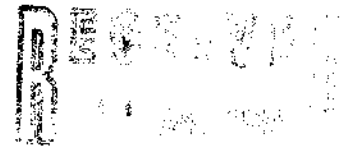


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**Rebecca Daddow**  
**Scottish Executive**  
**Roads Policy & Group Finance Division, 2-DD**  
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Dear Ms Daddow

**SPT response to Tolled Bridges Review Phase Two consultation paper**

Thank you for giving SPT the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Executive's Toll Bridges Review Phase Two consultation paper.

In his ministerial foreword, the minister asks what objectives a tolling strategy could address, and what factors should be considered when setting toll levels.

SPT considers road pricing, and this includes bridge tolls, as a form of demand management. Therefore, any tolling strategy should address (and use as criteria for setting toll levels) issues like impact on road maintenance (per vehicle and per vehicle passenger), impact on climate, impact on other people's health and impact on other drivers. Any tolling strategy should also support Scottish Executive policy of encouraging greater use of public transport.

As stated in the Westtrans/SPT Joint Transport Strategy (JTS), SPT is generally in favour of managing road traffic demand. The current position of the west of Scotland, as set out in the JTS, is to use parking constraint as the primary demand management mechanism in the region. Other road tolling mechanisms will be kept under review, and will need to be addressed if the use of parking restraint proves ineffective.

Concerning toll bridges, the JTS states that Erskine Bridge, the only toll bridge in the region, "provides an industrial, economic, tourist and social link. The ongoing presence of tolls on the bridge affects accessibility to employment opportunities, adversely affects local communities and increases traffic flows on the A82, the Clyde tunnel and the M8 in Renfrewshire."

With this in mind, please find our response to the questions attached.

Yours sincerely

*Aidan O'Donnell*

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Director General

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## **Tolled Bridges Review Phase Two consultation paper**

### **SPT response**

**Q1 Do you think that the system for verifying Blue Badge exemptions should be changed? If so, can you suggest what these changes should be?**

*A1 No view*

**Q2 Do you consider that the exemptions for emergency service vehicles should remain limited to the Ambulance, Fire and Police Services, or should we consider extending this to cover other key services?**

*A2 No view*

**Q3 Vehicles used by bridge authorities to respond to breakdowns on each bridge are exempt. Do you see a case for extending exemptions to the AA, RAC or other commercial breakdown services responding to breakdowns on the road network other than where this is the responsibility of the bridge authorities?**

*A3 No view*

**Q4 Should public transport vehicles and multiple occupancy vehicles be considered for exemption from bridge tolls?**

*A4 Public transport vehicles should be exempt. Any such exemption would in line with Scottish Executive policy to encourage greater use of public transport.*

**Q5 Should tolled bridges offer multiple crossing discount vouchers to all bridge users, or particular classes of users such as buses or multiple occupancy vehicles? If so, why should this be?**

*A5 SPT has no view on multiple crossing discount schemes as such. As stated in A4, all public transport vehicles should be exempt from bridge tolls to encourage greater use of public transport.*

**Q6 What are your views on a common vehicle classification system for levying tolls at all Scotland's tolled bridges?**

*A6 A common vehicle classification system should be used. Public transport exemptions should be defined as exemptions for all Public Service Vehicles.*

**Q7 Should we encourage modal shift from single occupancy cars to public transport and multiple occupancy vehicles on all tolled bridges? If so, how might this be achieved?**

*A7 The best method of reducing traffic and congestion on tolled bridges is to encourage modal shift towards public transport. For this reason we suggest that all public transport vehicles should be exempt.*

**Q8 Do you think that raising tolls at peak times would result in less congestion at those times?**

*A8 No view*

**Q9 Should tolls reflect the impacts of different vehicle types on the need for maintenance, repair and strengthening programmes? If so, do you have suggestions for how this might be done?**

*A9 Vehicle impact on road maintenance and repair is certainly one criteria that any road pricing scheme should take account of. Climate impact, impact to other people's health and congestion impact to other drivers are others. Furthermore, it is important that the impact per person is taken account of. While the maintenance impact per vehicle can be higher for public transport vehicles than for ordinary cars, the overall impact per person carried is much lower. Consequently public transport vehicles should be fully exempt from bridge tolls.*

**Q10 Do you think the current process involving Public Local Inquiries (PLIs) is appropriate for making changes to tolls or charges to meet the costs of managing, maintaining and operating a bridge?**

*A10 No view*

**Q11 Do you consider that final approval by Scottish Ministers is an essential safeguard for toll/charge payers or do you think the final decision is a matter for the management authority for the bridge?**

*A11 No view*

**Q12 Do you consider all tolls should be subject to increases linked to an inflation index?**

*A12 No view*

**Q13 What advantages and disadvantages do you see if any or all of the tolled bridges were to be managed by the Scottish Executive or the national transport agency?**

**Q14 Should we consider transferring some or all of the powers and functions of current bridge authorities to Regional Transport Partnerships in future?**

*A13+14 Regional transport planning might be strengthened by devolving management to Regional Transport Partnerships. In the west of Scotland, any future Regional Transport Partnership would involve SPT, which has a long and successful history of operation of transport infrastructure. Other English PTEs already manage road tunnels.*

**Q15** As the Erskine Bridge functions both as a key national and strategic link for the West of Scotland as well as an important local link for communities north and south of the River Clyde, do you see any argument for de-trunking it so that it could become the responsibility of the RTP for the West of Scotland?

**A15** *No view*

**Q16** Do you have any views on the advantages or disadvantages of the FETA model, for any or all of the bridges?

**Q17** Do you have any views on the advantages or disadvantages of the TRBJB model, for any or all of the bridges?

**A16+17** *See A13+14*

**Q18** Do you think there would be any merit in having a single body responsible for operating and managing all tolled bridges in Scotland?

**A18** *See A13+14*

**Q19** – If you think all bridges should be run by one body what form, powers and functions should this body have?

**A19** *See A13+14*

**Q20** Are there any other management options that you would like to suggest?

**A20** *No*