

PR from MTUA on 5 Feb 2018 - Steve Rotheram, Tunnel Users and latest toll increase

On Friday the City Region approved an increase in the the cash toll for cars. (The tag toll for cars is to be reduced from 7pm to 7am and all day Sunday, but both the cash tolls and the tag toll for larger vehicles were increased.)

Fridays' Echo included a letter from Steve Rotheram, the Metro Mayor, where he said "*I will be continuing to talk and listen to interested groups, businesses and tunnel users to find the best, most affordable and sustainable solution for the long-term prosperity of our whole city region.*"

John McGoldrick on behalf of the Mersey Tunnels Users Association said "The MTUA has been representing the users of the Tunnels since 2003, and Steve has not been talking to us, and there is no indication that he pays any attention to what users of the Tunnels say - quite the opposite."

"We have recently sent letters to Steve and the other Council leaders and to the councillors on Merseytravel (now known as the Transport Committee), there has not been a single reply."

"Steve in his letter on Friday said that the toll changes agreed on Friday were only a "*first step and a statement of intent to keep cross-river travel as affordable as we can.*"

"But the reality is that the Metro Mayor's budget on Friday not only increased the cash tolls, it also said "As part of a three year strategy, the LCRCA (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority) is seeking to increase overall revenue from the Tunnels"

John McGoldrick also claims that the Mayor is not acting in the interests of users of the Tunnels, "instead he is following in the long Merseytravel tradition of making as much money as he can from tolls, while at the same time clouding the finances of the Tunnels, so that it is very hard for the public to know what is really going on."

Ends

Contact number 0774 269 5699

The three recent letters -

4th Feb -

<http://www.tunnelusers.org.uk/20180204LetterToLCRCAmembers&TransportCtteefromMTUA.pdf>

1st Feb - http://www.tunnelusers.org.uk/ToTransportCttee%20LCRCAfromMTUA_1Feb2018.pdf

28th Jan - <http://www.tunnelusers.org.uk/ToLCRCAmembers28Jan2018.pdf>

The full text of Steve Rotheram's letter in the Echo on 2nd Feb-

We don't want river to be barrier to growth

IN REPLY to your correspondents, A Kendall and Rita Martelli, there appears to be some misunderstanding about the introduction of a £1 off-peak fast tag for the Mersey Tunnels {Metro Mayor's tunnel promise was hollow and What use is it?, ECHO. both January 30}.

Manifesto pledges are to be delivered over the course of a full elected term, and not necessarily in the first eight months. As I made clear last week. it's a first step and a statement of intent to

keep cross-river travel as affordable as we possibly can.

Our options this year were massively limited by the wider context of the Merseytravel budget and the need to sustain vital services, manage accelerating costs and safeguard the country's most generous concessionary travel scheme outside London. All at which we have achieved without any additional burden to council tax payers through an increase in the Merseytravel levy.

Using limited room for manoeuvre to ease the burden for some tunnel-users. freezing the peak-time fast tag and minimising the increase for cash tolls. was the best available option under extremely challenging financial constraints.

As I also explained last week, I have now initiated a wider study of future tunnel toll and payment options to consider how we can ensure that our river does not become a barrier to future economic growth. As part of this process. I will be continuing to talk and listen to interested groups, businesses and tunnel users to find the best, most affordable and sustainable solution for the long-term prosperity of our whole city region.

**Steve Rotheram. Metro Mayor,
Liverpool City Region**