

Proposed Itchen Bridge Toll Free for Motor Cycles

Corporate Health and Safety Service Response to Objections

While it is recognised the vast majority of motorcyclists are probably law abiding citizens and I'm sure members of the MAG are responsible riders, not all motorcyclists are members of MAG nor are all motorcyclists law abiding.

The Tamar and Dartford toll crossings were consulted in the preparation of the report, both are toll free for motor cycles. They both commented on the behaviour of some motorcyclists, where some don't wait in a queue but ride up the side of other vehicles and push in, they are instructed to use manual lanes, but often use automated lanes, causing the barriers to come down on cars that have just paid a toll. Large groups of motor cyclists coming through together do not wait to proceed individually but try to go through as a group.

The largest significant difference between Dartford and Tamar compared to the Itchen Bridge is they both have physical barrier control. There is not believed to be any other toll system of this size that does not have a barrier system, Southampton is unique in this respect.

The line manager of the Itchen Bridge was also consulted on this proposal and health and safety report consideration. It is anecdotally reported by the toll staff there is at least one noticeable collision a week between vehicles at the toll plaza.

The Corporate Health and Safety Service supports the key fob initiative as an interim solution to allow local residents toll free passage while maintaining a level of control and reasonable safety i.e. the status quo.

If future arrangements for the Itchen Bridge traffic control change i.e. the introduction of barriers, this may change the health and safety dynamics and allow for full toll free system for motor cyclists.

The final recommendation to amend the statutory order to allow number plates to be traced was to allow the current system of tracing to be maintained, as allowing toll free removes the automatic right to trace. The MAG group's comments on this suggest they condone unsafe actions of motorcyclists. As the vast majority of their group are I'm sure law abiding citizens, they would not be affected by this amendment.

The Corporate Services stands by its original report findings. This report was prepared by a Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, also in consultation with the Accident Analysis and Investigation Officer, Highways and Parking Services. Road Safety Research report no 54 an 'In Depth Insight into Motorcycle Accidents' by the Department of Transport was also taken into consideration.