



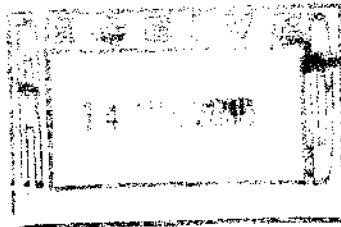
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John Paul Liddle
Tolled Bridges Review Project Manager
Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning
Department
Roads Policy & Group Finance Division
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Our Ref: 03.KMcL

Your Ref:

Date: 12 July 2005



Dear Sir

TOLLED BRIDGES REVIEW PHASE TWO CONSULTATION

Further to your letter of 28 June please find attached **tie's** response to the Tolled Bridges Review Phase Two Consultation.

I trust the response is self explanatory but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any clarification.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Alex Macaulay'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Alex Macaulay
Projects Director

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CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON TOLLED BRIDGES REVIEW

TIE LIMITED

Exemptions for Disabled Drivers/Blue Badge Holders/Emergency Vehicles

QUESTION 1 - Do you think that the system for verifying Blue Badge exemptions should be changed? If so, can you suggest what these changes should be?

Blue Badges are problematic for applying exemptions to transport charges. This includes parking, bridge tolls and future road user charging schemes. There are clear advantages in automating the process as far as possible through the use of technology currently available such as tags and automatic number plate reading cameras. A possible solution would be to use the system developed for the Edinburgh congestion charging scheme which itself was based on the scheme operated in London. This would require the creation of either a local or national database of registered badge holders.

QUESTION 2 - 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?

Estuarial crossings should also include exemptions for coastguard vehicles.

QUESTION 3 - 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?

In principle there are benefits to be gained by ensuring that the congestion effects of breakdowns are minimised. Bridge support vehicles already cover each bridge and approach and there would not seem to be any additional advantage in including other commercial breakdown services at present.

QUESTION 4 - Should public transport vehicles and multiple occupancy vehicles be considered for exemption from bridge tolls?

In terms of sustainability and congestion reduction the use of public transport and multi occupancy vehicles should be encourage. Where there is capacity restraint on the network priority should be given to these vehicles through road space reallocation. There is however an argument that they should still contribute proportionately to the maintenance of the structure of the bridge through the existing tolling regime. An exemption or discount would be more appropriately applied to a road user charge. The definition and classification of what constitutes a public transport and multi occupancy vehicle can be problematic particularly when moving to an automated tolling regime.

methodology used to determine this apportionment it is likely that the relatively small number of Goods vehicles would end up covering the bulk of the maintenance costs. Some pragmatism needs to be used to come up with a methodology which is both fair and transparent.

Procedure for Changing Tolls or Charges

QUESTION 10 - 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?

The PLI is well used and understood in the public arena but it is a lengthy and expensive process. There would be merit when setting the toll level to allow the flexibility to change the rate within a defined range to cover unforeseen maintenance events.

QUESTION 11 - 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?

The setting of tolls or charges should be a matter for the management authority for the bridge. Provided the authority is constituted in appropriate way there should be no need for Ministers to provide approval as a safeguard.

QUESTION 12 - Do you consider all tolls should be subject to increases linked to an inflation index?

The business case for bridge maintenance activities will not only be affected by construction costs, which may or may not be associated with inflation but also unforeseen and unplanned additional works which will arise from time to time. There is therefore a need to have some flexibility when setting the maintenance element of a bridge toll. If a road user charge is introduced it would be beneficial to have the ability to amend the cost to meet congestion reduction targets. This is likely to be in addition to any inflation index.

Executive/Transport Agency

QUESTION 13 - 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?

The management and operation of the existing tolled bridges has been well established over a number of years and the specialist skills are not widely available in the public or private sectors. It is not clear what benefit there would be in transferring management of either the Tay or the Forth bridges to the Scottish Executive or national transport agency. If as result a transfer the two bridges became part of the trunk road network, as is the case with Erskine, there may be calls for the tolls to be abolished altogether. In addition it would not be possible to promote a road user charge on the Forth Road Bridge under the current legislation.

Single Tolloed Bridges Authority

QUESTION 18 - Do you think there would be any merit in having a single body responsible for operating and managing all tolloed bridges in Scotland?

Each of the crossings are unique and it is difficult to see any benefit in having a single body in control.

QUESTION 19 - If you think all bridges should be run by one body what form, powers and functions should this body have?

N/A

QUESTION 20 - Are there any other management options that you would like to suggest?

None at present.