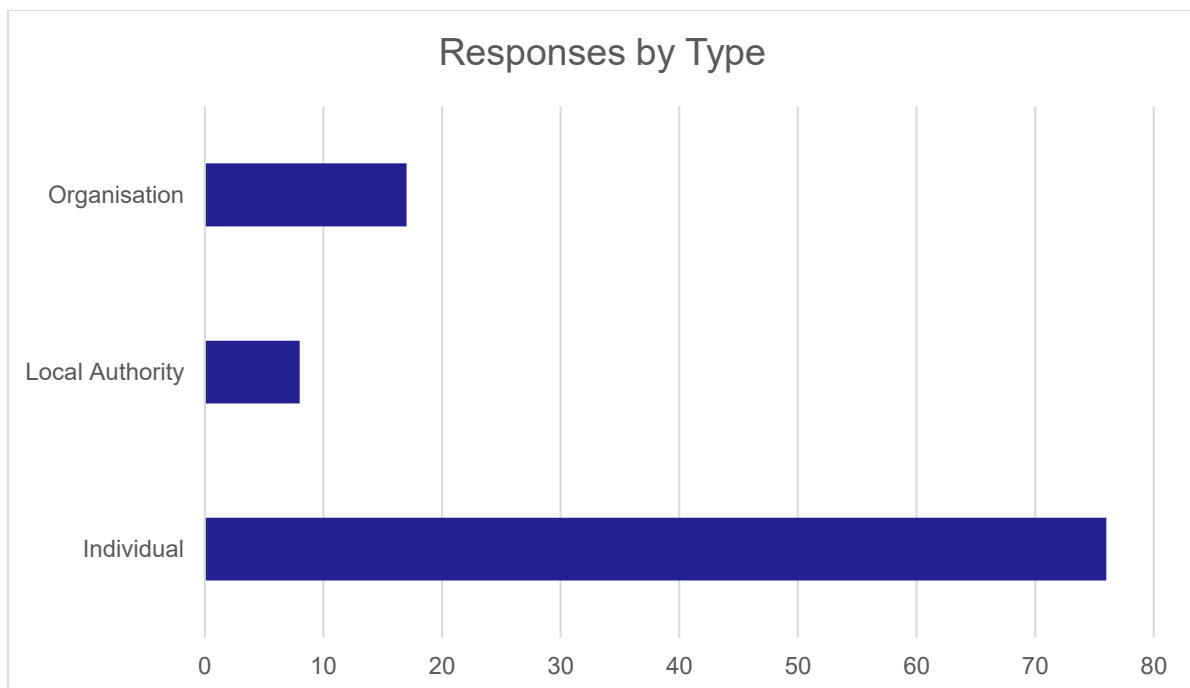


Figure 1: Responses by type

Analysis of Responses

The consultation was hosted on Citizen Space opening on 24 October 2025 and closing on 30 January 2026. Responses could be submitted directly from the Citizen Space website, via email and post. Some 101 responses were received via Citizen Space. No responses were received via post.

Respondents were not required to answer every question and typically answered the questions that interested them or they felt informed to answer. As such the total number of respondents varies for each question.

Of the 101 responses, 26 (26%) were happy for their responses to be published. A further 58 (57%), were happy for their responses to be published, but did not want their name and/or organisation to be attributed to the response. Where this is the case these responses have been included in the overall analysis but the response has been anonymised prior to being published by Transport Scotland. Any comments or quotes made within this report have been included in a way which maintains their anonymity. 17 respondents (17%) did not give permission for their responses to be published.

Question Response Analysis

Below we set out the questions and analyse the responses received on an individual question basis.

Question 1: Do you agree or disagree that the current maximum levels for PCNs, currently set at £80 & £100 (reducing by 50% if paid within 14 days) are appropriate?

The total number answering this question was 99 with 2 not answering.

28 respondents (28%) answered agree for this question. 71 respondents (70%) answered disagree, with 2 not giving a response (2%).

38% of the 8 local authorities who answered this question answered agree while 63% answered disagree.

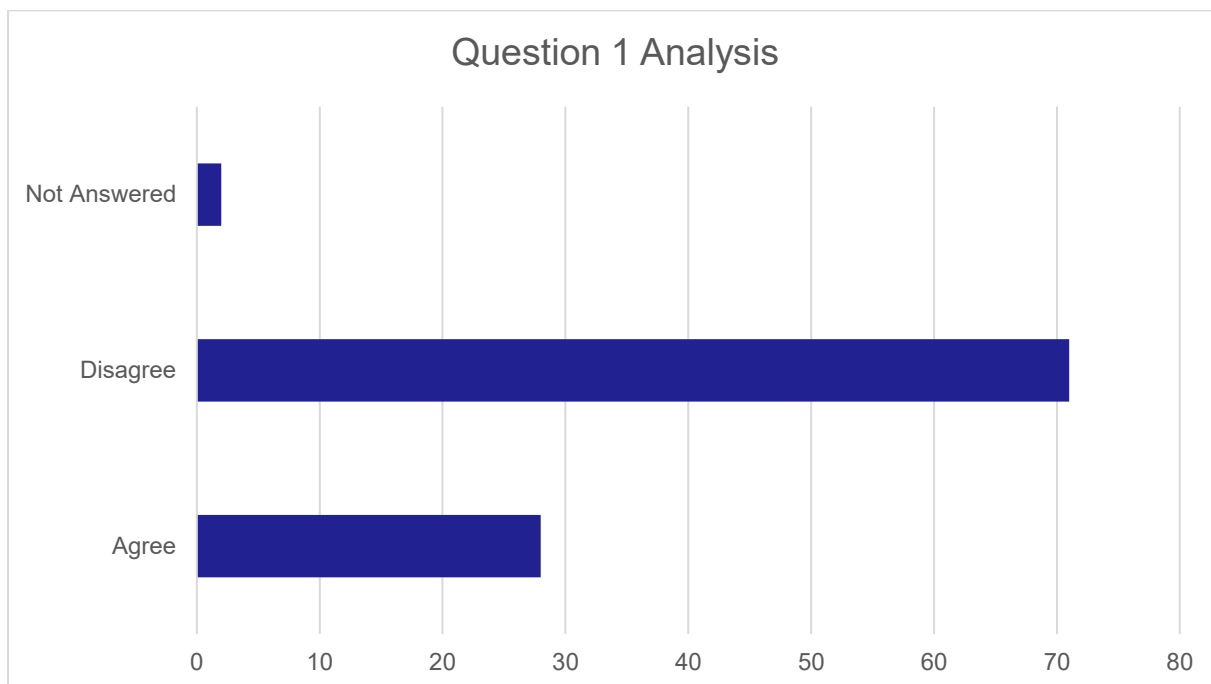


Figure 2: Question 1 responses

Question 1 Analysis:

Of the 84 comments received for question 1, 14 were from respondents who answered agree to question 1 and 69 from those who answered disagree. 1 respondent who left a comment did not answer question 1.

Example comments relating to question 1 are included below:

“Agree” response comments:

Individual comments:

“This seems a reasonable amount which should act as a deterrent.”

Local authority comments:

“Previous increase to £100 adequate penalisation for most offences. Would like to see contravention bandings introduced.”

Organisation comments:

“This is on par with England and Wales.”

“Disagree” response comments:

Individual comments:

“I would advocate uplifting these to match those set out in England as even at that level, they appear not be enough of a deterrent to the general public with unauthorised parking still a huge problem. Lower levels of fines surely equals lower levels of compliance, so I would vote to increase the value of PCNs.”

Local authority comments:

“The £60 penalty charge notice was introduced in Scotland in 2001. Inflation from then (using the bank of England inflation calculator) would value that at £113 today. The £100 maximum level set only in 2023 has already been passed and needs to be increased.”

Organisation comments:

“The costs of a PCN is often lower than parking for a day and drivers who know this will park inconsiderately and pay the PCN, especially if they are car pooling and can share the PCN cost. The PCN cost should be higher than the permit and cashless charges to park.”

Question 2: Which of the following four options would be your preferred choice:

- a) the current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days);
- b) £120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days);
- c) at a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority; or
- d) something else.

The total number answering this question was 100 with 1 not answering.

20 respondents (20%) answered the current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days), 17 respondents (17%) answered £120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days), 22 respondents (22%) answered a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority, 41 respondents (41%) answered something else with 1 not giving a response (1%).

13% of the 8 local authorities who answered this question answered the current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days), 25% answered £120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days), 50% answered a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority while 13% answered something else.

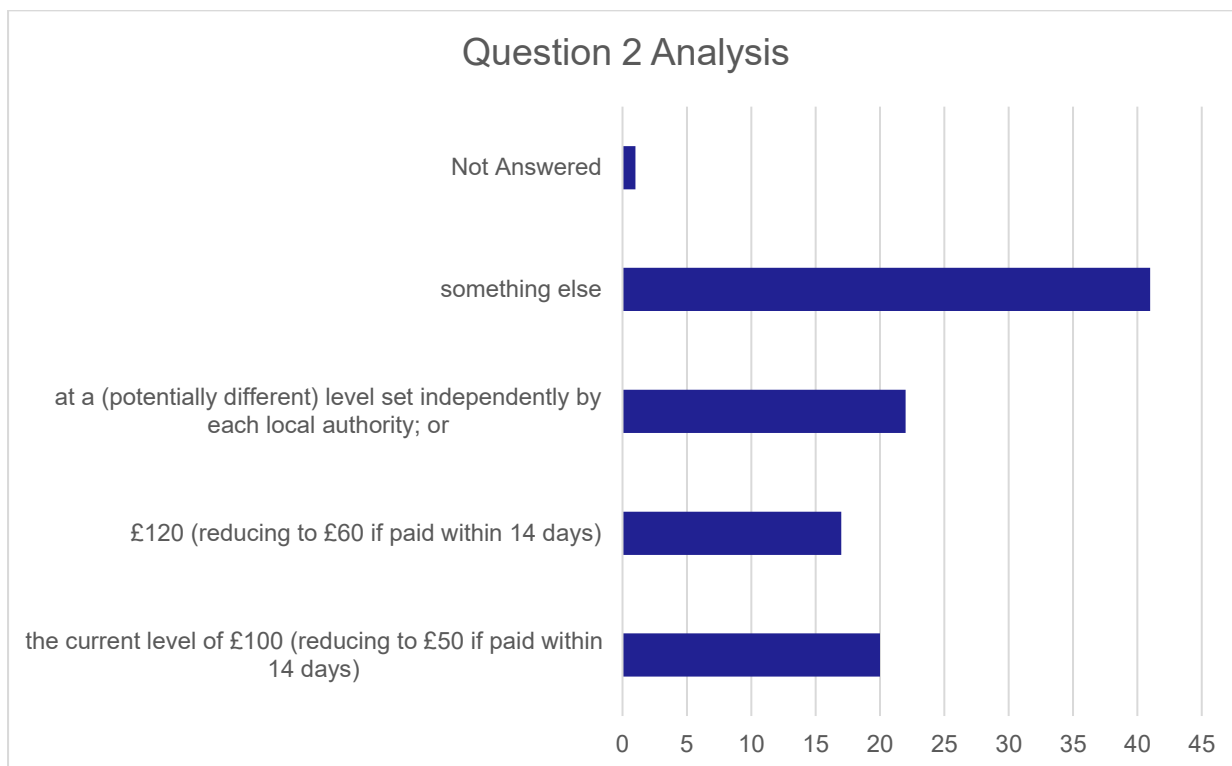


Figure 3: Question 2 responses

Question 2 Analysis:

Of the 82 comments received for question 2, 9 were from respondents who answered the current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days), 13 from those who answered £120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days), 19 from those who answered a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority and 41 from those who answered something else.

Example comments relating to question 2 are included below:

“The current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days)” response comments:

Individual comments:

“I think this is a good level to be a deterrent and any more than £100 feels excessive with the cost of living crisis.”

Local authority comments:

“Dundee City Council considers that Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) levels should continue to be set nationally and reviewed every five years, with the next review

undertaken before 1 April 2028. This review should focus solely on applying inflation (e.g. CPI) over the previous five-year period and setting a revised charge rounded to the nearest £10. A regular, inflation-based national review would be straightforward to administer and would ensure that PCN levels remain index-linked, consistent and relevant.

Allowing individual local authorities to set their own charge levels could lead to inconsistency across Scotland. This could create public confusion, misunderstanding or dissatisfaction, all of which would be avoided if a single nationally-set level applied uniformly across all councils. Granting local authorities this discretion would also generate unnecessary administrative work, requiring officers to develop options and reports for elected members. This work can be avoided across all 32 councils if the Scottish Government continues to set a national level that local authorities can follow.”

“£120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days)” response comments:

Individual comments:

“An increase to £120 will have more impact on improving behaviours and reflects the broader cost environment.”

Local authority comments:

“£120 is an appropriate amount when based on the £60 value set in 2001. An annual inflation also needs to be accommodated to ensure the value of a PCN keeps pace with operation costs.”

Organisation comments:

“The £60 is in-line with other car park operators and sets a deterrent, and encourages for payment to be made early.”

“a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority” response comments:

Individual comments:

“Different authorities have differing needs. Some have tourists, some don't. Let them decide on a case by case basis.”

Local authority comments:

“The City of Edinburgh Council’s preference would be to introduce Option C.

Council's already have a wide range of powers to manage their road networks and to set numerous transport and parking charges, such as pay and display or parking permit prices. These levers help Councils to effectively control traffic and manage demands to address such problems as congestion and pollution whilst also taking steps to enhance road safety. However, PCN prices are anomalous as they are not set locally, have no local accountability and historically have not always kept pace with inflation and rising parking prices. That being the case, before the latest charge increase there was a time in certain circumstances where it was cheaper for a motorist to accept a PCN than to comply with the parking regulations.

Travel patterns and parking demands can vary greatly across the country and are significantly higher in Edinburgh’s city centre, than in comparison with some more rural local authorities. That being the case, whilst the argument for consistency across Scotland is recognised, a one-size fits all approach is no longer viable.

The Council suggests that any changes to PCN charge levels, should also include a review of Bus Lane PCNs to ensure that they are also reviewed in a similar manner and not left behind, as it is not clear whether these are included in this consultation or not.

The Council also recognises that the setting of PCNs issued under Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 contraventions is a separate process and it would be good to have clarity on whether this consultation also includes these charge levels, or if control of these would remain with Scottish Ministers.”

Organisation comments:

“We feel the LA should choose the charges to accommodate their permit and cashless policies and to deal with local issues where compliance is low or you have persistent or nuisance vehicles (i.e. untaxed, no MOT, no insurance).”

“something else” response comments:

Individual comments:

“There should be a framework of penalty levels, with different charges applying for different offences. Local authorities should be able to choose their own process, but only within that set framework and it should not be possible for any authority to simply choose the highest levels for all offences. At its simplest, this could mean one level for offences related to pay and display and permit bays, another for parking in disabled bays and a higher level for yellow line offences. A top tier could apply to restrictions where loading prohibitions are in effect, ensuring that the highest penalties are reserved for those offences where there is the greatest impact on the movement of traffic or on road safety.”

Local authority comments:

“Would support moving to £120 if moving to contravention bandings. £120 for greater offences such as double/doubles, disabled bay and bus stop offences. Lower bandings would cover lesser offences such as expired tickets - these could perhaps be set at £80.”

Organisation comments:

“I think that raising the maximum PCN levels to at least £120 for lower-level contraventions and £160 for higher-level contraventions, with the existing 50% discount for early payment retained. This approach mirrors recent changes in London and ensures penalties remain proportionate, fair, and effective as a deterrent.”

Question 3: Option C for question 2 would mean removing current Scottish Ministers guidance on maximum PCN levels, leaving each local authority to set their own maximum levels independently. Do you anticipate any positive or negative effects should option C be implemented?

Question 3 Analysis:

86 comments were received for question 3.

Example comments relating to question 3 are included below:

Individual comments:

“Negative potentially but appreciate that the affordability of fines differs by local area so the ability to have lower levels in areas of deprivation would be useful to consider and high levels where PCN's wouldn't have the same impact.”

“I think that it would have a positive impact, as we can ensure local severity of offences can be targeted through increasing such a deterrent.”

Local authority comments:

“Positive effects could be individual authorities can adapt the PCN level to suit their own local needs and policies for managing congestion and the wider road network and to achieve a sustainable operating base for enforcement. Would also potentially allow for PCN levels to be adjusted more readily than is currently possible via ministerial guidance. Negative effects could be differences between neighbouring authorities, but these variations already exist with parking charges and with low emission zones.”

“I don't think this would impact greatly on the local authorities who have autonomy over other fees and charges for example TTRO and other permit relating to Roads and the management of those assets.”

Organisation comments:

“Our members would strongly oppose this option. Consistency of charges across the network and local authorities is essential for logistics and freight operators to plan and manage costs effectively. Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) often occur when drivers are delivering goods at the request of customers - not because they are parking inconsiderately.

A patchwork, piecemeal approach with charges independently set by each local authority would create significant administrative burdens for operators. There are also concerns that this could be perceived as a revenue-generating opportunity for local authorities, rather than a measure to improve compliance or safety.”

“I think it would cause confusion to motorists if it is not standardised across the sector.”

Conclusion

The focus of the questions in this consultation with regard to the Penalty Charge Notice levels was to gather opinion on the current level that they are set and whether this level should change.

In general, there was a lot of mixed feedback from individuals, organisations and local authorities who provided a response to the consultation.

Specific feedback to note is:

- 70% of respondents disagreed that that the current maximum levels for PCNs, currently set at £80 & £100 (reducing by 50% if paid within 14 days) are appropriate. 28% agreed while 2% did not provide a response.
- 41% of respondents answered “something else” for their preferred option of what the level of PCNs should be set at.

All feedback received relating to the Penalty Charge Notice levels was helpful in informing the decision making process. The Scottish Government are proposing to keep the levels as they are currently set (£100 (reducing by 50% if paid within 14 days)), with a commitment to reviewing them again in 2028, five years after the last increase in 2023, and every five years thereafter.

Appendix A – Consultation Questions

Question 1: Do you agree or disagree that the current maximum levels for PCNs, currently set at £80 & £100 (reducing by 50% if paid within 14 days) are appropriate?

Question 2: Which of the following four options would be your preferred choice:

- a) the current level of £100 (reducing to £50 if paid within 14 days);
- b) £120 (reducing to £60 if paid within 14 days);
- c) at a (potentially different) level set independently by each local authority; or
- d) something else, please provide an explanation.

Question 3: Option C for question 2 would mean removing current Scottish Ministers guidance on maximum PCN levels, leaving each local authority to set their own maximum levels independently. Do you anticipate any positive or negative effects should option C be implemented?



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