



Report to the Secretary of State for Transport

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An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport

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ALDWARK BRIDGE ACT 1772

TRANSPORT CHARGES & C (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1954

ALDWARK BRIDGE LIMITED

**APPLICATION FOR AN ORDER TO REVISE TOLL CHARGES FOR
THE USE OF ALDWARK BRIDGE**

Dates of Inquiry: 20-21 April 2005

Ref: TS 26/2/2

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CASE DETAILS

- This Application under Section 6 of the Transport Charges &c (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1954 is for an Order to revise toll charges for crossing Aldwark Bridge, near Linton-on-Ouse, North Yorkshire.
- The Application was published on 4 June 2004, and there were twenty objections outstanding to it at the commencement of the local Inquiry.
- The Application as amended is for an Order that would authorise an increase in tolls to 40p per crossing for vehicles weighing less than 3.5 tonnes and to £1 per crossing for heavier vehicles up to the weight limit of 7.5 tonnes. The part of the Application referring to tolls for the passage of vehicles in excess of the weight limit was withdrawn before the start of the Inquiry.

Summary of Recommendation: I recommend that the Order should be made in accordance with the amended Application.

1 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The effect of the Order if made would be to alter the vehicle categories and increase the vehicle tolls for use of the Aldwark Bridge over the River Ure near Linton-on-Ouse in North Yorkshire. The existing Order allows cars to be charged 15p per crossing; cars with caravan and trailer, small bus, or a goods vehicle up to 3.5 tonnes to be charged 30p; and a large bus or a goods vehicle over 3.5 tonnes up to the limit of 7.5 tonnes to be charged 80p. The proposed tolls are 40p per crossing for vehicles under 3.5 tonnes and £1 per crossing for heavier vehicles. There is no charge (existing or proposed) for pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.
- 1.2 I have been appointed as Inspector by the Secretary of State for Transport in pursuance of subsection 5 of Section 6 of the Transport Charges &c (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1954. I am to hold a Public Local Inquiry to hear objections and any representations concerning the Application by Aldwark Bridge Ltd for an Order to revise the tolls. I am to report to the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.3 I held the Inquiry at the Village Hall, Linton-on-Ouse for two days from Wednesday 20 April 2005. I made an unaccompanied site visit to the bridge and to the diversion routes on Tuesday 19 April. There was no call from any of the parties at the Inquiry for an accompanied site visit.
- 1.4 At the start of the Inquiry, twenty objections to the Application had been received. I was informed during the Inquiry that one of these objections (the objection from North Yorkshire County Council) had been withdrawn. Four more written objections were received during the Inquiry, together with one letter of support, and were not withdrawn. A further non-specific objection was registered orally at the opening of the Inquiry, but was not

pursued.

- 1.5 Linton-on-Ouse Parish Council was the only objector presenting a detailed case during the Inquiry, though there were other less formal questions and interventions from other objectors and interested parties.
- 1.6 The mains grounds of objection are:
- that the proposed toll increases are excessive and are not related to general inflation or to the increased cost of maintaining the bridge;
 - that the proposed toll increases would have an adverse effect on the community, including residents, the local school and businesses;
 - that inadequate publicity had been given to the proposals because of the use of an inappropriate local paper for the public notices;
 - that the bridge should be taken out of private hands and made toll-free for the use of all.
- 1.7 The Applicant is Aldwark Bridge Limited and it was confirmed during the Inquiry that the necessary statutory formalities had been observed [Doc PA/1]. I made available to the objectors a schedule of the background documents supplied to me [Doc IN/2] so that they were aware of all the information provided to me by the Applicant before the opening of the Inquiry.
- 1.8 This report contains a brief description of the bridge (the subject of the Application) and its surroundings, the gist of the cases presented, and my conclusions and recommendations. Lists of Inquiry Appearances and Documents are in Appendix A and B respectively. I have attached all documents and plans submitted to the Inquiry, including proofs of evidence. The proofs are generally as originally submitted – unless otherwise marked they do not take account of how the evidence may have been affected by cross-examination or other aspects of the Inquiry. My report, however, does take account of the evidence as given at the Inquiry, including points arising from cross-examination.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE BRIDGE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 Aldwark Bridge is a privately-owned toll bridge carrying a minor road over the River Ure some 16 km (10 miles) northwest of the city of York. A plan of the area is included as Appendix BGH1 in Doc IN/2/7. The bridge provides the only crossing of the river between the A1337 York Ring Road and the B6265 at Boroughbridge, a total distance of some 26 km (16 miles) measured in a straight line, but much further measured along the minor roads available as alternative routes.

