



Department  
for Transport



Wales Office  
Swyddfa Cymru

# The Severn Crossings

## Reducing toll prices and other issues

Consultation document

January 2017

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Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR  
Telephone 0300 330 3000  
Website [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft)  
General enquiries: <https://forms.dft.gov.uk>



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# Contents

Ministerial foreword	4
Executive summary	5
How to respond	6
Freedom of Information	6
Background	7
1. Future toll prices	9
Government Proposal	9
Options that the Government is not proposing	12
Regulatory changes	13
Impacts of the Government's proposals	14
2. Off-peak times	15
Considerations	15
Potential impacts of removing the tolls at night	15
3. Free-flow charging	16
Considerations	16
Other measures	19
What will happen next?	20
Annex A: Full list of consultation questions	21
Annex B: Consultation principles	23

In separate documents:

Annex C: Draft charging order

Annex D: Draft statutory instrument defining vehicle categories

# Ministerial foreword

The Severn Crossings are vital pieces of UK infrastructure which, together, have benefitted road users from England and Wales for 50 years. They are used by more than 25 million vehicles each year, and have provided road users and businesses in England and Wales with exceptional savings in time and money since the first Crossing helped connect the economies of both countries in 1966.

The Severn Crossings are a key link in the economies of South Wales and the South West of England, and continue to foster the economic and cultural landscape of their surrounding areas. Severn River Crossings (SRC) have acted as an excellent custodian of the Crossings for nearly 25 years and, together with Highways England, have ensured the safe operation and maintenance of the Crossings. The Government is determined to ensure that both the Severn Bridge and the Second Severn Crossing continue to provide this vital link for generations to come. We are committed to building on this success and to secure the future operation of the Crossings which ensures the best possible value for money for their users and for the taxpayer. The future operation of the Crossings is secure, both for their users and for those who work at them, and following the handover from SRC they will be managed by Highways England.

Over the past two decades toll prices have been set, in legislation, to be constant after adjusting for inflation. However, the reversion of the Crossings to public ownership once the current concession ends – in around a year's time – offers us the opportunity to reduce the amount paid to use them. We have, therefore, announced that we want to abolish the higher price toll category for vans and small buses, and halve the tolls for all vehicles. This is a significant step and will make a positive difference to commuters, travellers, and to small business owners in particular, with drivers of vans and small buses seeing savings of more than 75%.

But there are challenges that need to be addressed. Whilst the Crossings are in a relatively good condition, with any structures of their size and complexity there will always be maintenance costs which have to be paid. We believe that our proposals as set out in this consultation address these issues and offer a fair and sustainable deal for users of the Crossings and the taxpayer.



**Rt Hon John Hayes MP**  
**Minister of State for**  
**Transport**



**Rt Hon Alun**  
**Cairns MP**  
**Secretary of State**  
**for Wales**

# Executive summary

The Severn River Crossings are due to come back into public ownership in late 2017/early 2018. Once that happens, the Government is proposing to abolish the higher toll prices for vans and small buses, and halve the tolls. We expect that TAG payments will continue, and their prices will fall by the same amount.

Instead of £6.70, cars and other category 1 vehicles will pay £3.00 – more than a 50% saving. Instead of £13.40, category 2 vehicles such as small buses or vans will also pay £3.00 – more than a 75% saving. Large vehicles in category 3 will also save 50%.

Our calculations indicate that even at these lower charges toll revenue will be sufficient to cover the future operational and maintenance costs of the Crossings, ensure necessary repair works can be paid for and outstanding debt is recovered.

Research indicates that the reduced toll charges will result in some increased traffic – of around 17% by 2028. We are therefore considering measures to reduce the time it takes for tolls to be collected. For example, we are proposing that tolls be rounded down to a whole number of pounds, and we are looking at the option of having day-time only tolling.

The increase in traffic as a result of lower tolls is also one of the key reasons we plan to review the case for removing the barriers and introducing “free-flow” tolling on the Severn Crossings – as announced at Budget 2016. This consultation sets out initial reasons for reviewing the case and provides a short update.

The Government has been clear that toll revenue will be used to pay for the future operation and maintenance of the Crossings any potential future improvements such as the costs of introducing free-flow charging, and will be kept under review to see if they can be reduced further.

# How to respond

The consultation period began 13 January 2017 and will run until 10 March 2017. Please ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date. If you would like further copies of this consultation document, it can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/dft#consultations> or you can contact the consultation team if you need alternative formats (Braille, audio CD, etc.).

Please use the online form to respond, or send consultation responses using the questions at annex A to:

Name: Severn Consultation Team, Roads Investment Strategy Futures,

Address: 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR

Phone number: 020 7944 3593

Email address: [severnconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:severnconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

A partial list of those consulted – those who must be consulted by law – is included in Annex B.

## Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

# Background

The first Severn Bridge was opened in September 1966, providing a direct link from the M4 motorway into Wales, with a toll in place for use of the bridge to pay for the cost of construction. It continually operated above capacity and in 1986 the then Government stated that a second bridge would be constructed.

In 1988 it was announced that tenders would be invited from private consortia to fund, build and operate the second bridge and take over the operation of the first bridge. In 1990 the concession was awarded to Severn River Crossing PLC (“SRC”). The concession agreement was enshrined in the Severn Bridges Act 1992 and commenced in April 1992. Construction work also started in April 1992 and the second bridge was opened in June 1996.

Under the terms of the concession agreement SRC took on existing outstanding debt of £122 million in 1992 prices and construction costs of £330 million (excluding VAT). In return SRC is authorised to collect tolls from both Crossings to meet its financial obligations. The concession agreement is valid until SRC has generated a defined amount of revenue or for a maximum of 30 years (whichever comes sooner). The defined amount of revenue is currently set at £1,028,910,000 in July 1989 prices, and this figure is expected to be reached in late 2017 or early 2018, at which time the ownership of the bridges will return to the UK Government.

## About the bridges

The Severn Bridge spans the River Severn and River Wye between Aust (South Gloucestershire, England) and Chepstow (Monmouthshire, South East Wales), via Beachley, (a peninsula between the two rivers). It has two lanes each way (as well as a cycle path and narrow footpath) and is 1,600 meters long. Most of the bridge is in England. The Second Severn Bridge is further south, and spans the River Severn between Severn Beach (South Gloucestershire, England) and Sudbrook (Monmouthshire, South East Wales). It has three lanes and a narrow hard shoulder each way and is 5,128 meters long. Approximately half of the bridge is in England.

## About the concessionaire

SRC consists of four shareholders – two providers and two banks. The providers are John Laing (35% shareholder) which is a British developer infrastructure operator, and Vinci (35% shareholder) which is a French concessions and construction company. The two banks are the Bank of America (15% shareholder) and Barclays Capital (15% shareholder). SRC has a workforce of approximately 180 staff members, consisting mostly of toll collectors and engineers.

## About tolls and charges

The payment required to use the Severn Crossings is a 'toll'. This payment (and annual increases in line with inflation) is determined in the Severn Bridges Act. For some crossings the payment is a 'charge'. This is the case with the payment required to use the Dartford-Thurrock River Crossings, and it is based on a Charging Order made under the Transport Act 2000.

Because we are proposing to introduce a Charging Order (to replace the current legal arrangements) the payment required to use the Severn Crossings will become a 'charge' rather than a 'toll'. We are suggesting this change because it will more easily allow us to reduce the amount users pay, and because a charge could later be amended to being "free-flow".

# 1. Future toll prices

## Government Proposal

At Budget 2015 the Government announced that when the Crossings return to public ownership the higher toll prices for vans and small buses will be abolished, and that VAT on tolls will no longer apply and the tolls will be reduced by the equivalent amount. At Budget 2016 the Government went further and made a commitment to halve the tolls.

The tables below show what this means in practice – with the proposed prices when the Crossings revert to public ownership in late 2017 to early 2018.

### 2017 toll prices

<b>Toll category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2017 toll</b>
Category 1	Cars and minibuses with up to 9 seats.	£6.70
Category 2	Small buses with up to 17 seats. Vans up to 3.5 tonnes.	£13.40
Category 3	Buses with more than 17 seats. Goods vehicles weighing 3.5 tonnes or more.	£20.00

### Proposed charge prices – from late 2017/ early 2018

<b>Charge category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Proposed charge</b>
Categories 1 & 2	Cars and minibuses with up to 9 seats. Small buses with up to 17 seats. Vans up to 3.5 tonnes.	£3.00
Category 3	Buses with more than 17 seats. Goods vehicles weighing 3.5 tonnes or more.	£10.00

The proposed toll prices in the table above are inclusive of the Government's commitment to remove VAT.

The price for car drivers will be reduced by more than 50%. The price for van drivers will be reduced by more than 75%. Large vehicles in category 3 will also save 50%.

The Government is mindful that reducing tolls will increase traffic, and has conducted modelling which suggest 17% more vehicles using the Crossings by 2028 as a result of the toll reduction. The Government has therefore been considering ways to reduce queuing times at toll booths. The introduction of contactless card payments is already

making improvements in this respect. Another important measure to decrease the time to make toll payments is to minimise the number of coins required to pay, and reduce the number of times when change must be given.

To this end, the Government is proposing rounding the toll prices down to whole numbers of pounds. Currently, the toll prices rise each year in line with the Retail Price Index measure of inflation (RPI).<sup>1</sup> This results in prices that rounded to the nearest ten pence, which can often mean a large number of coins being transferred in payment or in change.

### **Consultation Question**

**Do you agree with the proposed reductions in tolls?**

### **TAG scheme**

The Severn TAG is an Automatic Vehicle Identification System. It works by users attaching an electronic device to the inside of their windscreens – and then as they approach designated ‘TAG lanes’ the barriers will raise. The process is significantly quicker than paying manually at toll booths, either by cash or by contactless card. Given the importance of ensuring that tolls can be paid as quickly as possible, to minimise queuing, we expect to continue having TAGs as a payment option and encourage their use.

At present the TAG is a set price for each vehicle category per calendar month – users will benefit from a discount after approximately 20 trips. It is aimed at frequent users and in line with the reductions described above the Government plans to reduce TAG prices by an equivalent amount (roughly by half) – so that users will continue to benefit from the same rate of discount that they do now.

The table below shows what this means in practice. The treatment regarding VAT and RPI described above also applies to our TAG proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> The Severn Bridges Act 1992 requires that tolls increase by inflation each year (tolls have remained constant in real terms since 1992).

## Proposed TAG prices

Category	2017 toll			Proposed charge		
	Season TAG	Shared TAG	Trip TAG	Season TAG	Shared TAG	Trip TAG
Category 1	£117.92	£117.92	£6.70	£52.80	£52.80	£3.00
Category 2	£235.84	N/a	£13.40	£52.80	N/a	£3.00
Category 3	£396.00	N/a	£20.00	£198.00	N/a	£10.00

The Government believes equivalent reductions in the TAG scheme will be welcomed by many users – because roughly 25% of trips are currently made using the TAG scheme.

We would also welcome views on the future of the TAG payment scheme.

### Consultation Question

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

## Exemptions

A number of current exemptions to the toll charge apply. For instance:

- UK Blue Badge Holders are exempt from toll charges – vehicles are not subject to a toll as long as the Blue Badge Holder is present. Disabled Tax Exempt vehicles are not subject to a charge without a Blue Badge Holder present, provided the person is in receipt of UK Higher Rate Disability Living Allowance or the vehicle is used for the carriage of disabled persons and is exempt from Vehicle Excise Duty.
- Motorcycles are exempt from toll charges.
- There is no additional charge for towing caravans or trailers.

Currently, the Government does not plan to remove or change any existing exemptions, or specify any new exemptions.

## Options that the Government is not proposing

### Abolishing the tolls

The Government is aware of the views expressed by some stakeholders that the tolls should be abolished altogether. But this would put at risk the future of the Crossings. The Crossings cost approximately £15 million each year to operate and maintain. During the course of the concession the Government incurred approximately £63 million to cover the costs of fixing latent defects on the Severn Bridge and this money still needs to be recovered. Furthermore, Highways England estimate that likely resurfacing of the Severn Bridge after the end of the concession period will cost in the region of £12 million. The reality is that given the size and complexity of these structures there will always be a cost to ensuring their safe operation; and it has long been Government policy that the costs associated with keeping the Crossings functioning should be paid for by the users that benefit, rather than the taxpayer.

The Government is also concerned that reduced tolls could result in increased traffic and congestion in areas surrounding the Crossings, both in Bristol and along the M4 in Wales, where there are already concerns about congestion levels. Reducing the tolls by 50% would allow us to assess the impact, on the Crossing and more generally, of increased traffic flows.

The Government is also aware of the report commissioned by the Welsh Government that shows that removing the tolls could significantly boost the economy of South Wales.<sup>2</sup> The prospect of removing the tolls and funding the operation and maintenance of the Crossings (and paying off the outstanding debt) through the resultant increases in revenue from general taxation is an attractive theory. But there is no guarantee that the Government would recoup the equivalent amount of lost toll revenue through general taxation – the taxpayer could end up out of pocket, or the future of the Crossings could be put at risk. For this reason, and in line with the Government's longstanding policy that users of estuarial crossings should pay for their upkeep, the Government is not consulting on the complete removal of the tolls. Instead the Government believes it is better to put in place a more sure and sustainable plan that balances the needs of users and taxpayers and guarantees the continued running and upkeep of the Crossings.

### Maintenance only toll

Another option that has widely been discussed is to charge the lowest possible toll level necessary to keep the bridges running – commonly referred to as a 'maintenance only toll'. The Government is committed to using toll revenue to fund the operation, maintenance and debt repayment associated with the Crossings. There is no intention to use the toll revenue for any other purpose. But there are a lot of uncertainties regarding the future costs of operating and maintaining the Crossings, including the uncertainty of whether or not free-flow tolling will be introduced and how much it will cost to implement and run. Halving the tolls is likely to generate enough revenue to cover the costs of future scenarios, but any further reductions at this stage exposes financial risk. For this reason, the Government is not

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<sup>2</sup> The report is available at: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/impact-severn-bridge-tolls-welsh-economy/?lang=en>

consulting on reducing the tolls by more than fifty percent, but is committed to keeping the toll prices under review and considering further reductions at a later stage – if and when such reductions might be possible.

## Regulatory changes

Currently, the legal basis for toll collection is the Severn Bridges Act 1992. The Act specifies toll rates and requires tolls to be increased each year by inflation. It does not allow for the reduction of the tolls.

It also says that tolls must cease by 2027 or once the “funding requirement” is met. This includes the costs of maintaining the bridges and operating tolling. It also includes costs already incurred outside of the Concession Agreement of £63m, and future, irregular costs that will be incurred, such as for resurfacing. The Government’s policy is to continue charging to meet these costs.

To make the changes proposed in this consultation, the Government intends to introduce a Charging Order under the Transport Act 2000, with the powers under the Severn Bridges Act ceasing at the end of the Concession. This would allow the Government to set charges at the level set out in this consultation. It would also provide for charges to continue, to cover ongoing costs, beyond 2027. A draft charging order has been published alongside this consultation (annex C). It closely follows the charging order that was put in place at the Dartford Crossing, before the charging system there changed from one with barriers to a free-flow system where payment is made electronically, away from the crossing itself.

Note that the charges apply only in relation to the roads on the crossings that are in England (that is, the majority of the M48 Severn Bridge and approximately half of the M4 Second Severn Crossing).

The policy is to continue using the same vehicle definitions that are currently in place at the Severn crossing. However the vehicle categories specified under the Transport Act 2000 are not the same as the categories that are currently used. So to carry on using the current vehicle categories, a further Statutory Instrument (SI) would be needed. A draft of this SI is published alongside this consultation (annex D); it amends the existing Road User Charging and Workplace Levy (Classes of Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2001 to add the Severn categories.

There are requirements to consult and publish charging proposals under the Transport Act 2000 and the Trunk Road Charging Schemes (Bridges and Tunnels) (England) Procedure Regulations 2001. This document meets the requirement to consult. The requirement to publish proposals means that the Secretary of State must publish, in at least one local newspaper and the London Gazette, a notice stating where the draft order and other relevant documents may be examined, with this examination period to last at least 84 days. This process will follow the consultation.

Introducing a charging order would change the legal status of the payment to use the Crossings from a toll to a road user charge.

### Consultation Question

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

## Impacts of the Government's proposals

Forecasts indicate that traffic across the Severn Crossings will increase by 28% between 2018 and 2027. But as a result of our proposed toll levels, based on the results of independent modelling commissioned by the Department, traffic growth will increase by 45%. Consequently because of reduction in tolls traffic volumes are forecast to increase by 17% over and above what they would have done. The Government is considering ways to manage this effect, including considering the options for free-flow tolling and day-time only tolling.

## 2. Off-peak times

### Considerations

In July 2016, as part of his evidence to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the future of the Severn River Crossings, Roads Minister Andrew Jones said he was open to incentivising use of the Crossings at certain times of the day to help reduce queuing at the toll plazas at busier times.

### Potential impacts of removing the tolls at night

Some early analysis has been conducted to understand the potential effects of removing the toll charge between 10pm and 6am.

Analysis of data from Traffic Wales indicates that on an average weekday, 6.5% of traffic on the M48 and 8.1% of traffic on the M4 crosses the Severn between 10pm and 6am. These percentages were applied to the westbound volumes from the traffic model that was used for looking at around a 50% toll reduction scenario, with differences in the number of vehicle categories travelling at this time taken into account. The revenue loss was estimated at approximately £6.7m in 2018 (in 2014 prices) if nobody changed the time they used the crossing. However based on the experience at the Dartford-Thurrock River Crossing, approximately 0.7% of daytime trips may be re-timed to take place in a free night-time period. This would result in an impact on revenue of around £7.2m in 2018 (2014 prices) – and similar amounts in subsequent years. It seems likely that most of this change would be from just after to just before 6am rather than at 10pm, when traffic volumes are lower. Further work would be needed to determine what impact this might have on journey times at 6am, which is the beginning of the morning peak. We propose to consider this further in parallel with free-flow charging.

# 3. Free-flow charging

## Considerations

At budget 2016 the Government announced it would review the case for removing the toll barriers and introducing 'free-flow' tolling on the Severn Crossings. The Department has begun considering the rationale for the benefits of free-flow, and also the potential drawbacks. We plan to assess the case for free-flow further, which may lead to consultation on options for free-flow in the future.

With free-flow tolling, drivers don't pay when they use the crossing, instead using the crossing without stopping. Payment can be made in advance, or until midnight the following day, either electronically or at selected retail outlets. Alternatively the user can set up an account meaning that payments can be taken automatically using Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

There is a need to enforce against vehicles that do not pay. This is done using cameras, identifying the address of the vehicle, and sending Penalty Charge Notices.

The main benefit is improved journey times.

This comes at a cost, however, as free-flow systems are more expensive to operate, meaning that tolls need to be higher than they would be with a barriered system.

## Principal benefits associated with introducing 'free-flow'

### Two-way charging

Currently tolls are only in place for westbound crossings which is seen as unfair and as a 'tax' for entering Wales. 'Free-flow' charging will enable charging in both directions. This in turn would allow the price charged each way to be halved.

### Journey times

The Severn Crossings themselves both currently operate well within their theoretical capacity and there is sufficient spare capacity on the Crossings to accommodate future traffic growth and a potential uplift in demand resulting from the reduction or removal of the toll. However, the existing barrier and road layout arrangement to collect the toll interrupts the flow of traffic and as a result congestion occurs, which can lead to poor traffic flow and delays at certain times.

Analysis by the Department for Transport (DfT) has investigated travel times between J22 and J23 on the M4 (a distance of 6.5 miles) and also between J1 and J2 on the M48 (a distance of 2.2 miles). The main conclusions for the analysis are shown in the

following table, which shows that average travel times are longer on the westbound journey, especially during the PM Peak.

**Average journey times at the Severn Crossings (selected time periods)<sup>3</sup>**

Crossing Text	Direction Text	Average journey times		
		Overall	Off-Peak (7pm to 7am)	PM Peak (4pm to 7pm)
M4 (J22–J23) (6.5 miles)	Eastbound	5-6 min	5-6 min	5-6 min
	Westbound	8-9 min	~7 min	~10 min
M48 (J1–J2) (2.2 miles)	Eastbound	~2 min	~2 min	~2 min
	Westbound	~3 min	~3 min	~3 min

Note that the morning peak is not shown because most traffic in the morning is flowing eastbound, so not encountering toll booths.

Poor traffic flows and delays are predicted to worsen if the current barrier and road layout arrangement are maintained as traffic volumes increase. These delays impact on both journey times and travel time reliability, which any new approach must address.

## Safety

The safety of drivers and staff is a priority. The Crossings currently regularly experience incidents caused by erratic and dangerous driving behaviour when people approach the payment booths, e.g. weaving or reversing. Between the beginning of 2014 and July 2016, 76 separate incidents involving the barriers were reported, and 44 collisions were reported in the plaza area, either between vehicles or of a vehicle with a barrier. Such incidents could be reduced or removed with free-flow tolling.

## Customer experience

Stopping to pay a charge by cash or card interrupts journeys, causes delay and presents an added inconvenience for customers. The introduction of a more modern charge collection system would provide a greater convenience and would align better to new schemes introduced or planned elsewhere in the UK or Europe.

## Economy

There is evidence to suggest that the arrangements in place to collect the payment of the toll negatively impacts on the economy. This is because traffic flow is interrupted as drivers have to stop at barriers to make a payment which causes delay and therefore impacts the economy as it hinders the movement of goods and people. For instance, the Freight Transport Association estimates that it costs a haulage

<sup>3</sup> These analyses are based on average journey times for specific time periods, will not reflect the experience of every journey, and should be used with caution.

company £1 for every minute that one of their 44 tonne vehicles is delayed by congestion.

## **Principal drawbacks and risks associated with introducing 'free-flow'**

### **Capital investment and operating costs**

Significant capital investment is required to pay for the introduction of 'free-flow' - indicative figures suggest that capital costs would run into the tens of millions of pounds. Furthermore, the on-going operation of a 'free-flow' system is expensive, and experience in the UK and elsewhere shows that operational costs would be more expensive than the use of toll booths.

### **Effect on potential to reduce toll prices even further**

As set out above, the Government is committed to keeping toll prices under review to ensure that users are getting a fair deal, and to secure revenue to keep the Crossings open and operating safely. The costs of introducing and running a free-flow system would need to be covered by toll revenues. We do not yet have an estimate what the future toll prices would need to be to cover the costs of free-flow.

### **Non-compliance**

With toll barriers in place there is little risk of users being able to avoid paying the toll charge. Conversely a free-flow system would require an active and comprehensive approach to tackling non-compliance. This could involve using Automatic Number Plate Cameras to determine which vehicles had not paid, and sending Penalty Charge Notices to the address of the registered keeper of the vehicle. The enforcement system would also need to allow for people to appeal Penalty Charge Notices.

### **Encouraging behaviour change**

Whilst it is widely accepted that a 'free-flow' system would improve the user experience, it must be recognised that some users may prefer toll booths, for example because it is not possible to forget to pay, or because there is no need to go online to make a payment. Also, the introduction of a 'free-flow' system would need to be accompanied by a comprehensive service to promote a new payment system and help drivers to use it.

## **Consultation Question**

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

# Other measures

The Government has listened to stakeholder suggestions and looked at a range of measures to improve the user experience – summarised in the table below.

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<b>Use of Variable Message Signs (VMS)</b>	
Currently, if the queuing times at the two plazas are unequal, the Highways England control room staff use Variable Message Signs to “divert” the traffic to the least busy route.	The Department will consider how to optimise the use of Variable Message Signs.
<hr/>	
<b>Providing reliable information about journey times</b>	
Publicising reliable information about journey times online (including real-time information) could help users of the Crossings to plan their journey and avoid unexpected traffic queues.	The Department will consider the case for developing this idea.
<hr/>	
<b>Lifting the barriers</b>	
Lifting the barriers for big events (proactive action) or when the queues are particularly long (reactive action) would help ease congestion a busy times.	The Department does not consider that this is possible under existing legislation. Introducing such a measure would require a special Act of Parliament.
<hr/>	
<b>Changing the layout of toll booths</b>	
Introducing “branch toll lanes” or “tandem toll booths” (technical terms for redesigning the toll plaza to increase the number of toll booths available).	There would be costs involved in changing the toll plazas in this way, and the Department does not consider there to be a reasonable case for these changes at the current time.

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# What will happen next?

A summary of responses, including the next steps, will be published within three months of the consultation closing on [www.gov.uk/dft#consultations](http://www.gov.uk/dft#consultations). Paper copies will be available on request.

If you have questions about this consultation please contact:

Name: The Severn Consultation Team, Roads Investment Strategy Futures,

Address: 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR

Phone Number: 020 7944 3593

Email address: [severnconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:severnconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Further background information can be found at the consultation website at [www.gov.uk/dft#consultations](http://www.gov.uk/dft#consultations).

# Annex A: Full list of consultation questions

The following summarises the consultation questions contained in this document. The quickest and easiest way to respond is electronically, on the consultation website.

## Introduction and consent

Consultation responses, including government responses and next steps, will be published within three months of the consultation closing.

I agree that my response may be published by government:

- Yes   
No

## Information about you / your organisation

Are you responding on behalf of:

- Yourself?   
An organisation?

What is your name / the name of your organisation?

If responding on behalf of an organisation, how were the views of members assembled?

This response is on behalf of (please choose the one that most closely applies):

- Member of the public   
Central government   
Local government   
Police   
Representative organisation   
Large company   
Small to medium enterprise   
Interest group

In which country are you / your organisation based?

- England   
Wales   
Scotland   
Northern Ireland   
Other

Are the crossings you / your organisation make mostly:

- Business or commuting
- Education or escorting to education
- Leisure or other personal
- Not applicable / don't use the crossing

Do you / your organisation use TAGs for payment?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable / don't use the crossing

How often do you / your organisation use the crossing?

- Three or more days a week
- One or two days a week
- Not weekly, but at least monthly
- Less often than monthly
- Don't know
- Not applicable / don't use the crossing

### Comments on the proposals

1. Do you agree with the proposed reductions in tolls?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you wish to, please explain your answer below:

2. If you have any specific comments on the legislative proposals, including the draft charging order, please enter them below:

### Comments on possible future developments

3. If you have any views on the future of the TAG payment system, please enter them below:

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?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you wish to, please explain your answer below:

# Annex B: Consultation principles

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

Consultation Co-ordinator  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/29 Great Minster House  
London SW1P 4DR  
Email [consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Note that as required by the Trunk Road Charging Schemes (Bridges and Tunnels) (England) Procedure Regulations 2001, this consultation has been sent, among others, to chief constables of relevant police forces, chief officers of relevant fire brigades, relevant bodies providing ambulance services, relevant local authorities, relevant Regional Development Agencies and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.