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Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Date: 14 November 2014

Dear Mr Goodman

**Re: Censorship of Number Plates**

Thank you for your letter to Miss R Newman about censorship of number plates, which has recently been received in Strategy and Policy Communications Directorate for response.

I have not had sight of the correspondence that you mention from last year, so I can only comment on your latest letter. You state that the correspondence stated that DVLA withholds numbers "likely to cause offence or embarrassment" This is correct.

It may help if I explain that the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has a responsibility to its stakeholders and customers to ensure that the combination used on registration marks do not cause upset or offence. The Agency applies a clear policy of withholding potentially offensive registration marks equally to normal issue series and those made available to purchase from our sales team. Such marks are withheld if they are likely to cause offence or embarrassment to the general population in this country on the grounds of political, racial and religious sensitivities or simply because they are in poor taste when displayed correctly on a number plate.

From the information you supply the "Copslie Case" was heard in the Supreme Court of New Hampshire and was regarding vanity plates that are issued in the USA. The European Convention on Human Rights would not apply to this ruling as the US is outside the European Union. The hearing would also not apply in this country which would come under our national legislation and not the Supreme Court.

There is currently a number plate review ongoing, however, I can confirm the process of withholding offensive registrations will not be part of this review.

Yours sincerely,

**Nicola Virdee**

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