

Mersey Gateway Bridge Inquiry

Supplementary Proof of Evidence No 2 by

Alan Wenban-Smith on behalf of The Alliance

**Reference Halton Borough Council's Paper of Amendments (No 1)
to Mersey Gateway Bridge Order, dated June 10, 2009 (HBC/0/25)**

At the Inquiry hearing on 10 June 2009 Halton BC tabled a paper of proposed amendments to Articles 41 and 42 of the Bridge Order, relating to the availability of discounts on the full toll:

- To Article 41, requiring that any scheme of discounts should have regard to the most appropriate way of benefiting those least able to pay the full price;
- To Article 42, proposing that discounts could be made available for frequent users by way of concessions for multiple or season ticket purchases, these discounts to be available regardless of place of residence.

I commented on first sight that such discounts would have the effect of further reducing the income to the bridge promoter, postponing the point at which there might be a net income, and reducing the public sector BCR below that being claimed.

On further consideration of the implications of these two amendments, I would wish to draw the following additional points to the attention of the Inquiry:

1. the more widely drawn the concessions, particularly with regard to place of residence, the greater will be the tendency of the Mersey Gateway Bridge to generate additional traffic, with the consequences of reduced time-savings, more congestion and more CO₂ generation. These all have a bearing on the valuation of the economic benefit of the Bridge, and the sensitivity of the claimed NPV should be tested in this light;
2. the two Articles appear potentially to be in conflict with each other and with the stated regeneration purpose of the Bridge. Residents of the defined Regeneration Area are intended to be the prime beneficiaries of the Bridge, but will be in no better position than those travelling from further afield. These more distant beneficiaries will add to the traffic from which Regeneration Area residents will suffer and to the competition for local jobs from which they are intended to benefit.