Statement of Reasons by Bruce Crawford MSP

In relation to my draft proposal for a Bill to abolish the Tay Bridge and Forth Road Bridge Tolls, I do not consider that consultation on the draft is required for the following reasons:

The Forth and Tay Road Bridges are now the only remaining road bridges in Scotland where a toll is collected. Toll bridges have been the subject of a major Government review. As a consequence, I am persuaded that there has been adequate opportunity for key stakeholders and the public to consider the issues relating to my proposal. I also consider that the arguments for and against my proposal have been fully explored within this review. The following paragraphs outline the progress of the Scottish Executives Review.

The Scottish Executive’s Transport White Paper published on 16 June 2004 outlined the approach for the review of existing bridge tolls in Scotland. This major review was conducted in two stages. Phase One of the review focused on the tolling regimes on the Forth, Tay, Erskine and Skye road bridges. The review examined environmental, economic and accessibility issues as well as traffic trends and alternative tolling regimes. The Phase One consultation began in July 2004 and a report was published in December 2004 “Tolled Bridges Review: Phase One Report”. This led to the removal of tolls from the Skye Bridge from 21 December 2004.

The Phase Two consultation began in April 2005. The resulting report, “Tolled Bridges Report – Phase Two Report” was published in March 2006. It considered the broader operational and management issues associated with each toll bridge in Scotland. This posed twenty questions organised around two central themes – i) factors to be considered when setting tolling levels, and ii) future management arrangements for the tolled bridges. The Minister for Transport reported the findings of that major consultation to Parliament on 1 March 2006. On 31 March 2006, the tolls were removed from the Erskine Bridge. Further information on the consultation/review is detailed in the Annex.

As can be seen, a full and extensive consultation was carried out to UK governmental standards and therefore I contend that a further consultation would provide no more relevant information than that already collected by the Scottish Executive. I believe that there is ample published information to help test, develop and refine my proposal.

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I therefore request the Committee to consider this statement of reasons and confirm that it is satisfied with the reasons for not consulting on the draft proposal.
Annex

**Phase One Review**

The Phase One Review was undertaken by Scottish Executive officials, in consultation with bridge experts and local authority officials associated with each tolled bridge, as well as a number of interest groups.

**There was no clear consensus amongst consultees’ responses on the future of tolled bridges**: some respondents felt all tolls should be removed; some felt tolls should only be levied until construction costs had been repaid; others felt the tolls should be continued or increased, to pay for maintenance, and address congestion and growing traffic trends.

**Terms of Reference**

The following Terms of Reference were determined for Phase One of the Tolled Bridges Review, each of which is addressed in a separate section of this report:

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis and develop a consultation process for both Phases of the review;
- A summary of existing toll regimes, identifying the history of each toll regime, financial performance and projected costs for future operations and maintenance;
- Modelling of the past, current, and future trends of traffic levels, differentiated by time of day/day of week/season (including identification of future developments that may impact on traffic levels);
- An analysis of the implications of removing the tolls; reducing the tolls; maintaining the status quo; increasing the tolls; differential toll by time of day, car occupancy, vehicle class etc;
- Identification of any significant environmental and economic issues (particularly pollution and congestion), that link to the tolls;
- Outline how options for changes to existing toll regimes may impact on Ministerial environmental and economic objectives and commitment to improve access for rural communities;
- Summary of the main policy, financial and legal implications of making any change to the tolling regime;
- Scope and project plan for Phase Two of the review to cover broader issues relating to management, operation and maintenance of tolled bridges and wider consultation.

The largely factual and technical focus of Phase One of the Review involved a targeted consultation of three groups of stakeholders:

- Members of the Scottish Parliament
- Bridge and Local Authority Transport Officials
- A number of individuals/organisations with an interest in one or more of the tolled bridges (Appendix 1)
Consultation

On 2 July 2004 the Minister for Transport wrote to all Phase One consultees inviting their participation in the Review and seeking their comments on Phase One: 129 letters were issued to MSPs with 4 responses; 18 letters were issued to Bridge and Local Authority Transport Officials with 18 responses; 21 letters were issued to organisations with an interest in the tolled bridges with 10 responses. 35 written responses were received in total, including 3 from private individuals.

In addition, Executive officials met with tolled bridges and local authority transport officials associated with each bridge. Executive officials also met with Mobility Access Committee Scotland (MACS) in its role as the Executive’s advisers on the interests of disabled people in the formulation of transport policies.

Phase Two Review

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for Phase Two were developed from the findings and issues emerging from Phase One and focussed on wider bridge management issues

Management Structures and Objectives

Review existing management structures to ensure that arrangements complement the development of regional transport partnerships (RTPs) and the national transport agency, and are responsive to the requirements of future transport priorities.

Consider whether the powers of the management body for each tolled bridge should cover investment in local transport infrastructure, including support for public transport and encouragement of modal shift from private cars.

Statement of Scottish Tolling/Charging Principles and Objectives

Consider whether there is a case for applying a consistent set of principles on every tolled bridge in Scotland, and if so, what these principles might be. Issues to be considered will include:

- Vehicle classification types.
- Exemptions for disabled drivers, emergency services vehicles and breakdown vehicles.
- Exemptions or reduced tolls for public transport/high occupancy vehicles
- Whether toll levels should have a direct relationship to the level of wear and tear caused by different vehicle types.
- The use or otherwise of discount schemes.
- Procedures for adjusting Tolls or Charges
Consider whether there is a need to amend the legislative and procedural arrangements for changing tolling or charging levels and periods, in a way that is transparent, flexible, justifiable, and responsive to changing circumstances.

**Maintenance Provision**

Review operational and funding arrangements to ensure that adequate provision is made for future maintenance and upgrading requirements.

**Technological Developments**

Review developments in modernising tolling operations on Scottish tolled bridges and the need to progress towards compatibility and interoperability with local and national road pricing schemes. This will take account of policy and legislative developments in the European Union (EU), in particular the draft European Directives on interoperability of infrastructure charging.

**Bridge Specific Issues to be Considered in Phase Two**

Forth Road Bridge - consider proposals to achieve a significant shift from single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) to multiple occupancy vehicles (MOVs) through such tolling structures and arrangements as differential tolling and discount schemes designed to benefit MOVs.

Tay Road Bridge - consider how future tolling arrangements could help tackle congestion and air quality issues affecting Dundee city centre, including a review of proposals by Tay Road Bridge Joint Board (TRBJB) to re-locate the toll booths at the southern end of the bridge.

**Consultation**

The consultation period began on 15th April 2005 and ended on 8 July 2005, with 63 written responses received. A list of Consultees / respondents to Phase Two is contained in Appendix 2.
Appendix 1

All MSPs
Scottish Environment Protection Agency Head Office
The AA
RAC Foundation for Motoring Ltd
CBI Scotland
Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Federation of Small Businesses
The Road Haulage Association Ltd
Freight Transport Association Scotland and Northern Ireland
British Motorcycle Federation
The Erskine Hospital
Confederation of Passenger Transport
SKAT Campaign
Old Schoolyard
Transport 2000
Scottish Environment Link
The Transport Research Institute
Forth Ports Plc
MACS
SPOKES
TRANSform Scotland
Scottish Association for Public Transport
Skye Bridge Ltd
East Dunbartonshire Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
Glasgow City Council
Renfrewshire Council
APCOA Parking (UK) Ltd
Amey Highways
City of Edinburgh Council
Fife Council
Perth and Kinross Council
West Lothian Council
Forth Estuary Transport Authority
Forth Road Bridge management
Angus Council
Dundee City Council
Fife Council
Tay Road Bridge Joint Board
Tay Road Bridge management
Appendix 2

Consultees / respondents to Phase 2

All Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs)
Amey Highways
Angus & City of Dundee Tourist Board
Angus Council
APCOA Parking (UK) Ltd
Argyll & Bute Council
Argyll, The Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling & Trossachs
Association of Car Fleet Operators
Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS)
Association of Commuter Transport
Association of Road Traffic Safety and Management
Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
Automobile Association (AA)
Bear Scotland Ltd
British International Freight Association
British Motorcycle Federation
British Roads Federation
British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association
CBI (Scotland)
Centre for Scottish Public Policy
Centre for Transport Policy
CFOA (S) Intervention Business Stream
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
City of Edinburgh Council
Clackmannanshire Council
Clydeport Operations Ltd
Commission for Integrated Transport
Communities Scotland
Confederation of Passenger Transport (UK)
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
Cycling Scotland
Department for Transport
Disability Rights Commission
Disabled Drivers Association
Disabled Motorists Association
Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce
Dundee and Tayside Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Dundee City Council
Edinburgh & Lothians Tourist Board
Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
Erskine Hospital
Faber Maunsell
Falkirk Council
Federation of Small Businesses
Fife Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Limited
Fife Council
Fife Fire and Rescue Service
Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA)
Forth Ports PLC
Freight Transport Association
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
Glasgow City Council
Greater Glasgow & Clyde Valley Tourist Board
Greenock Chamber of Commerce
Institute of Highways and Transportation
Institution of Civil Engineers
Institution of Highways & Transportation
Inverclyde Council
Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Midlothian Council
Mobility Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland
MVA Ltd
NESTRANS
NHS Argyll & Clyde Board
NHS Fife Board
NHS Greater Glasgow Board
NHS Lothian Board
NHS Tayside Board
Perth & Kinross Council
Perthshire Chamber of Commerce
Perthshire Tourist Board
RAC plc
Renfrewshire Council
Road Haulage Association
Royal National Lifeboat Institution
Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance
Scottish Ambulance Service
Scottish Association for Public Transport
Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Scottish Trades Union Congress
Scottish Transport Studies Group
SESTRAN
Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland
SPOKES
Spokes Lothian UK
Stirling Council
Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive (SPTA)
SUSTRANS
Tay Road Bridge Joint Board
Tayside Fire Brigade
TRANSform Scotland
Transport Initiatives Edinburgh (TIE)
Transport Planning Society
Transport Research Institute
TRL Scotland
VisitScotland
WEBS
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Lothian Council
WESTRANS

5.4 Additional Respondents

Civil Engineering Contractors Association
Councillor Jane Ann Liston, Fife Council
The Liberal Democrat Councillors in the East Area of Fife
Napier University School of Management
National Alliance Against Tolls (Scotland)
RAC Foundation
Scottish Council for Development and Industry
Stagecoach

Individuals:
Ronald Beasley
Steven Beaton
Gerald Cooper
Lyndsey Craik
Lynda Dobinson
Gilbert Forbes
Martin Gallagher
Alistair Graham
Peter Handley
R. Heyworth
Donald MacKintosh
Elizabeth McKerrall
Paul Maitland
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