

MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT

RUCO REPRESENTATION

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| <p>CPRE/North West<br/>Transport Activists Round<br/>Table</p> | <p>Tolling both the proposed new bridge and the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge, would mean introducing new costs into the lives of deprived communities living either side of the River Mersey in Halton which are amongst the most highly rated in the national health deprivation indices.</p> | <p>The environmental statement (ES) that accompanies the applications for the Mersey Gateway Project considered the social effects of tolling. This is reported at 20.7.19-20.7.22 of the Environmental Statement. Tolling research undertaken in 2004 highlighted that tolling has the potential to cause severance of communities on either side of the River. Respondents noted that they may choose to reduce cross river trips for social, leisure and shopping purposes and look for other alternatives which did not involve paying tolls. Individuals noted that they were unlikely to be as spontaneous in undertaking social trips to visit friends and families if tolls were implemented. The ES also considers the effect of the project upon health-disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>A Sustainable Transport Strategy is currently being prepared for the Borough. This strategy aims is designed to work alongside the Mersey Gateway Project and to promote an integrated transport system for Halton by improving bus services and opportunities for walking and cycling. Provision of improved facilities will reduce the reliance of local residents on private vehicles, where possible. Improved public transport facilities, footpaths and cycleways will therefore provide local residents with another option of crossing the River, which does not involve paying the toll.</p> <p>As a result of the impacts of the project this effect is assessed as either not significant or of low negative significance, although at the time of writing the ES the full detail of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy had not been published. In light of the benefits of the project it is considered that with the Mersey gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy in place the disbenefits are outweighed.</p> |

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|                    | <p>All these disbenefits would be brought about in the name of economic regeneration, despite the fact that previous similar claims (eg in respect of the Humber bridge) were shown to be without foundation and despite the fact that a leading government think tank, the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment, proved in their report "Transport and the Economy" 10 years ago there is no automatic connection between the provision of new highway infrastructure and economic benefits.</p> | <p>In order to consider these points the Borough Council has commissioned AMION Consulting to consider the wider economic impacts of the Mersey Gateway Project as a whole. AMION carried out their assessment taking full account of the effects of the tolls/charges upon those crossing the River Mersey.</p> <p>AMION report that - even on the Government's narrow assessment methodology - the Mersey gateway Project will by 2030 be job-creating in some of the most disadvantaged wards of Halton and beyond. Using other methodologies AMION predict that the project will lead to broader positive economic impacts in the medium-long term, including those identified in Sir Rod Eddington's transport study and also catalytic regeneration effects.</p>  |
|                    | <p>The opposite could in fact prove to be the case in this instance. A key question which should be asked is this. Why would businesses re-locate to Halton when, by so doing, they would impose unnecessary transport costs (the bridge tolls) on their staff, customers, suppliers and service providers, especially as the quality of life in Halton would be made poorer by increased amounts of through-traffic generated by the new bridge?</p>   | <p>A number of business representatives from both large and small business in close proximity to the SJB were interviewed during the social research. Opinion of Project tolling was split between businesses who expressed concern that effects would severe and those businesses which believed that the New Bridge would be economically advantageous. Effects of tolling were deemed to be greater by survey business representatives in Widnes than Runcorn, due to the requirement of businesses to cross the River more frequently from Widnes. Businesses were also concerned that tolling may decrease the existing labour pool for jobs as individuals would be less willing to pay to access their place of work.</p> <p>However, the project allows the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration strategy. With the catalytic effects predicted by AMION consulting produced by the new Mersey Gateway Bridge, the adverse effects on businesses of the toll/charge is outweighed in the view of officers.</p> |

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| Mr McLaughlin                              | Vehicle number recognition cameras attached to existing bridge and a toll for anybody from outside Halton Borough, would reduce traffic and give local council revenue. This would negate the need for expensive toll booths.  | Although the Mersey Gateway Project has considered the use of open road tolling (ORT) technology for the collection of tolls/charges, the use of ORT in this particular circumstance has not yet been proven. However, passive provision is made in the draft TWA Order and road charging order so that it may be adopted should it later e appropriate to do so. Provision is made for barrier tolling in the project to ensure that tolling can be implemented should ORT not be possible in practice. The Mersey Gateway project team will keep this matter under review.   |
| North West Transport Activists Round Table | NW TAR wishes to lodge a strong objection to these planning applications. They represent an integral part of a totally unsustainable project which is at odds with a number of national and regional governmental agendas, namely:<br>....<br>reducing social exclusion (both the new and existing bridge would be tolled) ... | <p>The environmental statement (ES) that accompanies the applications for the Mersey Gateway Project considered the social effects of tolling. This is reported at 20.7.19-20.7.22 of the Environmental Statement. Tolling research undertaken in 2004 highlighted that tolling has the potential to cause severance of communities on either side of the River. Respondents noted that they may choose to reduce cross river trips for social, leisure and shopping purposes and look for other alternatives which did not involve paying tolls. Individuals noted that they were unlikely to be as spontaneous in undertaking social trips to visit friends and families if tolls were implemented. The ES also considers the effect of the project upon health-disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>A Sustainable Transport Strategy is currently being prepared for the Borough. This strategy aims is designed to work alongside the Mersey Gateway Project and to promote an integrated transport system for Halton by improving bus services and opportunities for walking and cycling. Provision of improved facilities will reduce the reliance of local residents on private vehicles, where possible. Improved public transport facilities, footpaths and cycleways will therefore provide local residents with another option of crossing the River, which does not involve paying the toll.</p> <p>As a result of the impacts of the project this effect is assessed as either not significant or of low negative significance, although at the time of writing the ES the full detail of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy had not been published. In light of the benefits of the project it is considered that with the Mersey gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy in place the disbenefits are outweighed.</p> |

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| Halton FOTE        | <p>The financial viability of the case for the second Mersey crossing is questionable in that: (a) the current economic climate is unstable; (b) the rapid escalation of costs (estimated total is reported to have risen by some 40% over the past few months); (c) the extremely limited ability of local people and businesses to afford tolls (even at reduced rates); (d) the willingness of major companies to shoulder increasing costs to fulfil the regeneration claims put forward will be subject to the economic climate and rising fuel costs.</p> | <p>Financial viability of the Mersey Gateway project as a whole is the subject of considerable research undertaken on behalf of the Borough Council by its financial advisers, KPMG alongside other professional advisers who provide other information such as likely traffic levels. The basis of assessment takes account of optimistic and pessimistic growth scenarios, including the likely behaviour of the national economy over a 30-year concession period. In light of the advice they have received, officers consider the project to be viable.</p> <p>Officers confirm that the estimated total cost of the project has remained static since the publication of the applications earlier in 2008.</p> <p>The sophisticated traffic model used to predict behaviour of motorists after the Mersey Gateway Bridge is opened also takes account of the value of time and hence, the likelihood and willingness of local people and motorists to pay tolls. Even taking account of tolls, the Mersey gateway crossings will be well used. Efforts to provide sustainable transport alternatives are discussed elsewhere in this commentary. The level of tolls proposed corresponds to the toll levels of the Mersey Tunnels, the market for which is analogous to that of the Mersey gateway. As such, a viable model exists for a tolling system in this market.</p> <p>The advice received by officers and the evidence in respect of other projects elsewhere in Europe indicates a continued appetite on behalf of the private sector to fund projects of this nature.</p> |
|                    | <p>The credibility of the case for a second crossing is diminished by the arguments that tolling will deter traffic from using the route.</p>   | <p>The traffic model used by the Mersey Gateway Project indicates that notwithstanding a slightly lower use of the Mersey Gateway crossings in the opening years they project is viable and will achieve its project aims.</p>   |
|                    | <p>It is premature to approve a tolling system for which no model has been presented and therefore its efficiency and fairness cannot be tested.</p>  | <p>The various orders, including the road charging order, being promoted by the Borough Council will provide powers to impose tolls, they do not specify the exact tolling system. Fairness and efficiency will be a matters considered in letting the concession for the construction and operation of the Mersey Gateway project.</p>  |

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|                                     | <p>Tolling the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge - The Mersey Tunnel is tolled, and we know that many people use the Silver Jubilee Bridge even though the Mersey Tunnel would be a shorter journey, in order to avoid the toll. We believe it would be reasonable to charge a toll for the use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge. This would help reduce unnecessary journeys and would deter people from 'mis-routings' such as using the Silver Jubilee Bridge to avoid the toll on the Mersey Tunnels. Halton BC estimate that tolling the Silver Jubilee Bridge, without building the Second Mersey Crossing, would reduce traffic across the Silver Jubilee Bridge by 6%, as estimated by the Saturn model. But this model assumes that people will travel anyway, which is a false assumption. For example, when Hammersmith Bridge in London was closed, the increase in traffic over neighbouring bridges was much less than expected. Many people simply did not make the journeys by car and cycling levels increased. Therefore we believe the estimate of a 6% reduction due to tolling could be a large underestimate.</p> <p>Halton BC also told us that tolling the Silver Jubilee Bridge would be 'politically in-feasible'. We take this to be a mere excuse. It was predicted that London Congestion Charge would be politically infeasible; instead, it was a great success. HBC also told us that if the Silver Jubilee Bridge were tolled then much of the traffic would redirect via Warrington town centre. When pressed, they admitted the evidence for this was only anecdotal, citing an incident 4 years ago when the Silver Jubilee Bridge was closed for 6 hours. We do not accept that Warrington town centre would suffer if the Silver Jubilee Bridge were tolled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do believe that Runcorn people would drive to Warrington and back to get to Widnes (or <i>vice versa</i>) given that the cost of driving the extra distance would be greater than the toll.</li> <li>• Traffic surges due to unexpected events are not the same as permanent changes in traffic arrangements, such as the introduction of a toll. People will alter their travel habits and journey patterns.</li> </ul> | <p>The possibility of imposing charges/tolls on the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) is considered at Chapter 5 of the ES and paragraph 4 of the report that this appendix accompanies. For the reasons stated, the imposition of tolls on the SJB alone is not considered to provide a suitable alternative the Mersey Gateway Project.</p> |
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|                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not everyone would travel via Warrington town centre - some would use the Mersey Tunnels.</li> </ul> <p>Road pricing schemes will eventually have to be taken on board (there are some example of positive trial schemes in the U.S. where road users accrue some benefits for participating in such schemes) nationally as a tool to combat both traffic congestion and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.</p> <p>If this is the case then the figures of traffic usage for both crossings will have to be recalculated on a downward basis. Some studies suggest that there will be a 25% reduction in total traffic usage. According to a recent Treasury report road charging could reduce congestion by some 50% of what it would have been in 2025.</p> <p>The Treasury figures are predictions and relate mainly to reducing traffic congestion. If climate change challenges call for even tougher action in the next few decades, as well they might, and road charging is used further to curb road traffic usage these figures could be significantly higher.</p> <p>If additional financial support is needed from Government, HBC would have to consider increasing the concession term beyond 30 years and increasing basic tolls and/or reducing the discount scheme for regular local users. Lessons should be learnt from previous PFIs re escalating costs, maintenance compensation mitigation - leading to local taxpayers taking the brunt.</p> | <p>The road user charging and tolling proposals under consideration are predicted - as part of the Mersey gateway Project - to achieve this effect.</p> <p>At present no national road pricing proposal exists. As such, in the view of officers it is neither possible nor appropriate to give any weight to such a proposal in the assessment of the Mersey gateway project and road user charging proposals associated with it.</p> <p>Again, this is speculation without a project announcement by the Government.</p> <p>The construction and operation of the project is not proposed to be funded or supported by local taxpayers. When the concession is let the intention is that it will be a contributor to the Borough Council's finances. At present the duration of the concession has not been set, but it is anticipated that it will have a thirty year term.</p> |
|                    | <p>Toll Plazas - Our main concern here is the intention to locate the principal plaza on part of St. Michael's Golf Course. It is not immediately clear what remediation of the highly contaminated land would be undertaken to protect construction workers and toll-booth operators. It is understood that this area is heavily contaminated with highly toxic substances, and any remediation must be thorough, highly controlled and constantly monitored.</p> <p>We are also concerned that the possibility exists of 'bottle-necks' arising from any small incident or hold-up at any of the toll plazas.</p>  | <p>An assessment of the contaminants present or likely to be present in soils within the land upon which the project will be constructed is to be found at Chapter 14 of the ES. This specific point is addressed at paragraphs 14.8.88, 14.8.89 and 14.8.109-110.</p> <p>The toll plazas have been designed in accordance with relevant standards. As such, the likelihood of incidents, delays and hold-ups is reduced, as well as in-built capacity to reduce consequential effects upon traffic.</p>   |

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| Preston Brook Parish Council | <p>Statement of Sims and Reasons Paragraph 8.2 - Justification for the imposition of tolls and charges: The wording in this paragraph is not only unclear but misleading. The Road User Charging Scheme for the SJB is a toll scheme complete with toll booths.</p> <p>There would be a detriment to residents in that they will not only have to pay once for public services through Council Tax but twice to access public services through the payment of toll charges incurred by travelling over the bridge. All residents will clearly be disadvantaged by this and it is somewhat discriminatory towards our residents as opposed to those who live on the Widnes side of the bridge who have easier access to services.</p>  | <p>This paragraph explains that the TWA Order will not impose tolls on the SJB. Instead, the separate road user charging order that is the subject of this report will be used for that purpose.</p> <p>Without the imposition of tolls/road user charging there would be no prospect of delivering the Mersey Gateway Project. The imposition of tolls/charges will ensure that the cost of the project falls upon motorists rather than the population at large. The Borough council is promoting the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy to ensure that toll-free alternatives are available and that all parts of the borough remain accessible on that basis.</p> |
| Vale Royal BC                | <p>1. My Council would make the following points:</p> <p>(i) The A533 Silver Jubilee Bridge was constructed using public funds only, and is not therefore indebted to the private sector for charges outstanding. As currently happens with all other parts of the publicly funded UK road network, maintenance of that part of the network should be drawn from public treasury finances and not from road charges.</p>  | <p>The approach to maintenance of the Silver Jubilee Bridge is yet to be determined, being dependent upon the nature of the concession let for the construction and operation of the Mersey Gateway Project.</p>   |
|                              | <p>(ii) Local industry and local communities have located and formulated their transport patterns having regard to the freely accessible A533 crossing. The introduction of a charge, even though deferred to 2014 represents a challenge to those local people and businesses either to relocate or reorder their private and business lives or to incur what is in effect a selective tax upon them, but not upon those who do not depend on the availability of a crossing.</p> <p>(iii) The level of charges proposed is punitive to local business and residents who both regularly and frequently use the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Halton Borough Council's published material does not satisfy my Council that adequate exemptions and/or discounts for local business and residents have been considered.</p> | <p>The imposition of charges for the use of the crossing will ensure that those deriving most benefit are also those who fund the improvements to the road network.</p> <p>The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.</p>  |

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| National Alliance Against Tolls | <p>(iv) Relating charges on the Silver Jubilee Bridge to those of the Mersey Tunnels is inappropriate. The relationship between the Wirral Communities and the City of Liverpool and those towns in its hinterland is unlike the relationship between Runcorn and its environs and Widnes and its environs. In scale, function and value, the two locations are dissimilar.</p> <p>(v) It is inappropriate to rely upon the introduction of charges on the Silver Jubilee Bridge to contribute either to the funding of the new bridge or the funding of Halton Borough Council's general revenue account. To do so would represent a selective taxation unfairly imposed on a part of the community.</p> <p>(vi) It is inappropriate to rely upon the introduction of charges on the Silver Jubilee Bridge to act as a deterrent to avoidance of toll charges on the new bridge. There are four reasons for this:</p> <p>(a) Deterrence can be created through traffic management and/or physical carriageway modifications.</p> <p>(b) M6 Thelwall Viaduct provides a free-of-passage alternative.</p> <p>(c) For crossings which have a very localised origin and destination, the new bridge will not itself provide a practicable alternative.</p> <p>(d) There should be available to road users, the sort of choice which is available to those who may according to choice, circumstance or conditions, use either the M6 Toll or the 'old M6' to cross the West Midlands.</p> <p>If charges for the use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge are to be introduced, then there should be a scheme of exemption and/or discount for local residents and for local business in order to reflect their frequent use of the bridge. If discounts are introduced, then they should be substantial.</p> <p><u>Tolling of the existing bridge at Runcorn</u></p> | <p>A sophisticated transport model has been used in order to predict travel choices as a result of the improved accessibility that will be afforded by the Mersey Gateway Project and the effect of tolls. A range of tolls/charges is allowed by the drafting in the proposed TWA Order and the proposed road charging order. This has enabled the Borough Council to identify that toll ranges will be appropriate in the specific circumstances of the Mersey gateway and the Runcorn-Widnes crossing.</p> <p>See comments above.</p> <p>The transport model used by the Mersey Gateway Project team has identified that it is necessary for charges to be imposed upon the SJB in order to achieve the project aims.</p> <p>See comments above.</p> |



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|                    | <p>The tolling of the existing bridge is unprecedented in modern times. It will be the first time since serfdom disappeared in Britain that a toll has been put on a free bridge.</p> <p>The reason for tolling the existing bridge is because the proponents of the planned new crossing realise that otherwise there would be little use made of their new bridge. This reason is admitted at para 5.5. of the "Toll and Road User Charges Explanation" which says - "As the new bridge will be subject to tolls, the Silver Jubilee Bridge must also be subject to tolls. This is because if the new bridge alone were subject to tolls, traffic would be more likely to use the Silver Jubilee Bridge, even if it were reconfigured to take a lower traffic capacity."</p>   | <p>The imposition of road user charges upon bridges is not unprecedented in Britain. In London charges are imposed for the use of Lambeth Bridge, Westminster Bridge, Waterloo Bridge, Blackfriars Bridge, Southwark Bridge and London Bridge. The proposal before the Borough Council is to impose an analogous charge upon the SJB. This is no a toll, per se.</p>   |
|                    | <p>This reason for tolling is without precedent; there is no other toll which has been put in place to protect a tolled alternative. The proposal is the equivalent of proposing say the building of a new school or hospital or park to fill an identified need and then not only charging for the new facility but also putting a charge on the existing school or hospital or park to make sure that the new facility gets some customers.</p> <p>The existing bridge was built between 1958 and 1961 at a total cost of just under £3 million (£2.7 million). This was funded by means of a 75% Ministry of Transport grant with the remaining 25% being met mainly by Cheshire &amp; Lancashire County Councils. Cheshire were responsible for maintenance of the bridge till 1998, when Halton took over. To now put a toll on this bridge is particularly unjust for those living in Cheshire and Lancashire.</p> | <p>The Mersey Gateway Project is would not be delivered but for the imposition of tolls or charges on the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Silver Jubilee Bridge respectively. As such, the use of road user charging powers to ensure the delivery of the project is justified.</p> <p>Those living in Cheshire and Lancashire are not currently responsible for maintenance of the existing SJB. They will not be responsible for the cost of the Mersey gateway Bridge. Neither the County Council of Cheshire nor Lancashire has of objected to the Mersey Gateway Project. Indeed, Cheshire County Council has written in support.</p> |

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|                    | <p>The draft Road User Charging Order lists various purposes for which the "net proceeds" of the tolls may be used including - at Annex 3, 2 (e) - "in making payments to the Council's general fund for the purpose of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of policies relating to public transport in its local Transport plan, or for other purposes; and". [sic]</p> <p>This provision seems to be based on the Mersey Tunnels toll regime which is far from typical. Elsewhere it is normally the case that tolls can only be used for the purposes of paying off any construction cost and maintaining the structure during the period it is to be tolled. In our view this provision seems to be an attempt to get even more money from the already overtaxed drivers and businesses who are crossing the river.</p> <p><u>Disabling of the existing bridge at Runcorn</u></p>  | <p>This provision is derived from (inter alia) the River Tyne (Tunnels) Order 2005. It is not unprecedented and is designed to ensure that the Borough Council can use the proceeds of tolling for measures such as the promotion of the proposed Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy. This power would also enable the use of funds for any discount scheme.</p>  |
|                    | <p>When around the end of 2003 the MTUA was enquiring into crossings, they discovered that the four lanes on the untolled Runcorn bridge were carrying more traffic than the eight tolled lanes of the Mersey Tunnels. A fact that was used to try and counter the Claim that tolls were needed on the Mersey Tunnels because they did not have the capacity to cope with the volume of traffic. Indeed it was suggested that if more capacity was needed for crossing the Mersey, then the most economic way of providing it, was to remove the tolls on the Mersey Tunnels.</p> <p>Tolled crossings have a reduced capacity due to the disruption of the smooth flow of traffic. This disruption is caused by the fanning out and slowing down at the approach to the toll plaza, and in many cases the stopping at the toll barriers, then when traffic is past the toll barriers it has to manoeuvre back into the original number of lanes.</p> | <p>The Mersey Tunnels are remote from the Mersey Gateway Project. The Borough Council has no powers to regulate the Mersey Tunnels. Changes to the Mersey Tunnels would not resolve other issues affecting the Borough of Halton at which the Mersey Gateway Project is aimed.</p> <p>The toll plazas have been designed in accordance with relevant standards. As such, the likelihood of incidents, delays and hold-ups is reduced, as well as in-built capacity to reduce consequential effects upon traffic.</p> |

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|                    | <p>Another factor that means that tolled crossings carry less traffic is that drivers travelling in peak periods usually have little choice of journey or route, but off peak they may decide because of tolls to take a longer route or make a different journey (e.g. to a different shopping centre), the result is that a tolled crossing in off-peak periods is empty compared with an untolled crossing.</p>  | <p>The sophisticated transport model used for the Mersey Gateway Project has considered the effect of the project on the transport network in both peak and off-peak scenarios. These scenarios have been taken into account in providing toll/charge ranges in the proposed orders.</p>   |
|                    | <p><u>Doubt over legality of Tolling the planned bridge at Runcorn</u></p>  |  |
|                    | <p>The tolling of a highway whether the Land is publicly or privately owned is generally against Common Law. There are two minor toll roads that were permitted by Royal Charters (in 1443 and 1669). All other tolls are the result of Acts of Parliament. In nearly every case the Act is a private act that relates to one particular crossing. A possible reason for this procedure is that tolling is contrary to the general practice and the requirement for specific legislation means that MPs can have a say on what happens.</p> <p>In the case of the planned new Runcorn bridge it seems that there is to be no attempt made to get a private act passed, instead two general acts are cited. The draft Order mainly refers to the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. The powers appear to have been used only twice before. One instance was the M6 Toll Road; the other was the Skye bridge. Campaigners against the tolling of the Skye bridge believed that the tolling was illegal, though for various other reasons the tolls were removed at the end of 2004.</p> <p>The preface to the draft order (page 4) says - "An application has been made to the Secretary of State .... for an Order under sections 3 and 5 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 .." The advertisement of the draft Order does not refer at all to the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, it only refers to the Transport and Works Act 1992 and says that application for the Order is being made under Section 3(1)(b).</p> | <p>The primary power for tolling in the case of the proposed River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order is not derived from the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, but from the Provisions of the 1992 Act and, in particular, Section 5(1) and Schedule 1, Paragraph 12, which provides expressly for "<i>The charging of tolls ... and other charges...</i>". A private bill is not necessary.</p> <p>The power to impose tolls under the New Roads and Street Works Act is not used here.</p> <p>The power to impose tolls under the New Roads and Street Works Act is not used here.</p> |

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|                    | <p>So the 1992 Act appears to be crucial for tolling the new Runcorn bridge and according to what the MTUA were told by the DfT in 2006 has been used once before (and once only) in connection with the tolling of a road or crossing, that was for the planned second tunnel across the Tyne. In our view there was no legal basis for using the 1992 Act, though in the case of the Tyne Tunnel this appears not to be crucial as there was specific power for the building and tolling of the second Tunnel in a Private Act - the Tyne Tunnel Act 1998.</p>   | <p>Schedule 1, Paragraph 12 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 is relied upon for the River Tyne (Tunnels) Order 2005.</p>   |
|                    | <p>Though the 1992 Act includes tolling powers it is clearly in respect of railways etc or "matters ancillary" to them - "An Act to provide for the making of orders relating to, or to matters ancillary to, the construction or Operation of railways, tramways, trolley vehicle systems, other guided transport systems and inland waterways, and orders relating to, or to matters ancillary to, works interfering with rights of navigation; to make further provision in relation to railways, tramways, trolley vehicle systems and other guided transport systems; to amend certain enactments relating to harbours; and for connected purposes." (Preface to the Transport and Works Act 1992)</p> <p>If MPs had intended that the 1992 Act powers should also apply to roads or river crossings, then they would have been included in the Act's list of facilities that could be tolled and MPs would have mentioned them in the debates on the bill. In fact there is no mention of tolled roads or river crossings in the Hansard reports on the Bill and in Hansard for 2 December 1991 (column 39) there is this:</p> | <p>The Transport and Works Act 1992 was enacted to address orders relating to, or to matters ancillary to, works interfering with rights of navigation. Section 4 of that Act empowered the Secretary of State to designate the works interfering with rights of navigation. This was done by the Transport and Works (Description of Works Interfering with Navigation) Order 1992. Article 2 of that Order states that "The Secretary of State hereby prescribes works of the following descriptions .... (c) bridge...". That term in turn is defined to include "a viaduct, an aqueduct and a gantry and the abutments of and approaches to a bridge".</p> <p>The Act and its secondary legislation should be construed upon its face. It plainly envisages tolling and bridges are plainly authorised by the terms of the Section 4 order.</p> |
|                    | <p>In our view citing the 1992 Act as the authority for the Order raises doubts over the validity of the Order and it is possible that at some point there will be a legal challenge to the tolling of the new bridge.</p> <p><u>A tolled bridge has less benefits than a tolled one</u></p>   | <p>The possibility of legal challenge is not a material to the consideration of this matter.</p>  |

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|                                 | <p>A new road or crossing brings economic benefits. In the case of a new Mersey Crossing the early research indicated that these benefits would be substantial and that a new crossing could pay for itself in 2 years or less. The research was based on an untolled crossing. It is obvious that a toll will substantially reduce the benefits. Businesses where transport is a key factor will avoid being based in an area where there are tolls. Tourists and shoppers and prospective employees will tend to avoid tolls.</p> <p>The Mersey Crossing is the worst possible case in that not only is the new crossing to be tolled but a free crossing which currently carries more traffic than the Mersey Tunnels is also to be tolled. The overall economic effect is likely to be negative - the lack of a new crossing sets a limit on growth, but tolls on both bridges could be an incentive to actually move away.</p> <p>Liverpool Macroeconomic Research Ltd (linked to Liverpool University) carried out research ("The Economic Impact of a Second Runcom Bridge") which was published in September 1998 and which dealt with the economic benefits of building a new bridge. At 1998 prices, they estimated that the benefit to the Cheshire economy would be up to £210 million a year and to the Merseyside economy a further £70 million a year. This meant that in economic terms, a bridge would pay for itself very very quickly. But the research was on the basis of an untolled bridge. If you not only toll the bridge, but also toll the existing free bridge, the effect on the local economy will be very different.</p> <p>AMION Consulting then carried out another "Economic Impact Assessment", published in July 2003. But again the benefits calculated were on the assumption that the bridge would not be tolled.</p> <p>In April 2004, the Government said that they wanted more information before deciding on a new crossing, part of this was to be the economic effect of tolling. So there was then another report from AMION Consulting - "New Mersey Crossing - Wider Economic Impacts". This was published in January 2005.</p> | <p>A number of business representatives from both large and small business in close proximity to the SJB were interviewed during the social research. Opinion of Project tolling was split between businesses who expressed concern that effects would be severe and those businesses which believed that the New Bridge would be economically advantageous. Effects of tolling were deemed to be greater by survey business representatives in Widnes than Runcorn, due to the requirement of businesses to cross the River more frequently from Widnes. Businesses were also concerned that tolling may decrease the existing labour pool for jobs as individuals would be less willing to pay to access their place of work.</p> <p>AMION report that - even on the Government's narrow assessment methodology - the Mersey gateway Project will by 2030 be job-creating in some of the most disadvantaged wards of Halton and beyond. Using other methodologies AMION predict that the project will lead to broader positive economic impacts in the medium- long term, including those identified in Sir Rod Eddington's transport study and also catalytic regeneration effects.</p> <p>AMION's latest research will be published</p> <p>The vast majority of users of the SJB - and predicted users of the Mersey Gateway crossings - will be private car users. Business users are not solely or even predominantly concerned with HGVs.</p> |
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|                    | <p>This new economic report devoted only 2 pages (61 and 62) to effect of tolling. In our opinion it was a superficial assessment, and was just based on a survey of existing "businesses" in the area. Businesses were asked two questions on tolling.</p> <p>One was- "In your opinion what is an acceptable toll level (each way)?" The answer to this question was not revealed in the report.</p> <p>The other question was "Please consider the following scenario - Staff and business users have to pay £1.30 to cross the River Mersey (at all points). This is an equivalent to the charge currently made for crossing via the tunnels - What effect would you expect this to have on your business?" There were 5 boxes to tick going from "large effect" to "No effect".</p> <p>As the survey was going to businesses, and those most interested would be HGV operators, it is strange that a figure of "£1.30" was quoted for "business users" as the rates for HGVs going through the Mersey Tunnels at that time were up to £5.20 (it is now higher).</p> <p>In any case it appeared that all of the conclusions were based on which box those who returned this survey ticked. There were 239 responses of which 71% said tolling (at the £ 1.30 rate) would have an effect on them. From this it was then somehow deduced that the employment gain for a tolled crossing would still be 40% to 60% of that for an untolled crossing. (In terms of jobs this was said to be 1,700 to 2,500.)</p> <p>The conclusion that a tolled crossing would achieve up to 60% of the gain of an untolled crossing is in our opinion built on thin air, and putting a toll on the existing free bridge is more likely to reduce employment. Though as the existing bridge is also to be disabled so that there is no more overall traffic than now, it is difficult to see how anyone could believe that all this could have anhing other than a significant negative effect on the local economy.</p> |                    |

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|                    | <p>The final conclusion of the January 2005 report said - "Some 6,920 new jobs ... are expected to be generated". Though this appears to actually be the number of new jobs if there are no tolls. Halton Council issued a news release on 11 th January 2005 - "Mersey Gateway would bring benefits to all". Though they were now recommending a tolled bridge, they justified it to the people of Halton by quoting job figures which also appear to be those for an untolled bridge: "The cost of building the bridge is estimated to be £250m ... However some of the benefits will include almost 7000 jobs and an £80m annual increase in GVA, the statistic which measures economic output for the regions of the UK."</p> |  |
|                    | <p>Another feature of these privately financed tolled roads, in Britain and overseas is that there are usually secret "funnelling" clauses. The authorities agree that surrounding roads and road signs will be designed to direct traffic on to the tolled route. The authorities also agree not to do anything to relieve congestion on untolled alternatives. Though in this case it is likely that the Government far from doing anything to improve possible alternative crossings, may be intending to toll them as well.</p>   | <p>A signing strategy will be prepared prior to commencement of operation of the Mersey Gateway. The signing strategy will require the approval of the local planning authority. Therefore it will be a public document, approved having regard only to material planning considerations.</p>            |
|                    | <p>On the 18th November 2004, the Halton Coucil Executive Board considered the question of tolling and what would be recommended to the Government. They were told - "Financial analysis refined during the year indicates that the cost to Government if the new crossing were not tolled would be of the order of £750m". This figure of £750 million for an untolled bridge was repeated in various placfes including a special edition of the Mersey Crossing newsletter of November 2004.</p>  | <p>The important point to note here is that term "<i>cost to Government</i>" (emphasis added), which is greater for the untolled alternative. This is because absent a toll, the entire cost would have to be met from the public purse - by the taxpayer. The absolute cost is essentially similar.</p> |

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|                    | <p>Though the cost of a tolled bridge was apparently £750 million, the cost of a tolled bridge was implied to be a lot lower - a Halton Council news release on the 11 January 2005 said - "The cost of building the bridge is estimated to be £250m but sometimes a figure of £350m is quoted which includes a so-called optimism bias, which is introduced at the request of Government." A later release from the Council - the June 2006 edition of "Inside Halton" - changed the estimated cost of the tolled bridge to £305 million.</p> <p>In our view the impression that has been given that a tolled crossing is cheaper to build than an untolled one is the opposite of reality. Much of the cost would be the same whether tolled or untolled, as the bridge would be designed by consulting engineers and built by contractors possibly as a design and build scheme. The only necessary differences in cost would be that a tolled bridge would be more expensive to build and operate because:</p> |                    |



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|                    | <p>(a) A tolled bridge needs more land to accommodate tolling plazas and the additional lanes as traffic approaches the plaza and then exits the plaza and approaches the bridge.</p> <p>(b) A tolled bridge not only has to meet the cost of constructing the plaza and additional lanes, it also needs tolling equipment, and people to operate and maintain it and to account for the tolls.</p> <p>(c) A tolled bridge has far more "consultants" than an untolled one.</p> <p>(d) The construction of a tolled bridge is delayed by the various legal requirements and the very long time that has to spent in creating a perception through the news media etc that the only choice is tolling. These delays substantially increase the cost. There may be other reasons for the delays apart from the tolling issue, but the MTUA were told in December 2003 by Halton Council that the new bridge "could be open to traffic in 2008." Perhaps if it had been agreed that the bridge would not be tolled, this forecast would have been accurate.</p> <p><u>"Toll and Road User Chargers Explanation"</u></p> <p>Halton Council have issued a document in support of their application which says that - "The purpose of this paper is to explain the mechanism by which the Council would levy tolls and charges under both the proposed Order and the Scheme, including how the level of tolls/charges would be set, and the amount of tolls/charges." We have some comments on this.</p> <p>The document says at para 6 that the tolls "should be roughly the same as those payable for use of the existing Mersey Tunnels, based on today's figures." But then at para 8 sets out a range of tolls which vary from slightly less than the Mersey Tunnels to nearly twice the charge (and in the case of motorbikes which are not tolled on the Mersey Tunnels says that the toll could be as much as £2.50).</p> | <p>A range of tolls/charges is provided which includes the current tolls applicable to the Mersey Tunnels. Some leeway is provided to allow tolls/charges to be set within the relevant bands. It is most likely that tolls/charges will be at or about the same level as the Mersey Tunnels tolls. It is important to realise that this is a <i>power</i> and not a requirement. As such, when it lets the concession to build and operate the Mersey Gateway the Borough Council will look to use that power sparingly and so that the Mersey Gateway performs well against the objectives that have been set for it.</p> |

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|                    | <p>An explanation for this ambiguity as to the level of tolls is given in para 10, which starts - "Ranges are proposed rather than specifying tolls. This is because the Council wishes to preserve flexibility about the amounts of tolls, rather than specifying them now. This will enable it to negotiate with prospective concessionaires so as to achieve the best possible deal for Halton."</p> <p>In our view it is not reasonable to apply for an Order which specifies a range of tolls which for example says that the toll for a small goods vehicle could be anywhere between £2 and £5. Toll Orders invariably specify tolls, not ranges. It is particularly unreasonable that the reason for the range is "to achieve the best possible deal for Halton". Roads are supposed to be a national asset, and it is setting a bad precedent if Halton Council is allowed to set tolls on roads that carry a substantial portion of through traffic on the basis of what best suits its area.</p> | <p>The instruments being promoted are not toll orders, but an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 and a road charging order. What they contain are devices that enable the toll/charge to be determined in future.</p> <p>The adopted highways in Halton, including the SJB are highways for which the Borough of Halton is the local highway authority. They are administered by the Borough Council in accordance with its statutory powers.</p> |

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|                    | <p>The Council gives several sub reasons under para 10 including - "10.2 Traffic levels can be predicted up to a point, but absolute certainty will not be gained until the new bridge opens. There is an optimum toll/charge that is attractive to users, so that they do not use other routes. This will be easier to fine-tune nearer to the opening day."</p> <p>On one side of the new crossing is the Mersey Tunnels which are the third most expensive river crossing in Britain. The Council is living in a fantasy world if it believes that a toll level which is potentially higher than the Mersey Tunnels might be "attractive to users". On the other side are the bridges at Warrington and the Thelwell Viduct which are currently free. Some traffic is bound to divert via those crossings and the higher the charge the more traffic will divert. Unless, that is, the intention of the Government is to toll or disable the remaining free routes, and thus create a virtual Berlin Wall along the line of the Mersey from Liverpool to Manchester.</p> | <p>A sophisticated transport model has been used in order to predict travel choices as a result of the improved accessibility that will be afforded by the Mersey Gateway Project and the effect of tolls. This enables an optimum toll to be identified in due course when costs of the project are known when the concession is entered into.</p> <p>A range of tolls/charges is allowed by the drafting in the proposed TWA Order and the proposed road charging order. This has enabled the Borough Council to identify that toll levels will be appropriate in the specific circumstances of the Mersey Gateway and the Runcorn-Widnes crossing.</p> <p>The transport model has identified the extent to which traffic will divert to alternative routes at toll levels within the bands proposed.</p> |
|                    | <p>The evidence from the traffic on the M6 Toll road is that there is a small core of roads users who have a high price inelasticity and will continue to use a toll road whatever the price is, but that for the vast majority of drivers there is a high price elasticity. The Runcorn tolls will be protected to the West because the operators of the Mersey Tunnels are part of the Mersey Crossing Group and will have a common interest with Halton Council in maintaining as high as possible toll levels. But some drivers will have (unless it is blocked) an escape route to the east, and there is therefore a possibility that the traffic levels will be a lot lower than the numbers currently using the untolled Runcorn bridge.</p>  | <p>It does not follow that the highest possible toll/charge level will be attractive to the Borough Council or the operators of the Mersey Gateway. There is an optimum toll level below which (owing to insufficient income) and above which (owing to diversion) viability is threatened. This level is not necessarily at an identical level to the level of tolls on the Mersey Tunnels.</p>  |

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|                                      | <p>At para 13 the Council proposes that tolls can increase over the 30 year concession at a rate of "one percent above retail price index inflation". This means that at the end of thirty years, even if there had been no movement at all in the RPI, the tolls could be 33% higher. This is unreasonable.</p>  | <p>The ability to increase tolls is a power. It is not a requirement. As explained above, there is an optimum toll/charge level. As a result it may not be advantageous to use the entire potential annual uplift. However, the additional 1% allows a margin to make viability secure without a frequent recourse to a statutory process in order to secure necessary toll/charge increases.</p>   |
| <p>Freight Transport Association</p> | <p>While FTA is therefore opposed to the principle of all direct tolling, it is accepted that in the current climate the new crossing could not be built without the tolls. Further to that, it is appropriate that that the traffic flow across all three crossing points of the river (Mersey Gateway, SJB and Mersey Tunnel) is managed dynamically and that therefore toll levels are applied and managed across all three.</p>   | <p>Officers consider this to be a correct representation of the balance between the need for the Mersey Gateway project and the requirement for tolling/charging. Officers of the Borough Council are consulting officers of Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority, which is responsible for the Mersey Tunnels in relation to toll levels and technical aspects.</p>  |
|                                      | <p>Our members would seek assurances, however, that once the bridge was paid for all tolls would be lifted. This had been the understanding with the construction of the Dartford Crossing, but appears not to have been fulfilled now repayments on the bridge are complete.</p> <p>It appears that the Government continues to support the principle of tolling as a financial lever for influencing travel behaviour. It is essential, in a climate where expansion of road charging is likely, that emerging projects are interoperable. The most significant scheme apparent at the moment is also in the North West: the Greater Manchester congestion charge. Payment methods at all Mersey crossing points must be compatible with other proposals for road charging across the UK. FTA urges all road charging bodies to develop interoperable charging systems.</p> | <p>The Mersey Gateway will be the subject of a concession for its operation with a likely duration in the region of thirty years. For this period tolls/charges are almost certain to remain in place. The approach to the imposition of tolls/charges upon the expiration of the concession will be a matter for those responsible for the Mersey Gateway at that time.</p> <p>The proposed River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order requires compliance with European requirements for interoperability. Also, officers are in liaison with Mersey Tunnels and the DfT in respect of this operational aspect. Ultimately, this is a matter that can be specified in the concession agreement.</p> |

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| Widnes Skip & Reclaim | <p>The power to charge tolls and the tolls road charging scheme will place an additional and unnecessary burden on local businesses and the Objector's business in particular. Even with concessionary rates the frequency of the use of the tolled highways will result in substantially increased transport costs which is likely to affect the Objector's business seriously and adversely.</p> | <p>A number of business representatives from both large and small business in close proximity to the SJB were interviewed during the social research. Opinion of Project tolling was split between businesses who expressed concern that effects would severe and those businesses which believed that the New Bridge would be economically advantageous. Effects of tolling were deemed to be greater by survey business representatives in Widnes than Runcorn, due to the requirement of businesses to cross the River more frequently from Widnes. Businesses were also concerned that tolling may decrease the existing labour pool for jobs as individuals would be less willing to pay to access their place of work.</p> <p>AMION report that - even on the Government's narrow assessment methodology - the Mersey gateway Project will by 2030 be job-creating in some of the most disadvantaged wards of Halton and beyond. Using other methodologies AMION predict that the project will lead to broader positive economic impacts in the medium – long term, including those identified in Sir Rod Eddington's transport study and also catalytic regeneration effects.</p> |
|                       | <p>A request is made for an exemption of the Objector's business and occupiers of its premises and other land served by the same access from tolls on all highways subject to the orders.</p>  | <p>The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.</p>  |

| Name of Constultee         | Representation on Charging   | Officers' Comments   |
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| Harold Prescott & Sons Ltd | <p>The power to charge tolls and the tolls road charging scheme will place an additional and unnecessary burden on local businesses and the Objector's business in particular. Even the concessionary rates the frequency of the use of the tolled highways will result in substantially increased transport costs which is likely to affect the Objector's business seriously and adversely.</p>                                  | <p>A number of business representatives from both large and small business in close proximity to the SJB were interviewed during the social research. Opinion of Project tolling was split between businesses who expressed concern that effects would severe and those businesses which believed that the New Bridge would be economically advantageous. Effects of tolling were deemed to be greater by survey business representatives in Widnes than Runcorn, due to the requirement of businesses to cross the River more frequently from Widnes. Businesses were also concerned that tolling may decrease the existing labour pool for jobs as individuals would be less willing to pay to access their place of work.</p> <p>AMION report that - even on the Government's narrow assessment methodology - the Mersey gateway Project will by 2030 be job-creating in some of the most disadvantaged wards of Halton and beyond. Using other methodologies AMION predict that the project will lead to broader positive economic impacts in the medium – long term, including those identified in Sir Rod Eddington's transport study and also catalytic regeneration effects.</p> |
|                            | <p>Exempt the Objector's business and occupiers of its premises and other land served by the same access from tolls on all highways subject to the orders.</p>   | <p>The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.</p>  |
| Warrington Borough Council | <p>The Council continues to support the Mersey gateway scheme and its associated planning and Transport and Works Act Applications, but expresses concern at the scale of the potential additional traffic which will divert to the two Mersey bridges in Warrington. This support is contingent upon the securing of adequate mitigation measures in Warrington to ensure that the impact of additional traffic is minimised.</p> | <p>Warrington Borough Council's Executive Board considered a lengthy report on the Mersey Gateway Project prepared by its officers. Councillors in Warrington are concerned about the potential for diversion of traffic to crossings of the River Mersey as a result of the imposition of tolls/charges on the SJB and Mersey Gateway Bridge.</p> <p>Whilst officers do not accept that the diversion of traffic via Warrington - to the extent it occurs at all - is material, they are working with officers of Warrington Borough Council in seeking to allay their concerns.</p>  |

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| Arriva             | Toll charges: Any increase in the cost of our operations between Widnes and Runcorn would have to be passed on to our passengers through fare increases. In a lot of areas toll charges are waived for bus operators.  | The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.  |
| Knowsley BC        | This Council understands and supports the need for the imposition of tolling on the Mersey Gateway Bridge to ensure the financial viability of the project, and the reasons behind the proposed tolling of the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge, notwithstanding the use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge is currently free of charge. The Council would however wish to see measures in place to ensure that the tolls are consistent with those operating at the existing Mersey Tunnels, and are at a level that they do not discourage the use of the bridges.   | Officers consider this to be a correct representation of the balance between the need for the Mersey Gateway project and the requirement for tolling/charging. Officers of the Borough Council are consulting officers of Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority, which is responsible for the Mersey Tunnels in relation to toll levels and technical aspects.                   |
| Halton Green Party | Measures taken to reduce traffic over the Silver Jubilee Bridge have been few and half hearted and little imagination has been employed in considering options. Halton Borough Council has not looked at reducing traffic over the bridge except by means of public transport and has admitted the Council could have done more in this respect. The Council could have considered tolling the Silver Jubilee Bridge at peak times, remove signage on the M6 Motorway which directs regional traffic over the Silver Jubilee Bridge, improve public transport including light rail on Britannia Bridge, beef up car share schemes, encourage firms to provide "work at home days" for employees using bridge, etc. | The possibility of imposing charges/tolls on the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) - and other non-engineering approaches - are considered at Chapter 5 of the ES and paragraph 4 of the report that this appendix accompanies. For the reasons stated, the imposition of tolls on the SJB alone is not considered to provide a suitable alternative the Mersey Gateway Project. |

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| Great Sankey Parish Council | <p>The Parish Councillors are concerned that the future tolling of the crossings at Halton will cause a greater amount of traffic to come through Great Sankey, probably the majority being HGV's. This will lead to even greater congestion, longer travelling times, higher pollution and damages to roads caused by HGV's. This is borne out of the stated toll levels and the history coming from the usage of the M6 toll road.</p> <p>When the new crossing was originally envisaged it was not tolled and now it will be because the government will not fund full cost. However the level of diverted traffic through Great Sankey will be contingent on the level of toll charged, and it will increase even further if the higher level of toll is implemented which will bring greater problems to Great Sankey.</p> | <p>The sophisticated traffic model used to predict the effects of the Mersey gateway project, including the effect of tolls/charges has examined the diversion of traffic as a result of the proposals. The project is predicted to result in less congested roads on balance [including in the Great Sankey area?]</p> |
| Sefton BC                   | <p>1. These matters were formally considered by the Cabinet Member Technical Services and Cabinet Member Regeneration at their meeting on 2 June 2008 and 9 June 2008 respectively. Both Cabinet Members resolved:</p> <p>"(i) The legal orders served on the Council to permit the construction and tolling of the proposed Mersey Gateway New Road Bridge Crossing and the tolling of the existing Silver Jubilee Road Bridge Crossing be noted; and</p> <p>(ii) the project continues to be supported as an integral part of promoting regeneration and improving transport access within the Liverpool City Region."</p>  |   |
| Merseytravel                | <p>The Passenger Transport Authority wishes to register its support for Halton Borough Council's proposed A533 Silver Jubilee Road User Charging Scheme Order to authorise the imposition of charges for use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge ("the RUC scheme").</p>   |   |



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| Broadthorn         | <p>The Order seeks to authorise...the authorising of a system of tolling the new bridge underpinned by a power to make and enforce byelaws (article 38), charge tolls (article 39 and Schedule 11), and enforce penalties (article 44 and Schedule 12); and the establishment of a power conferred upon the Lord Chancellor to appoint a charging adjudicator to determine disputes relating to the removal or immobilisation of vehicles under Part 1 of Schedule 12 to the Proposed Order. The Secretary of State does not have sufficient authority under the 1992 Act to authorise the incorporation of these powers into the proposed Order.</p> <p>In establishing the proposed tolling regime the provisions in Schedule 2 seek to confer extensive powers without geographic limitations to examine, enter, seize, immobilise, remove vehicles in connection with the operation of the tolling system which relates to the use of the surface of the bridge for road traffic.</p> | <p>The representation relates to the legal authority for the proposed River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order, rather than the road charging order. However, the Borough Council has received legal advice from its external legal advisers that the representation is not correct in this regard.</p>   |
| Gussion            | <p>The Council claims that the road user charging order will "assist the delivery of the scheme by providing for the imposition of charges for the use of the A533 Jubilee Bridge by vehicles". No financial data has been supplied as to what extent the imposition of charges will enable and assist the delivery of the project within funding limits. Furthermore, no research has been provided to demonstrate what effect the imposition of charges will have on the use of the bridge and thereby the revenue raised.</p>  | <p>The transport model used by the Mersey Gateway Project team has identified that it is necessary for charges to be imposed upon the SJB in order to achieve the project aims. This is because without the imposition of charges sufficient traffic diversion to the Mersey Gateway Bridge would not occur to relieve the congestion on the SJB to allow it to be re-designated as a local crossing.</p> |
| Paul Cooke         | <p>Toll Formula Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has a formula been set for calculating the Toll Charges?</li> </ol>   | <p>The proposed road charging order and the River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order each provide mechanisms for charges/tolls to be set within certain bands. However, the exact toll level will be set when the concession for the construction and operation of the Mersey Gateway is let.</p>   |

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|                    | 2. If so how are the capital and maintenance of both bridges included?  | Estimated assessments of such costs have been made of such sums. However, these items will be for prospective concessionaires to assess. The estimated assessments have been considered in determining the toll ranges.  |
|                    | 3. Will the two Bridges charging mechanisms form part of the one formula?<br>4. What is the profit margin for the concessionaire?<br>5. Will the formula be fixed by RPI plus 1% alone?<br><br>6. Have comparisons been made with the estimated Mersey Tunnel future Toll costs?<br><br>7. What procurement strategy is proposed?<br><br>9. Has a risk assessment been carried out on the Toll Formula, especially with respect to revenue stream variations? | The two bridges will have slightly different mechanisms designed to produce the same charge/toll. This is because the legal method of charging/tolling is different for each crossing. This cannot be known until the concessionaire is appointed. The RPI plus 1% mechanism gives a power to raise tolls/charges. It may be that tolls/charges are raised to levels less than the amount that such a mechanism allows. Furthermore, the Transport Act 2000 allows a different charge to be set on the SJB, and the proposed River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order, both contain mechanisms to enable further increases to be secured in more limited circumstances. The charge/toll ranges are centred on current Mersey Tunnel tolls. It has been assumed that the Mersey Tunnel tolls will rise more-or-less in line with inflation. The Borough Council has consulted Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority, which is responsible for the Mersey Tunnels, and has not been informed of any extraordinary expenditure that would require a reappraisal of such levels. It is currently proposed that a Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) concession will be let. Both optimistic and pessimistic growth scenarios have been modelled, as well as a central, most likely case. |
| Peter Cranie       | This proposal will still have a detrimental effect on Climate Change and local pollution. There has been insufficient consideration or a sustainable plan based on a road charging plan being implemented now for the Silver Jubilee bridge.  | The possibility of imposing charges/tolls on the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) is considered at Chapter 5 of the ES and paragraph 4 of the report that this appendix accompanies. For the reasons stated, the imposition of tolls on the SJB alone is not considered to provide a suitable alternative the Mersey Gateway Project.  |

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| D W Edwards        | <p>If there is a requirement to encourage through traffic to use an alternative route, then exact a high charge on this traffic. However, for residents I see no difficulty in supplying free passes or finding other ways to discourage through traffic from using the Bridge.</p> <p>I know Halton Council can find endless schemes to use funds raised from charging, but this is not and should not be the point. The point is, this Bridge provides a link between Runcorn and Widnes, a FREE link, which has enabled the two towns to join forces financially, and become a single Borough.</p> | <p>The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.</p>  |
|                    | <p>A little common sense should have made it clear what a mistake charging is, but here again in the rush for prestige, Halton Council have forgotten the residents themselves.</p> <p>Let's consider a few examples: Small businesses servicing the needs of people in the Borough. Charges incurred will be</p>   | <p>The environmental statement (ES) that accompanies the applications for the Mersey Gateway Project considered the social effects of tolling. This is reported at 20.7.19-20.7.22 of the Environmental Statement. Tolling research undertaken in 2004 highlighted that tolling has the potential to cause severance of communities on either side of the River.</p> |

| Name of Constultee | Representation on Charging   | Officers' Comments   |
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|                    | <p>passed on to the customer if Tolls are introduced. This will reduce their competitiveness, and may force them to close.</p> <p>Shopping<br/>Widnes people will find it cheaper to shop in Warrington than Runcorn, and Runcorn people will find it cheaper to shop in Warrington than Widnes. Less trade for our own shops.</p> <p>Amenities<br/>All the amenities paid for by Halton residents taxes now cost them more to visit, if they are on the other side of the river. These are only a few examples but Halton Council seems to have completely ignored the needs of its own people. Halton Council was formed with the purpose of enabling funds to provide amenities for the people of Runcom and Widnes. The proposal to charge residents would divide the Borough back into two distinct Towns, each with their own needs. I therefore see Halton Council as becoming defunct, with no purpose except to battle over whether funds should be spent in Widnes or Runcorn.</p> | <p>Respondents noted that they may choose to reduce cross river trips for social, leisure and shopping purposes and look for other alternatives which did not involve paying tolls. Individuals noted that they were unlikely to be as spontaneous in undertaking social trips to visit friends and families if tolls were implemented. The ES also considers the effect of the project upon health-disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>A Sustainable Transport Strategy is currently being prepared for the Borough. This strategy aims is designed to work alongside the Mersey Gateway Project and to promote an integrated transport system for Halton by improving bus services and opportunities for walking and cycling. Provision of improved facilities will reduce the reliance of local residents on private vehicles, where possible. Improved public transport facilities, footpaths and cycleways will therefore provide local residents with another option of crossing the River, which does not involve paying the toll.</p> <p>As a result of the impacts of the project this effect is assessed as either not significant or of low negative significance, although at the time of writing the ES the full detail of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy had not been published. In light of the benefits of the project it is considered that with the Mersey gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy in place the disbenefits are outweighed.</p> |
| D Hatchard         | I don't agree with tolling because not many people will be able to afford to cross the river to go to work, for example.   | See comments above.  |

| Name of Constultee | Representation on Charging  | Officers' Comments  |
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| Paul Fry           | <p>I am writing to you to strongly object to any charging regime that maybe imposed on Mersey Bridge crossings especially the Silver Jubilee Bridge. I believe the political environment within which the proposals were constructed, has evaporated under the pressure of increased tax burdens. Indeed, projected costs upon ordinary citizens and business for the next decade predict that such implementation will severely damage the economic health of the region. In layman's terms the post enactment years will see the mutilation of Widnes and Runcorn's economic engine. Hard business decisions will force companies to relocate elsewhere to avoid the additional burdens of Toll Road Tax policies which, eat into profitability through increased transport costs, wage inflationary pressures and service costs.</p> <p><b>Why would business in this area choose to carry these extra taxes when UK and worldwide competitors do not ...?</b> Remember, only 0.25% of current Road Tax revenue is ever spent on the roads infrastructure, whilst scurrilous banks located in the heartland's of the present Labour Party receive £100 billion to support unethical trading policies.</p> <p>The politicians, bureaucrats and decision-makers need to wake up to the unfolding realities of the 21st century. Vehicle fuel</p> | <p>A number of business representatives from both large and small business in close proximity to the SJB were interviewed during the social research. Opinion of Project tolling was split between businesses who expressed concern that effects would severe and those businesses which believed that the New Bridge would be economically advantageous. Effects of tolling were deemed to be greater by survey business representatives in Widnes than Runcorn, due to the requirement of businesses to cross the River more frequently from Widnes. Businesses were also concerned that tolling may decrease the existing labour pool for jobs as individuals would be less willing to pay to access their place of work.</p> <p>However, the project allows the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration strategy. With the catalytic effects predicted by AMION consulting produced by the new Mersey Gateway Bridge, the adverse effects on businesses of the toll/charge is outweighed in the view of officers.</p> <p>Council by its financial advisers, KPMG alongside other professional advisers who provide other information such as likely traffic levels.</p> |

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| <p>costs will continue to rise mercilessly, household energy costs will endure a similar profile and are predicted to rise 40% this year alone, announced Road Tax hikes are due to be applied retrospectively, crippling UK levels of personal debt have been recorded, qualitative forecasts of growth in negative equity and house repossessions are gathering pace, post code rationing of NHS care and the full ramifications of the 'Credit Crunch' will empower people across diverse social economic groups to reject this sort of discriminatory ideology. This region could be plunged into long term and bitter confrontation leading to regular transportation and economic paralysis. Under the bridge charging proposals the working poor and those on low incomes would shoulder the greatest burden while the rich continue to travel unhindered, relatives of those who are sick and dying would face further punishment on top of questionable hospital car parking charges, tax payers would see money earmarked for health service provision squandered on ambulance travel charges whilst patients are regularly denied life saving drugs through a lack of funding (see attached Item 1). It is my assertion that similar public funding underpinning the fire brigade would also be diverted back to the government's coffers.</p> <p>However, nowhere throughout this so called congestion reduction policy, have I witnessed any linking of this bridge tax with public transport improvements, whether that is in hard cash financial proposals through structural investment or detailed analysis to identify and reverse 30 years of public transport fragmentation. It's this lack of any visible or meaningful presence within this congestion reduction policy that finally nails this charging scheme as no more than a revenue earning scam ....!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those hard pressed local politicians and bureaucrats currently being bullied into accepting toll bridges the thoroughness of the Freedom of Information Act will eternally link their households to their ultimate economic betrayal. Their hands will be soiled with the destruction of this region and no amount of washing will remove the stain.</li> </ul> | <p>The basis of assessment takes account of optimistic and pessimistic growth scenarios, including the likely behaviour of the national economy over a 30-year concession period. In light of the advice they have received, officers consider the project to be viable.</p> <p>The environmental statement (ES) that accompanies the applications for the Mersey Gateway Project considered the social effects of tolling. This is reported at 20.7.19-20.7.22 of the Environmental Statement. Tolling research undertaken in 2004 highlighted that tolling has the potential to cause severance of communities on either side of the River. Respondents noted that they may choose to reduce cross river trips for social, leisure and shopping purposes and look for other alternatives which did not involve paying tolls. Individuals noted that they were unlikely to be as spontaneous in undertaking social trips to visit friends and families if tolls were implemented. The ES also considers the effect of the project upon health-disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>A Sustainable Transport Strategy is currently being prepared for the Borough. This strategy aims is designed to work alongside the Mersey Gateway Project and to promote an integrated transport system for Halton by improving bus services and opportunities for walking and cycling. Provision of improved facilities will reduce the reliance of local residents on private vehicles, where possible. Improved public transport facilities, footpaths and cycleways will therefore provide local residents with another option of crossing the River, which does not involve paying the toll.</p> <p>As a result of the impacts of the project this effect is assessed as either not significant or of low negative significance, although at the time of writing the ES the full detail of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy had not been published. In light of the benefits of the project it is considered that with the Mersey gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy in place the disbenefits are outweighed.</p> |
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A pragmatic view would be that if the government wants sustained national economic growth but will not pay for a revived transport infrastructure, then the regional mandarins should hold their nerve and refuse to have it built. For 30 years my family have watched the wholesale degeneration of cross Mersey public transport links even to the point where Liverpool University graduates, awarded a living at home loan etc, have been unable to sustain their courses without either purchasing a car or moving into college accommodation. Given the current and foreseeable tightening of household finances, hard working families in this area want a demonstrable return to reliable integrated transport systems as a matter of priority. No matter how well intentioned, draconian tax raising measures will only inflame the situation, particularly as the South East leisurely travel through the Dartford Tunnel for 20p per time (see attached Item 2). I object to the proposals to charge on any Mersey Bridge crossing on the grounds of:

- Local companies will face another unnecessary tax burden disproportionately applied.
- Poor working families will be subjected to medieval tax regimes for attempting to go to work without credible alternatives.
- These proposals contain no serious plans for the rejuvenation of the public transport infrastructure and are woefully inadequate.
- Excessive transportation taxes will impact upon all sections of this society, driving up local costs while rendering the region as uneconomic and business adverse.
- Cash starved services such as NHS and Fire Brigade will be further constrained as public funding is sucked out to pay the government or private capital investors.
- 2010 will witness massive increases in vehicle Road Tax charges, yet only 0.25% of current revenue is ever spent on the road infrastructure.

NHS strategy on centres of excellence spread throughout the region ensures that patients and their dependants will pay punitive 'Gateway' charges.



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| Helene Wenham   | I wish to object strongly to the proposed tolls for the old bridge. My family all work in the Widnes area so there will be a significant financial impact which is totally unacceptable.   | Reference is made to the comments above on the subject of severance caused by the proposed imposition of tolls and charges along with the positive proposals to introduce the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy. |
| J Wenham        | I do not think the second bridge will be good value for money ... especially as it is the local residents who will have to pay for most of it. So I don't accept that it will bring regeneration to the borough because workers and businesses will have to pay tolls on top of increasing petrol prices.  | Reference is made to the comments above on the subject of severance caused by the proposed imposition of tolls and charges along with the positive proposals to introduce the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy. |
| Michael Gelling | <p>Why should we who live in Halton have to pay for moving around Halton. Some of us in the community have worked tirelessly to bring the communities split by the Mersey together and celebrate the Halton Community. This has been very hard work when you consider that Widnes used to be in Lancashire and Runcorn was always in Cheshire. The toll will, at a stoke, set this process back nearly forty years.</p> <p>Halton has some of the most socially deprived areas in the country and we are now expecting those same people to find more money to access services which maybe on one side of the river or the other. There have been statements by politicians who say that the toll will be reduced for local people and businesses but the same was said about the Mersey Tunnels. A politician's promise is not worth the vote you give it. Nearly all the major events this Council puts on are held in the Stadium in Widnes and those of us in Runcorn must cross the bridge if we wish to be involved in our community i.e. local election counts to name but one.</p> | Reference is made to the comments above on the subject of severance caused by the proposed imposition of tolls and charges along with the positive proposals to introduce the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy. |

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| <p>P A Thompson</p>   | <p>The business proposal in how to maintain the two crossing's financially is flawed in itself. If, on the one hand the council say that charging to use the crossing will be a deferent to a lot of road users then this would impact on the money generated to go towards the up-keep of the two crossings. Where then does this shortfall In income come from? Will It be from the pockets of the local community in increased taxes? This should surely be a major part of any consultation process. Does this also mean there is a possibility the local community will be paying both to cross the bridge as well as subsidising it through local taxation?</p> <p>The continued rhetoric that the bridge will boost our ailing economy is mis-leading and mis-guided as the vast majority of the heavy goods traffic will be passing through to onward destinations which do not have a bearing on our economy either directly or in-directly. Charging for the local community to cross either bridge will have an adverse effect on the local economy with people preferring to travel away from Halton so as not to use either crossing.</p> | <p>The traffic model used by the Mersey Gateway Project indicates that notwithstanding a slightly lower use of the Mersey Gateway crossings in the opening years as a result of tolls/charges they project is viable and will achieve its project aims.</p> <p>Any early shortfall in revenue would have to be financed by a concessionaire from borrowing - there should be no recourse to the Borough Council or other public funds. The Borough Council expects this risk to be assumed by the private sector concessionaire.</p> <p>Reference is made to the comments above on the subject of severance caused by the proposed imposition of tolls and charges along with the positive proposals to introduce the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.</p> <p>The SJB already functions as an inter-regional and intra-regional route. The Borough of Halton and its residents are subject to the detrimental effects of such traffic. The Mersey Gateway project provides an opportunity for the quality of the environment in the borough to be improved, quite apart from predicted transport benefits.</p> |
| <p>Mrs S M Spruce</p> | <p>I understand that booths will be constructed to collect tolls from all motorists using both the existing Silver Jubilee bridge and the new proposed crossing. Monies generated I am told will be essential to cover primarily financing costs. The implications will be enormous for people living locally. Furthermore, residents of Sutton Weaver live just outside the boundary of the Borough of Halton. At this stage it is unclear whether they will benefit from any discounted rates which may be awarded to people living in the Borough itself.</p>   | <p>The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.</p>  |

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| <p>Cllr Graham P Stubbs,<br/>Sutton Weaver</p> | <p>If bridge users are to be tolled much hardship will be caused to individuals and businesses alike, I have vehicles making twenty trips a day over the Runcorn Bridge to get to work and to carry out our business we are not a bottomless pit and tolls would stop us trading in Runcorn from our Widnes site this may have an effect on our thirty three strong workforce.</p> | <p>A number of business representatives from both large and small business in close proximity to the SJB were interviewed during the social research. Opinion of Project tolling was split between businesses who expressed concern that effects would severe and those businesses which believed that the New Bridge would be economically advantageous. Effects of tolling were deemed to be greater by survey business representatives in Widnes than Runcorn, due to the requirement of businesses to cross the River more frequently from Widnes. Businesses were also concerned that tolling may decrease the existing labour pool for jobs as individuals would be less willing to pay to access their place of work.</p> <p>However, the project allows the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration strategy. With the catalytic effects predicted by AMION consulting produced by the new Mersey Gateway Bridge, the adverse effects on businesses of the toll/charge is outweighed in the view of officers.</p> |
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| <p>Miss A K Woolley</p> | <p><b>OBJECTION - Toll charges for local residents (Council Tax Payers) of the Borough of Halton</b></p> <p>I write in respect of the above. I do not object to the building of the new bridge, I do however object <b>strongly</b> to local residents having to pay tolls to cross either the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge, or the proposed new "Mersey Gateways" bridge.</p> <p>The borough of Halton comprises 2 towns, Widnes and Runcorn. Since the local Unitary Authority came to power in 1998, the Council and its Councillors have continuously stressed to the people of these towns that we live in one "Halton". I myself am from Widnes. But live in Runcorn. My parent's families were from both sides of the River. (Widnes &amp; Runcorn.) I feel personally that I have embraced the Local Authority philosophy that we are "one Halton" and spend equal amounts of time in both towns. I pay my Council Tax to Halton Borough Council, who use that revenue in both towns.</p> <p>I therefore find it incredible that the local authority intends to further charge its residents (&amp; Council Tax payers) to use roads (the current &amp; proposed bridges) within the borough. The Leader of the Council was quoted on Teletext declaring what benefits the new bridge will bring to the Regional Economy. So the local residents are to pay to improve the Regional Economy? I didn't realise that was down to us.</p> | <p>Reference is made to the comments above on the subject of severance caused by the proposed imposition of tolls and charges along with the positive proposals to introduce the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.</p> |
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The figures stated show an approximate price of between £1.00 and £2.50 for a "motor vehicle with 4 wheels". Are local residents seriously expected to pay between £1.00 and £2.50 every time they want to travel across their own borough?

I think it is totally disgusting. The Local Authority should set up a scheme whereby local residents can apply for a Free Pass that allows them to travel freely across the borough (and NOT to pay tolls). Passes could be sent out with Council Tax bills, as long as residents give details of vehicle registrations there is little room for misuse within the system.

I implore you to take this matter seriously and to order the local authority of HALTON Borough Council to implement such a scheme and to place an order that Council Tax payers of the Borough of Halton cannot be charged tolls to travel in their own borough. We pay Council Tax and Road Tax already.

The Borough Council is yet to determine the extent or nature of any discount or exemption scheme for the Mersey Gateway. This will be a consideration at the time that the concession for the Mersey Gateway Project is let and will have regard to these questions.