

Our ref: CRS 746,790

[REDACTED]
Head of Dart Charge Service

[REDACTED]
Via Email

Dart Charge
WMRCC Quinton
1 Ridgeway, Quinton
Birmingham B32 1AF

02 February 2017

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail dated 21 December 2016 received under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The specific details of your request have been extracted from your email and are highlighted in bold within the body of this letter.

In response to your Freedom of Information request –

The PRECISE LOCATION of the signage informing drivers of HOW and WHERE to pay the fee and indeed HOW MUCH to pay!

We recognise the importance of signage and its role in ensuring the continued safe and compliant operation of the Crossing. I would like to advise that a comprehensive signage strategy, including use of advance directional signs, variable message signs and safety signs, was therefore developed in preparation for Dart Charge. Fifty new signs were unveiled just ahead of its introduction, on the roads surrounding and approaching the Crossing in both directions. Amongst other information, these signs notify road users that they have until midnight the following day to pay the road user charge. I would like to assure you that careful consideration was given to the display of information within the overall context of ensuring that signage is clear and effective without becoming a distraction and potential road safety issue. Our signage has been signed off by Highways England Net Serve team who approve signage for England and they have ensured our signage conforms to the various regulations for signage.

Additionally, the information you have requested regarding signage whereabouts relating to Dart Charge in the Kent and Essex area is available via the following link;

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-signs-for-dart-charge-kent-and-essex.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-signs-for-dart-charge-kent-and-essex)

I want information as to WHICH radio stations carried the advertising and WHEN they were broadcasted?

I can confirm that from 11 July 2016 and 21 August 2016 our summer campaign included national radio advertising. The radio stations engaged in this were 'Absolute Radio', 'Heart', 'Talk Sport' and 'Smooth'.

When was the period leading up to the removal of the toll booths?

You refer to an INTENSE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN leading up to, during and after the removal of the toll booths. WHEN, WHERE and what form did this take?

In the run up to the introduction of Dart Charge in November 2014 Highways England held around 25 public information events at key locations such as Asda Greenhithe in Dartford, Bluewater and Lakeside shopping centres and at various motorway service areas close to the Crossing. These were well attended and were opportunities for members of the public to ask questions about Dart Charge direct to Highways England staff and also to take away leaflets and other material. No minutes were taken of these events.

Additionally, please see the appended 'Dartford Consultation Document'.

What form did the information campaign take this summer and in what geographical regions?

Last summer Highways England ran a public information campaign targeting infrequent users of the crossing with Dart Charge payment information. The vast majority of drivers are paying Dart Charge with compliance rates currently around 93%. However it is right that we do all we can to inform drivers about Dart Charge and how to pay – particularly during the summer when we expect more drivers to be using the Crossing for the first time since Dart Charge was introduced in November 2014. The campaign included radio advertising, posters in the UK and at Calais. We had leaflets on display in Hampshire and Dorset covering the tourist information centres and Welcome Break's Fleet Services on the M3 Northbound, these were available from June right through to October. In addition the campaign targeted the local area of Dartford which included 48 sheet billboards. We also worked with a range of partners to communicate key information to their customers, members and staff.

How much revenue did Dart Charge accrue through fines?

I can confirm that whilst we do hold the information, under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we are not required to provide information, which is already reasonably accessible to you. The information regarding the Dartford Accounts are available via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications> searching 'Dartford Accounts' in the search box.

How is the money spent?

Highways England operates the Dart Charge scheme on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport therefore all revenues are passed through to the Department for Transport. There is however a legal requirement* for net revenues from the crossing charge at Dartford to be spent on the achievement of any policies or proposals relating to Transport, as was the case for the previous charging scheme.

*Transport Act 2000 (Road User Charging), Schedule 12 paragraph 13 requires that the net proceeds of such a charging scheme should be applied for the purposes of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of any policies or proposals relating to transport but makes no prescription for how that will be achieved.

You say that there were poster and leaflets put in ports, airports, tourist attractions and motorway service stations please name which ones in Hampshire, and Dorset?

We are unable to provide details of every location; however, as examples, I can confirm that we had leaflets on display in Hampshire and Dorset covering the tourist information centres and Welcome Break's Fleet Services on the M3 Northbound,

How is a person without access to the internet able to access the necessary information or pay the fine and pay it within the prescribed time limit?

We acknowledge that not all road users have internet access and therefore we offer several alternative payment methods which are communicated within the penalty charge notice (PCN) letter. Payment can be made by phone (0300 300 0120) or by post using the payment slip provided to Dart Charge Customer Services, PO Box 842, Leeds LS1 9QF

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the legislation, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We may therefore be publishing the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context, via the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a printed copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number CRS 746,790 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely


Head of Dart Charge Service
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