

Response from Confederation of British Industry Scotland
16 Robertson Street Glasgow G2 8DS

Tolled Bridges Review – Phase Two Consultation

CBI Scotland wishes to submit the following views to the above consultation. We are very grateful for the extension to the 'advertised' response date. As is our normal practice, we are happy for our response to be made public.

Question 3

We see a strong case for extending extensions to the accredited, commercial breakdown services. These organisations and the services they provide, although commercial in nature, are an integral part of the solution to relieving congestion on our roads.

Question 4

Public transport vehicles should be exempted from bridge tolls. We are less convinced of the merits of extending exemptions to all multiple occupancy vehicles.

Question 8

Raising tolls at peak times may make some people consider either not travelling or travelling at a different time. In that sense, it may help tackle congestion if it removes or displaces 'non-essential' traffic/trips at the busiest times of the day.

However, many people have no alternative but to use road-based transport and have to travel at peak times. This includes the drivers of service, delivery and freight vehicles. Higher tolls at peak times will add to their cost of doing business. Similarly, unless there are viable public transport or car sharing options available for private motorists, they will still have to use their car to travel and will, therefore, be penalised if they have to travel at peak times. The results of the congestion charging referendum in Edinburgh demonstrates that people will not accept measures that they believe are simply another 'tax' on motorists.

Question 9

Tolls are already generally higher for HGVs so they already contribute to the additional wear and tear that they cause. A more fundamental reason for not levying additional charges on the haulage industry is the additional cost this would add to moving goods to and from Scotland, undermining the competitiveness of many Scottish businesses competing in UK and international markets. Scotland's distance from many of its markets is already a disadvantage and we should not pursue policy measures that will worsen this. Of course, it is possible that the haulage industry may not be able to pass on its additional costs to its customers. This would not be

helpful either for an industry that is already suffering from very high fuel prices and the additional costs imposed by the Working Time Directive.

Question 11

We believe that final approval by Scottish Ministers is an essential safeguard for toll/charge payers and should be retained.

Question 12

Toll increases should be kept to the minimum needed to maintain the bridges and provide for repair and strengthening work as and when required. We do not see any rationale for automatically raising tolls in line with inflation.

Question 13

We see no advantage in having tolled bridges managed by the Scottish Executive, which should only be responsible for the direction of overall transport policy, not operational management of any aspects of the system. The situation with the National Transport Agency is less clear cut since the main tolled bridges could conceivably be categorised as part of Scotland's strategic, national infrastructure. However, it is our view that giving responsibility to the NTA to manage tolled bridges does not sit comfortably with the remit for the organisation that was set out in the Transport White Paper in 2004.

Question 14

Serious consideration should be given to transferring the powers and functions of the current bridge authorities to Regional Transport Partnerships in the future. We agree with the point made in the consultation document that bridges are major transport assets and could be an important constituent in the integrated, regional transport strategies drawn up by the RTPs.