

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

PART 1 - Information about you

Name	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
Address	LEP Secretariat Essex County Council County Hall Chelmsford Essex
Postcode	CM1 1LX
email	LEP@essex.gov.uk
Company Name or Organisation (if applicable)	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Please tick one box from the list below that best describes you /your company or organisation.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small to Medium Enterprise (up to 50 employees)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Large Company
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Representative Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Union
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interest Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Police
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of the public
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe):
<p>If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or interest group how many members do you have and how did you obtain the views of your members:</p> <p>The SELEP Full Board consists of 44 members (19 businesses, 19 Local Authority representatives, 3 HE and 3FE representatives) who are responsible for setting the LEP's strategy and priorities.</p> <p>All members were invited to provide comments. Following this a consensus approach was used to identify the key points raised.</p>	

If you would like your response or personal details to be treated **confidentially** please explain why:

PART 2 - Your Comments

1. Do you agree or disagree with the approach of increasing the charges for cash payments for all categories of vehicle by broadly equivalent rates?	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:</p> <p>The LEP is of the view that the toll booths and existing charging should be removed as soon as possible. However, the LEP is mindful of the fact that that the DfT is unlikely to implement this.</p> <p>If a charging regime is to be retained at the Crossing then it should operate free-flow charging. However, the LEP considers that free-flow charging must be introduced much sooner than the “end of 2013” as proposed.</p> <p>In addition, the LEP is concerned that the DfT has not provided information on how the current revenue income is used, which appears to be more than adequate to provide the early introduction of improvements at the Crossing such as Free-Flow Charging.</p> <p>The LEP is concerned about the proposed level of increase and considers this to be excessive and unfair on all drivers and businesses who are already being hit hard by the recession. In addition, the proposed increased charges are likely to hamper the delivery of regeneration within the LEP area unless the discount regime is extended to include additional Boroughs and businesses.</p> <p>The LEP is of the opinion that the impact upon businesses has not been adequately explored.</p> <p>The LEP considers that a case for an increase in charging has not been adequately demonstrated and details are somewhat vague on the use of the existing income and the additional income likely to result from raising the charges. Precise details need to be provided on how the revenue stream will be used to provide adequate crossing capacity in the short term and in the future.</p>		

2. Do you agree or disagree that current rates of discount should continue to apply for Dart-Tag account holders?	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree ✓
<p>Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:</p> <p>The LEP would recommend that Dart-Tag use should be further encouraged with immediate effect with the provision of greater discounts.</p>		

3. Do you agree or disagree with the approach of introducing changes in 2011 and 2012?	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree ✓
<p>Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:</p> <p>Firstly, the LEP recommends that charges be removed from the crossing and not be increased.</p> <p>However, If charges are to be increased then the LEP considers this should not happen until free-flow charging is in place.</p> <p>To reduce confusion and the added burden upon business management, especially to freight/haulage operators, any increase should be introduced in one stage rather than two.</p>		

4. Do you have specific comments on the draft Order (at Appendix B)?	YES ✓	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:</p> <p>The Draft Order should be amended to incorporate the LEP's recommendations set out in this document.</p>		

5. Do you agree or disagree that the current terms of the Local Residents Discount Scheme should remain unchanged?	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree ✓
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Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:

The LEP is keen to see discounts continuing but recommends that the geographical area be extended to include other Boroughs and also include businesses.

6. Do you agree or disagree that other details of the charging regime (i.e. times of operation, vehicle categories and exemptions) should remain the same?	Agree ✓	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:

The views of the LEP, on the principle of charging, is clearly set out above. Notwithstanding this, the LEP would support the continuation of the free period between 22:00pm to 6:00am.

7. Do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the impacts of the proposals particularly on small firms and protected equality groups?	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree ✓
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Please explain your reasons and add any additional comments you wish to make:

The LEP is of the view that the assessment does not give due consideration to the impact upon household budgets and businesses, in particular freight and haulage companies.