

Severn Consultation Team  
Roads Investment Strategy Futures  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

**LETTER BY EMAIL**

10<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **THE SEVERN CROSSINGS: Reducing toll prices and other issues**

**North Bristol SusCom Ltd.** is a group of major employers, located in North Bristol, promoting **sustainable commuting** to our 40,000 employees, 30,000 students and visitors. We are working together to influence and improve local sustainable transport provision to **combat traffic congestion** and reduce the impact upon our environment.

Our response to this consultation is influenced through discussions we have had with our members – both employers and employees - over a number of years, our understanding of the commuting behaviour of employees in the area and the issues they face on daily basis on their commute to/from work, the future growth (housing and employment) planned for North Bristol and the current congestion issues we face.

#### **Question 1: Do you agree with the proposed reduction in tolls?**

No we do not. Whilst we are certain individual commuters would like to see a reduction in the tolls being charged to cross the bridge, the charges have had an positive impact on the commuting behaviour of some employees – we know many choose to cycle across the bridge and also car share to avoid the current toll charges. Should the charges be reduced we fear that there will be a significant increase in people looking to move to South Wales and commute to North Bristol by car for employment and it may influence those who are commuting sustainably at the moment (train, cycling and car sharing) to get back in their cars.

Your own figures forecast an increase in additional traffic which will have a serious negative impact on some of our more congested routes linking with the M5 and M4 in the North Bristol area. It is the increase in congestion, pollution and

reduction in sustainable travel that concerns us most.

Rather than reducing the tolls during peak congestion periods we would like to see the charges remain at their current level during those peaks and more investment being made into sustainable alternatives to car use during peak commuting times – things like a multimodal interchange in South Wales to include park and ride, park and share, park and cycle facilities, better bus links and greater frequency and capacity on trains to help reduce the overall number of cars in this area at peak commuting times.

**Question 2: If you have any views on the future of the TAG payment system, please provide them.**

We support the use of the TAG payment system to minimise queuing and the idling of cars to help reduce both congestion and pollution.

**Question 3: If you have any specific comments on the legislative proposals, including the draft charging order, please provide them.**

We feel that the charges should remain at the current level during peak commuting periods and any revenue raised above and beyond the maintenance costs should be focused on re-investing in reducing single car occupancy commuting across the bridge – park and rides, direct bus services to North Bristol etc.

**Question 4: Bearing in mind the advantages and disadvantages, do you think that the Government should consider the idea of introducing two-way free flow charging?**

We support the need for further assessment of the case for free flow charging. High capital investment and running costs for free-flow charging could mean that toll revenues (above and beyond maintenance costs) cannot be spent on sustainable transport alternatives (as mentioned previously in this letter).

Yours Sincerely



Ann O'Driscoll  
Director