TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

4th Meeting, 2007 (Session 3)

Tuesday 18 September 2007

The Committee will meet at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 1.

1. **Decisions on taking business in private:** The Committee will consider whether to take agenda item 4 in private.

2. **Abolition of Bridge Tolls (Scotland) Bill:** The Committee will take evidence on the Bill at Stage 1 from-

   John Stephens, Associate and Steve Hunter, Principal Consultant, Steer Davies Gleave;

   and then from-

   Janice Pauwels, Sustainable Development Unit Manager and Ewan Kennedy, Transport Planning Manager, City of Edinburgh Council; Bob McLellan, Head of Transportation Services, Fife Council; and Ken Laing, Bridge Engineer, Dundee City Council;

   and then from-

   Richard Dixon, Director, World Wildlife Fund Scotland; John Lauder, Director, Sustrans Scotland; Paul Tetlaw, Chair of TRANSform Scotland and Stuart Hay, Head of Policy at Friends of the Earth Scotland.

3. **Subordinate Legislation:** The Committee will consider the following negative instrument-


4. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its forward work programme.

Steve Farrell
Clerk to the Committee
Tel. 0131 348 5211
email: steve.farrell@scottish.parliament.uk
The papers for this meeting are as follows:

**Agenda Item 2**

Private briefing paper
*Toll Impact Study* by Steer Davies Gleave – Executive Summary
Written evidence from City of Edinburgh Council, Fife Council and Dundee City Council
Written evidence from Scottish Environment Link

**Agenda Item 3**

Cover Note from the Clerk

**Agenda Item 4**

Private paper from the Clerk
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context
1. This study provides a largely quantitative assessment of the effects of removing tolls on the Forth and Tay road bridges. It focuses on the impacts on Fife and the greater Dundee area, but some effects, such as those on employment, consider a wider area. It is intended that this study will provide the Scottish Executive with robust evidence of the impacts of tolls on the Forth and Tay road bridges.

2. The study examines the traffic, economic, social and environmental impacts and the financial and wider costs of retaining or abolishing the tolls on each bridge. The focus of the study is on the impacts of retaining or removing the tolls first in terms of changes in bridge traffic, and then on the consequences of these changes on the economy and local communities in Fife and Dundee and on the environment.

3. The impacts of removing the tolls have been assessed against objectives consistent with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), which ensures that the economic, environmental and social impacts are addressed in a consistent and standardised manner. The critical and central issue is the traffic impact and whether the reduction in the financial cost of travelling over the bridge leads to changes such as alteration of route by car and other vehicles; traffic generation or suppression; or combinations of these effects. Understanding this is fundamental, as the economic, environmental and social consequences stem from this.

Impacts/Findings
4. The main effects for each bridge are broadly similar but of a different magnitude. The impact of removing the tolls on the Tay Bridge would create a greater percentage change in travelling behaviour than on the Forth Bridge, including re-routing from the A90 via Perth. But far fewer people use the Tay Bridge so the economic and other impacts of this are not directly proportionate. The key findings for each bridge are presented separately below:

5. The Economic Activity and Location impact of removing the tolls on both bridges is a marginal improvement in the number of jobs filled in Scotland – within the areas closest to the bridge the gain is negligible (< 0.01% of total current employment). There are slightly greater distribution gains, with Fife gaining 1,178 residents in employment but at the expense of other areas, especially Edinburgh and the Lothians. Dundee City also gains both in terms of jobs filled and employed residents. The study was unable to find any real
evidence of significant social impact resulting from the existence or removal of the tolls.

**Findings: Tay Bridge**

6. The surveys of bridge users and non-users indicate that the financial cost of the toll on the Tay Bridge makes very little difference to the extent to which people will travel to work or make business trips across the bridge, and no difference to freight traffic. However, the survey evidence indicates that removing the toll on the Tay Bridge would prompt an increase in leisure trips made over the bridge, some of which would be made at or near peak times.

7. This is in line with the findings from the modelling work, which forecasts that, without a toll on the Tay Bridge, a proportion of drivers will switch route from the A90 to the A92 and the A91 through Fife. The Scottish Executive has invested in the A90 to make it a high capacity, improved safety dual carriageway route, whereas the A92 is partly, and the A91 is wholly, single carriageway; both provide less capacity than the A90.

8. The toll does play a role in traffic management and helps to avoid potentially excessive use of single carriageway roads in Fife for strategic traffic heading towards the central belt. Therefore if an increase in traffic on the Tay Bridge and then on the A92/A91 is to be avoided, there is a need to retain the toll as a form of traffic management on the Tay Bridge.

9. Should a decision to remove the Tay Bridge tolls be made, the local transport modelling identified a number of locations on the Dundee road network that would require some degree of redesign/remodelling. These include the toll plaza and junctions on South Marketgait with East and West Marketgait and the merge from the northbound bridge ramp.

10. Dundee City Centre currently suffers from localised congestion, in part because of the design of the bridge ramps and the speed of toll collection. This was noted as a problem for drivers in the surveys. While the toll plaza could be relocated, this is an expensive solution. Delays accessing the bridge might be addressed by restructuring the ramps and speeding up the flow of traffic through the toll booths. The ramps could feasibly be redesigned as part of the Dundee Central Waterfront regeneration project. Measures which would speed up the flow of traffic through the toll booths may include the adoption of electronic tolling and/or a tag or voucher system.

11. The regeneration of central Dundee is a major project which could have significant local economic benefits. It is noted that the regeneration of the Dundee Central Waterfront has not yet been included in the Transport Model for Scotland and therefore was not included in the modelling undertaken.
12. While it is not within the remit of this study, our research shows that respondents believe that the £1 payment on the Forth is a convenient and efficient amount to pay, which some respondents said contributes to fewer delays in paying the toll. Use of an amount such as £1 potentially could lead to increases in the speed of toll collection on the Tay if this was adopted instead of the current £0.80 charge.

13. Assessed against the appraisal objectives consistent with STAG, the removal of tolls would lead to increased global and local traffic emissions and some level of increase in traffic noise; against the environment objective the proposal has adverse impacts. The monetised transport impact assessment undertaken demonstrates that the net private sector impact is positive; however the loss of public sector toll income is more than twice this impact in scale. Removing the tolls from the Tay Bridge would not represent ‘value for money’; this remains the case over a tested range of traffic reassignment between the alternative strategic routes.

14. For the reasons outlined above it is recommended that the tolls on the Tay Bridge are retained, but also recommended that measures to speed up toll collection are investigated.

**Findings: Forth Bridge**

15. The surveys have identified that people using the Forth Bridge to travel to work would not travel any more or less if the toll were abolished. The surveys also indicate that between 25% and 30% of leisure users would use the bridge more frequently if tolls were removed. Some leisure trips (15%) are currently made during peak hours and it is likely that some increase would take place at peak hours, but most would take place outside the current peaks.

16. Survey respondents indicated that in response to worsening congestion most would alter the timing of their travel, but would not consider more drastic changes: few said they would change how they travel. Together all of these factors suggest increasing congestion and longer peaks on the bridge in the absence of tolls.

17. The Transport Model for Scotland indicates that there would be some increase in demand for the bridge during peak hours if the toll were abolished, mainly through rerouting by drivers who currently actively avoid paying the toll.

18. As with the Tay Bridge, research undertaken with the private sector showed that the tolls on the Forth Bridge make no difference to the propensity of freight vehicles or people on business trips to cross the bridge.

19. As the Forth Bridge is already operating at capacity during peak hours, the increase in demand which would be created by removing the tolls would extend the “peak” period and cause queues to lengthen. Traffic congestion is a concern
for almost everyone surveyed and travelling behaviour is more sensitive to this than to the financial cost of bridge tolls at their current level. The response to congestion of people travelling to work is to adjust the time at which journeys are made, rather than to reduce the number of journeys made.

20. Should a decision to remove the Forth Bridge tolls be made, the layout of the area of the current toll plaza would need to be completely remodelled. This could include a review of the balance of priority given to the A90, the A904, the A8000 and the future M9 spur.

21. Despite an increase in congestion, the economic and land-use modelling work shows removal of the financial cost of the toll from the Forth Bridge does lead to a marginal but positive local economic impact for residents of Fife, as Fife residents gain employment outside Fife at the expense of residents of other areas, especially Edinburgh and the Lothians. Part of this is the (small) added stimulus to migration to Fife due to the lower financial costs of travel, although typically the major effects here are driven by property prices. It is harder to predict longer term effects on the Fife economy that may arise from higher levels of congestion. It is possible that the economic base could be weakened if people with very high values of time such as senior professionals and business owners, leave the area because they are more intolerant of congestion than other residents.

22. To conclude, congestion would increase if the tolls were removed from the Forth Bridge because leisure trips, some of which are made during peak hours, would increase and the peak periods would be extended. The vast majority of survey respondents were considerably more concerned about congestion than about the financial cost of the bridge toll, but the main response to congestion would be to change travel times. This would tend to extend the length of periods of heavy congestion.

23. In terms of the impact appraisal undertaken the removal of tolls would lead to increased global and local traffic emissions and some level of increase in traffic noise; against the environment objective the proposal has adverse impacts. The monetised transport impact assessment undertaken demonstrates that the disbenefit of congestion considerably outweighs the benefit of removing the cost of the tolls; taken with the loss of public sector toll income the overall impact on the study area is negative. Removing the tolls from the Forth Bridge would not represent ‘value for money’.

24. For the reasons outlined above it is recommended that the toll on the Forth Bridge is retained.
BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE PROVOST AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

The Provost agreed, in terms of Standing Order 14(b), that in light of the Scottish Executive announcement of 1st March, 2006 on the future of road charges in Scotland which would leave the Tay and Forth Road bridges as the only bridges subject to tolls and to allow the Council to respond as a matter of urgency, the following motion be considered at the meeting.

Motion

Councillor A. McGovern, seconded by Councillor M. Rumney, moved as follows:-

“Firstly, that Fife Council and Dundee City Council lead a campaign to remove tolls on the Forth and Tay Bridges. Secondly, that we actively seek the support of the people of Fife and Dundee in our campaign. Thirdly, that we actively seek the support of all public and representative bodies in Fife and Dundee and fourthly, that we seek the support of all MSPs, MPs and all of Scotland’s Councils.”

Amendment

Councillor E. Riches, seconded by Councillor A. Martin, moved, as an amendment:-

“That a full strategic investigation be carried out covering the whole of the east of Scotland into all issues which arise including -

- the need for, and effect of, new public transport
- the case for a new or replacement bridge
- how any proposals would be funded
- whether or not tolls would be necessary”

Vote

It was agreed that the vote be taken by calling the roll.

For the Amendment - 9


For the Motion - 56

**Decision/**

The Council agreed in terms of the motion.
1 Introduction
The City of Edinburgh Council welcomes the opportunity to present evidence to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee during its consideration of the Abolition of Bridge Tolls (Scotland) Bill. The Council acknowledges that the main objective of the Scottish Government in introducing this Bill into Parliament, as its first piece of legislation, is the removal of the remaining tolls from the Forth and Tay Road Bridges as soon as practicable. Notwithstanding this fact, the Council has a number of concerns regarding the potential environmental impact of increased traffic levels, congestion and pollution as a result of removing all charges.

The recently published toll impact study suggests that the removal of tolls may result in a rise in the number of vehicles using the Forth road bridge of around 10%. This report indicates that this may lead to increased global and local traffic emissions as well as localised negative impacts in terms of noise, vibration, visual and driver amenity.

2 Impact of Toll Removal.

2.1 Concerns about Increased traffic levels and falls in public transport use

2.1.1 There is likely to be a significant increase in traffic over the bridge. This will lead to the peak period extending and queues lengthening. There will be an immediate effect but also over the longer term periods of congestion will extend and traffic queues will grow more quickly than if tolls had been in place.

2.1.2 Increased traffic will cause more wear and tear on the bridge, particularly if HGV numbers increase. Resulting congestion may also lead to reductions in economic efficiency and competitiveness.

2.1.3 Public transport use is likely to fall due to reduced price competitiveness with car use and, in the case of buses, due to possible increased congestion.

2.1.4 Falls in public transport use and new car trips will lead to a net increase in traffic into Edinburgh, in turn leading to increases in congestion and pollution in west Edinburgh. This should be seen in the context of recent successes in increasing cross-Forth public transport use including the Ferry Toll Park and Ride.
2.1.5 The removal of tolls removes the main means of managing future traffic growth over the bridge, and a major source of potential funding for cross-Forth transport projects.

2.1.6 If a second crossing is provided, the lack of tolls will encourage rapid traffic growth over the bridge which will markedly increase the severity of additional congestion and pollution impacts on Edinburgh.

2.2 Environmental Concerns

2.2.1 Removal of tolls from the Forth and Tay bridges is forecast to increase Carbon Dioxide emissions by around 9000 tonnes\(^a\). Clearly a significant proportion of this will be attributable to removal of the Forth Tolls.

2.2.2 Nitrogen dioxide (NO\(_2\)) is the air pollutant of greatest concern in Edinburgh and levels in the city are mainly caused by motor vehicles.

2.2.3 Particulate pollution (PM\(_{10}\)) levels are also causing concern at ‘hot spots’ in and around the city centre. Sources of particulate pollution in the Edinburgh area include, though are not limited to, emissions from traffic. According to the World Health Organisation, there is no safe limit for exposure to particulates.

2.2.4 Deterioration in air quality may occur in areas of existing poor air quality but potentially also in other areas of relatively good air quality due to increased traffic congestion.

2.2.5 Outwith toll removal considerations, ongoing monitoring indicates that worsening level of NO\(_2\) will require the declaration of further Air Quality Management Areas and/or the expansion of existing areas. There are already identified NO\(_2\) concentrations in the city centre and at St John’s Road.

2.2.6 With the removal of tolls, the Council anticipates that NO\(_2\) air pollution is likely to get worse and PM\(_{10}\) levels are likely to rise.

2.2.7 Other environmental concerns include noise and vibration issues for communities such as South Queensferry and, to a lesser extent, other areas of the city that will experience increased traffic.

3 Staffing Issues for FETA

3.1 A review is underway to develop the new organisational structure which will be required to resource the amended role and functions of the authority. It is anticipated that between 35 and 40 posts will be removed from the current structure and the FETA Board has already approved a number of reports and protocols that will be used to cover the transition process. The trade unions have been fully consulted in the preparation of these documents and in the review process.

3.2 Other proposed changes will remove a significant element of the wider strategic responsibilities which were incorporated into the role of General
Manager and Bridgemaster. Accordingly at its meeting on 31 August, the FETA Board approved the recommendation that this post should be made redundant.

4 Mitigation of Impact of Toll Removal and Potential Costs

4.1 Summary of Potential Issues and Potential Mitigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Potential mitigation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Congestion on bridge approaches and in Edinburgh; increases in Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions</td>
<td>Bus priority measures on the A90 corridor. More Par&amp;Ride in Fife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Increases in noxious air pollution on bridge approaches and in Edinburgh</td>
<td>Clean bus engine technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Increase in wear and tear on the bridge</td>
<td>None realistically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Reduction in public transport use</td>
<td>Reduction in cross-Forth rail fares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Removal of main means of managing traffic growth over the bridge</td>
<td>None realistically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Removal of major funding source for cross-Forth transport projects</td>
<td>Earmarked Scottish Government funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Periods of congestion will extend and traffic queues will grow more quickly in future</td>
<td>None realistically though see A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H If second crossing built, lack of tolls will increase the severity of additional impacts on Edinburgh.</td>
<td>Traffic management on any second crossing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Staffing: changes to current FETA arrangements</td>
<td>Taking forward proposals for redeployment and redundancy</td>
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4.2 Potential Cost of Mitigation:
This is not an exhaustive list, but initial considerations include:-

4.2.1 Bus priority
Robust bus priority measures (involving bus lanes and signal priority) would be needed on the approaches to the bridge and on the A90 corridor within Edinburgh. These should help safeguard public transport’s share of travel and therefore help reduce congestion. Measures are already under development for the Fife approaches including additional Park and Ride. On the Edinburgh approaches, significant civil engineering would be required to deliver the necessary bus priority measures; costs would be likely to be in a range from £10M to £20M.

4.2.2 Public transport use
The Scottish Government could reduce cross-Forth rail fares to maintain the competitive position of rail vs car use. Costs would be significant (estimated at a maximum of £1.5m to £2.0m per annum b) although the net cost would be considerably less that the cost of toll removal. There is no readily deliverable
means of reducing cross-Forth bus fares.

4.2.3 Air Quality
Though buses make up a small proportion of total traffic their NOx emissions are significant and amenable to reduction. Investing in the cleanest available diesel technology for buses on the corridor would incur significant short-term costs, likely to be of the order of £1m.

4.2.4 Traffic management in 2 crossing scenario
If a second crossing is built, lack of tolls will increase the severity of additional impacts on Edinburgh due to increased traffic. Costs to ameliorate this impact through traffic management and encouraging use of public transport have not been identified.

5 Summary
The Council is concerned over the negative impacts of toll removal and the ways in which these impacts can be ameliorated.

The recently published ‘Toll Impact Study’, prepared for the Scottish Government, concluded that removal of tolls will increase traffic, reduce the competitiveness of public transport and increase congestion. This in turn will increase in Carbon Dioxide emissions and noxious pollution. It should be possible to mitigate some of these impacts as set out above and it is recommended that, should toll removal proceed, serious consideration should be given by the Scottish Government to funding these mitigating measures as a matter of priority.

References

b: Cost calculations use an estimate of internal Scottish rail journeys crossing the Forth Rail Bridge calculated using Table 8.6 of Scottish Transport Statistics No 24, 2005. £1.5M is based on Edinburgh to Fife flows only, £2.0M on all cross-Forth rail travel internal to Scotland. These figures will be conservative as they assume NO increase in passenger numbers in response to the price cuts.
WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Abolition of Bridge Tolls (Scotland) Bill
Evidence from Dundee City Council to the
Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee

Summary

Dundee City Council is grateful for the opportunity to present evidence for consideration by the Committee in reviewing the Abolition of Bridge Tolls (Scotland) Bill. Dundee City Council has consistently argued that removing the need to collect tolls at the present toll plaza, located within the centre of Dundee, would have a positive effect in reducing congestion and the resultant air pollution within the city centre. During the evening peak periods traffic on the bridge regularly queues back from the toll plaza onto the inner ring road causing this strategic artery to ‘lock up’ at key junctions around the city centre area. All traffic, including public transport, seeking to leave or cross the city, and not associated with the bridge, gets caught up with significant subsequent delays and congestion. This directly impacts on access to the main rail and bus stations.

The monitoring of air quality in the vicinity of the bridge approach ramps has highlighted elevated levels of air pollution and queuing of vehicles on the approach ramps is considered to be one of the factors contributing to elevated levels of air pollution and the subsequent congestion around the city centre area.

Removing the need to collect tolls at the current toll plaza will have an immediate positive impact on congestion and air quality in Dundee’s city centre. Any longer term growth in traffic crossing the bridge as a consequence of removing the tolls will require to be managed and ideally controlled, by the introduction of measures to create modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel. The adjoining local authorities along with the Bridge Board, Regional Transport Partnerships and Transport Scotland will be required to work in partnership to develop intervention strategies to reduce congestion, including encouraging the greater use of car sharing and public transport. It is to be hoped that the Scottish Government will work along with these organisations in ensuring that funding is in place to assist in the implementation of such mitigation measures.

Traffic Modelling

Traffic modelling by Dundee City Council using a Paramics model shows that the bridge tolls cause queues to develop causing congestion throughout Dundee city centre and beyond, especially during the week day evening peak. As part of the work done for the Dundee Central Waterfront project, it can be demonstrated that removing the process of collecting tolls has a significant impact on reducing congestion in the city centre. This modelling work was validated on 28 March 2006 when the collection of tolls was removed as a consequence of industrial action. The city centre area was closely monitored and congestion during the evening peak was found to be significantly
reduced. Traffic counts on the bridge confirmed that a similar number of vehicles crossed the bridge in each direction on that day.

The Paramics traffic model was further developed to replicate the proposed arrangements required for the Dundee Central Waterfront master plan proposals. This modelling demonstrated that future traffic flowed well through the central waterfront area when tolls were removed. When tolls were retained the entire city centre area was observed to lock-up.

Air quality is directly related to congestion and it is concluded that by removing the tolls an improvement in air quality would be anticipated in those areas currently suffering toll queue related congestion.

**Future Traffic Growth**

The Toll Impact Study undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government was published a few weeks ago and it would be inappropriate to comment directly on this piece of work. However the impact of removing the tolls from the Tay in terms of predictions on future traffic growths is highly debateable. As part of the Road Traffic Reduction Act monitoring regime, Dundee City Council has established a cordon of traffic count sites around the city centre area and counts all traffic entering and exiting the city. Between 2001 and 2005 the total number of vehicles entering the city centre on an average day increased by 5%. Over the same period, traffic on the Tay Road Bridge increased by 7%. This means that traffic on the only tolled road entering the city has increased more than on the non-tolled roads. This suggests that the current charge of 80p per crossing (south bound only) is not a significant factor in the decision to use the bridge or not. This was borne out by some of the research undertaken as part of the Toll Impact Study. This does not in itself prove or disprove that traffic growth will significantly increase as a consequence of the removal of the tolls but highlights the need to exercise caution in the interpretation of any results from the modelling work undertaken as part of the study to predict future traffic growth.

**Mitigation Measures**

In the event that traffic volumes do grow significantly as a consequence of the decision to remove tolls from the Tay, properly planned and funded mitigation measures will be required to manage such increased demand. As part of the development of the Regional Transport Strategies for both TACTRAN and SESTRAN, interventions have been developed to encourage modal shift and reduce congestion, these include:

- Doubling rail frequency by introducing Dundee-Edinburgh semi-fast, as proposed in Scotland’s Railways; and
- Tay Bridge South, Park and Choose facility.

Recognising the economic, accessibility and environmental impacts of the current situation, SESTRAN and TACTRAN are taking forward a jointly
funded STAG appraisal of the proposed Park and choose facility situated at the southern end of the bridge.

In addition, physical improvements to certain road junctions associated with the inner ring road and the Central Waterfront will be critical to accommodate future traffic growths.

It is important that the above measures are developed in partnership with all of the appropriate agencies and that funding is provided to help ensure that any potential congestion created as a future consequence of the decision to remove the tolls, are mitigated.
Scottish Environment LINK is the umbrella body for the environment movement in Scotland. Involving 34 member bodies representing a spectrum of environment and associated culture heritage interests, we have a cumulative individual membership of around 500,000 people across Scotland. We welcome this opportunity to coordinate a panel of environment organisations to give evidence on the environmental impact of the Abolition of Bridge Tolls (Scotland) Bill. Our panel brings together representatives with expertise on climate change, sustainable development, and sustainable transport from LINK member bodies and a closely affiliated organisation – TRANSform Scotland.

LINK believes that our current patterns of transport are unsustainable. Between 1993 and 2003, traffic volumes on Scotland’s roads increased by 18%. Last year, according to government figures, they rose again by 3%, reaching their highest ever levels. Carbon dioxide emissions from transport represent 23% of the UK’s total emissions, and rose by 8% between 1990 and 2004. Last month saw the publication of the government’s toll impact study, commissioned by the previous administration. It concluded that removal of tolls from the Forth road bridge would cause the number of vehicles using the bridge to increase by 10%, and similarly on the Tay bridge vehicle numbers would increase by 40%. This would have serious implication for the Scottish government’s commitment to carbon emissions reductions, as well as the traffic stabilisation targets.

You may be aware of a briefing paper published earlier this year by TRANSform Scotland, stating the case against the removal of tolls from the Forth and Tay Road Bridges. The briefing paper is included as part of this written evidence. Areas of particular concern to LINK and Transform Scotland are:

- the likelihood of increased greenhouse gas emission due to abolition of the tolls on the Forth and Tay Bridges and the implications for the proposed carbon emissions budgets in the forthcoming climate change bill
- the alternative sustainable transport opportunities which could be delivered for the same cost as abolishing the tolls
- the traffic mitigation measures which will be needed if bridge tolls are abolished, to ensure traffic stabilisation targets are met and emissions are reduced

We intend to cover these issues in more detail during our oral evidence session on the 18th September.

Scottish Environment LINK Transport Sub Group and Transform Scotland September 2007
1. **Introduction**

1.1 TRANSform Scotland urges MSPs to **oppose proposals for the removal of tolls from the Forth and Tay Road Bridges**. Any proposals of this kind would, firstly, represent a financial subsidy from the general taxpayer to car commuters and the road haulage industry, and secondly, worsen traffic and environmental conditions in South-East Scotland.

1.2 There has been no increase in the overall price of road use in recent years: **this is recorded, statistical, fact**. As such, we see no sound reasons for the removal of road charges such as bridge tolls.

1.3 At the same time, climate change emissions from transport continue to rise unchecked. There is no prospect of Scottish governance addressing Scotland’s disastrous environmental record if action is not taken to **increase, not decrease**, the price of road transport. Reductions in the price of road use can only further damage the future prospects for public transport and the environment.

1.4 TRANSform Scotland supports the decision of the then transport minister, in the *Tolled Bridges Review* statement of 01/03/06, that tolls should remain on the Bridges because of the role of toll charges in road traffic demand management.

1.5 TRANSform Scotland considers that the removal of bridge tolls would worsen Scotland’s environmental record and undermine the nation’s attempts to reduce climate change emissions.

2. **Arguments against removing bridge tolls**

2.1 **It would have a regressive impact in tax terms**

2.1.1 Removing bridge tolls would require the general taxpayer to pay for bridge maintenance: this would represent a transfer of funds from non-road users to road users. This would represent a transfer from the less affluent (i.e. non-car owners) to the more affluent (i.e. car owners).

2.2 **It would worsen congestion**

2.2.1 Removing bridge tolls would act as encouragement to increase road use: this will increase levels of traffic and congestion on the bridges.

2.2.2 The Scottish Executive-commissioned *Tolled Bridges Study: Phase One TMfS Model runs final report* found that removing bridge tolls would increase traffic levels on the Forth Road Bridge by 15% southbound and by 20% northbound, while FETA’s response to the Scottish Executive tolled bridges review indicated that the removal of Forth Bridge tolls would increase traffic levels by 21%. This would have a severe negative impact on congestion levels.

2.2.3 It is understood that part of this forecast increase in traffic levels would be as a result of trips being made via the Forth Road Bridge rather than via the Kincardine Bridge. This would be a perverse response, especially in the context of the Scottish Executive’s action to increase road capacity at the Kincardine Bridge by the construction of a second road bridge. Action should be taken to remove traffic flows from the Forth Road Bridge, not to increase them.

2.2.4 In the case of the Tay, the Executive’s *Tolled Bridges Review: Phase Two Report* states:
“Modelling indicates that the existing congestion problems on [the] Tay [Bridge] would be exacerbated without tolls, and that increased tolls could help to ease congestion problems.” iii

2.2.5 It is very clear from the available evidence that removal of tolls on either bridge would lead to increased congestion, with resultant negative economic impacts.

2.3 It would reduce the transport sector’s coverage of its external costs

2.3.1 Road users do not cover their external costs. Road taxation covers only one-third to one-half of road users’ external costs.iv

2.3.2 Removing bridge tolls would further reduce the contribution of the road sector to meeting its external (environmental, social and economic) impacts.

2.3.3 Contrary to the frequent statements by motoring organisations of the "hard-pressed motorist", the simple fact is that over recent decades the real price of motoring has not increased.

2.3.4 Private motoring is more affordable today than it was 20 years ago, while the price of public transport has risen: since 1980, bus and rail fares have risen by 37% in real terms.v Future projections suggest that without action being taken, that the price of private motoring will fall by 29% between 2000 and 2010 and a further 24% by 2025.vi

2.3.5 There have been no increases in taxes on petrol over the last two years. Increases in fuel duty planned by the Treasury have been scrapped in response to rising oil prices and pressure from motoring and road haulage groups. In Scotland the percentage of fuel price that is taken up by taxes is lower today than it was in 1996.vii

2.4 It would worsen Scotland’s ability to meet existing Scottish Climate Change Programme commitments

2.4.1 The transport sector is one of the main contributors to climate change. There is now widespread acceptance that climate change is real, that it is already having damaging impacts across the planet, and that these impacts will worsen. Despite a now high level of awareness of this issue, there is however little evidence that the Scottish transport sector is taking measures to reduce emissions: car use and road freight levels continue to increase, while progress on vehicle efficiency is limited at best.

3. About TRANSform Scotland

3.1 TRANSform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. We campaign for a more sensible transport system, less dependent on unsustainable modes such as the car, the plane and road freight, and more reliant on sustainable modes such as walking, cycling, public transport and freight by rail or sea.

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i Scottish Executive (2004) Tolled Bridges Study: Phase One TMS Model runs Final Report p.27


TRANSform Scotland
the campaign for sustainable transport

Lamb’s House, Burgess Street, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6RD
Tel: 0131 467 7714 Fax: 0131 554 8656
Email: info@transformscotland.org.uk
Web: www.transformscotland.org.uk
TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

4th Meeting, 2007 (Session 3)

Tuesday 18 September 2007

Subordinate Legislation Cover Note

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<tr>
<td>Standing Order</td>
<td>10.4 (Negative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laid Date</td>
<td>1 August 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circulated to Members</td>
<td>3 September 2007</td>
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<td>Meeting Date</td>
<td>18 September 2007</td>
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<td>Reporting Deadline</td>
<td>22 October 2007</td>
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Purpose

1. The purpose of this instrument is to allow Scottish Ministers to make regulations which relate to the Traffic Commissioner and to deal with appeals relating to traffic regulation conditions determined by the Traffic Commissioner.

Background

2. This Order makes provision in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area who was specified as a cross-border public authority by the Scotland Act 1998 (Cross-Border Public Authorities) (Specification) Order 1999 (SI 1999/1319).

3. Further information on the legislative background and policy objectives can be found in the Executive note which is attached.

Subordinate Legislation Committee Report

4. The Subordinate Legislation Committee did not have any comments to make in relation to this instrument.

Recommendation

5. The Committee is invited to consider any issues which it wishes to raise in reporting to the Parliament on this instrument.
The Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty in Council

The Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area has been specified as a cross-border public authority by the Scotland Act 1998 (Cross-Border Public Authorities) (Specification) Order 1999(a).

In accordance with section 89(3) of the Scotland Act 1998, following consultation with the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area, a recommendation has been made to Her Majesty in Council to make this Order.

Accordingly, Her Majesty, in exercise of the powers conferred upon Her by sections 89, 113(3) and (4) and 124(2) of the Scotland Act 1998(b), is pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order as follows:

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Scotland Act 1998 (Cross-Border Public Authorities) (Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area) Order 2007 and shall come into force on 1st October 2007.

(2) This Order does not extend to Northern Ireland.

(a) S.I. 1999/1319, to which there are amendments not relevant to this Order.
(b) 1998 c.46.
Transfer of functions to the Scottish Ministers

2. The functions which are conferred on a Minister of the Crown by the enactments specified in column 1 of the Schedule shall—

(a) so far as exercisable by that Minister in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area; and

(b) subject to any restriction in the corresponding entry in column 2 of the Schedule, be exercisable by the Scottish Ministers instead of by the Minister of the Crown.

General modification of enactments

3. Sections 117 and 118 (general modification of enactments) of the Scotland Act 1998 shall apply in relation to the exercise of functions by the Scottish Ministers by virtue of article 2 of this Order as they apply in relation to the exercise of functions by the Scottish Ministers within devolved competence.

Transitional and saving provisions

4.—(1) The transfer, by virtue of this Order, of any function exercisable by a Minister of the Crown to the Scottish Ministers shall not affect the validity of anything done (or having effect as if done) by or in relation to a Minister of the Crown, for the purposes of or in connection with any such function, before the date on which the transfer takes effect.

(2) Anything (including legal proceedings) which, at the time when that transfer takes effect, is in the process of being done by or in relation to a Minister of the Crown may, so far as it relates to any function transferred, be continued by or in relation to the Scottish Ministers.

(3) Anything done (or having effect as if done) by or in relation to a Minister of the Crown for the purposes of or in connection with any function transferred to the Scottish Ministers by virtue of this Order shall, if in force at the time when that transfer takes effect, have effect as if done by or in relation to the Scottish Ministers in so far as that is required for continuing its effect after that time.

Judith Simpson
Clerk of the Privy Council
## SCHEDULE

**Article 2**

### ENACTMENTS CONFERRING FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enactments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Restrictions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 (c.14), sections 60(a) (general power to make regulations for purposes of Act) and 61(b) (exercise of regulation making powers and parliamentary control thereof), as applied by sections 134 (regulations, rules and orders) and 135(c) (procedure for making regulations, rules and orders) of the Transport Act 1985 (c.67).</td>
<td>Only so far as the functions are exercisable in relation to those functions under sections 6(d), 7(e) and 9 of the Transport Act 1985 which are exercisable by the Scottish Ministers by virtue of this Order.</td>
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<th>The Transport Act 1985 (c.67)—</th>
<th>Only so as to allow provision to be made in regulations as set out in paragraphs (g), (i) and (j) of section 6(9) of the Transport Act 1985.</th>
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<td>(a) section 6(9) (registration of local services);</td>
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<td>(b) section 7(6)(d), (9) and (11) (application of traffic regulation conditions to local services subject to registration under section 6); and</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>(c) section 9 (appeals against traffic regulation conditions).</td>
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(a) Section 60 was amended by the Transport Act 1985 (c.67), section 13(2)(2), Schedule 2, Part II, paragraph 3(18), Schedule 7, paragraph 2(9) and Schedule 8, the Transport and Works Act 1992 (c.42), section 6(5) and (8) and the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 (c.40), section 6(5).  
(b) Section 61 was amended by the Transport Act 1985, Schedule 8.  
(c) Section 135 was amended by the Statute Law (Repeals) Act 2001 (c.14), Schedule 1, Part 14.  
(d) Section 6 was amended by the Transport Act 2000 (c.38), Schedule 27, paragraph 14; the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 (asp 2), sections 45 and 46 and schedule 2, paragraph 4(2) and the Railways Act 2005 (c.14), Schedule 12, paragraph 8.  
(e) Section 7 was amended by the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 (c.22), Schedule 8, paragraph 117(2), the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, section 42 and S.I. 1996/974.
EXPLANATORY NOTE
(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order makes provision in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area who was specified as a cross-border public authority by the Scotland Act 1998 (Cross-Border Public Authorities) (Specification) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/1319).

Article 2 provides that the functions conferred on a Minister of the Crown by the enactments specified in the Schedule to this Order shall, so far as exercisable in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area, be exercisable by the Scottish Ministers instead of by a Minister of the Crown, subject, in certain cases, to specified restrictions.

The functions specified in the Schedule are functions which are specifically exercisable in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area by the Secretary of State and which, as a result of the operation of section 88(1) of the Scotland Act 1998, have not transferred to the Scottish Ministers at devolution by virtue of section 53 of the Scotland Act.

In relation to the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981, this Order transfers the regulation making functions of the Secretary of State under sections 60 and 61 (which are applied, with modifications, to regulations made under Part I and Part II of the Transport Act 1985 by sections 134 and 135 of that Act), insofar as they are exercisable in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area, and subject to the restriction specified in Column 2 of the Schedule. This restriction means that sections 60 and 61 are transferred only insofar as they are exercisable in relation to those functions under sections 6, 7 and 9 of the Transport Act 1985 transferred by this Order.

In relation to the Transport Act 1985 this Order transfers—
(a) the regulation making functions of the Secretary of State under section 6(9) in relation to the registration of local services (but only so as to allow provision to be made in regulations as set out in paragraphs (g), (i) and (j) of section 6(9));
(b) the function of the Secretary of State under section 7(6)(d) to prescribe matters which can be regulated by traffic regulation conditions (which may be determined by a traffic commissioner under section 7(1));
(c) the function of the Secretary of State under section 7(9) and (11) to prescribe periods within which requests may be made to a traffic commissioner for an inquiry into traffic regulation conditions; and
(d) the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to appeals against traffic regulation conditions under section 9,
insofar as they are exercisable in relation to the Traffic Commissioner for the Scottish Traffic Area.

Article 3 ensures that any references to the Secretary of State and powers to make legislation are glossed appropriately to reflect the transfer of functions to the Scottish Ministers.

Article 4 makes transitional and saving provisions as regards the previous exercise of functions by a Minister of the Crown prior to their devolution to the Scottish Ministers.

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