

Dart Charge

An overview

April 2014

Background context

The Dartford-Thurrock River Crossing is a vital transport link that handles around 50 million vehicle crossings each year, often exceeding its design capacity and experiencing congestion problems.

A road user charge has been collected at the Crossing since 2003 to manage the high demand for its use. Revenues from the Crossing must, by law, be spent on transport improvements.

The Government is committed to improving the crossing experience for the millions of people who use it every year and **Dart Charge** is part of a package of measures to improve capacity at this location and the M25.

Overview of Dart Charge

What is happening?

We are changing the way you pay the Crossing charge. From October 2014 instead of stopping at the barriers to pay the charge, you will pay in advance or by midnight the following day.

There will be several ways to pay, including online, by text, at many retail outlets or by phone.

It will still be cheaper and easier to have an account – you can save up to one-third on every crossing. Existing DART-Tag holders will be contacted before the changes take place about moving their accounts.

No one needs to do anything yet in relation to the changes being introduced. Subscribe to receive updates on the introduction of Dart Charge and opening an account www.gov.uk/highways/dartford.



How much will it cost?

Initial set-up costs for the scheme are estimated to be within the range of £48 million - £62 million. This includes the estimated costs for:

- vehicle detection, charging and enforcement management services
- road infrastructure
- traffic management and safety works.

It also includes the Highways Agency internal project costs.

The Highways Agency has awarded the main contract for vehicle detection, charging and enforcement management services to Sanef. If this contract extends to its maximum term of 10 years the full potential value of the services delivered within it will be up to £367 million. The design and implementation element of this is included in the total set-up cost estimate above.

How will it affect my journey?

The new payment arrangement makes greater use of technology and will require substantial changes to the existing road layout at the Crossing.

This spring the Highways Agency will start advance construction work at the crossing to prepare for the introduction of Dart Charge.

Immediately after the introduction of Dart Charge, we will start the main road works at the Crossing to remove the existing booths and introduce a new road layout; this work is due to be completed in spring 2015.

All work at the Crossing is being planned to minimise disruption while ensuring that the Crossing remains safe for road users. Details of the exact traffic management arrangements, including temporary speed limits, are still being developed.

How do I find out more information?

We are running an extended public information campaign until spring 2015, to provide road users with clear and consistent information about the changes that will be taking place. This will include information on:

- the transition to the new remote payment arrangements
- road layout changes
- how to pay the crossing charge
- how to register for pre-pay accounts
- the planned construction works at and on the approach to the crossing

As the scheme progresses we will provide more information online - subscribe to receive updates on the introduction of Dart Charge www.gov.uk/highways/dartford.

Timeline and key dates

Activity	Date
System build and testing completed	August 2014
Account registration open	September 2014
New remote payment arrangements go live	October 2014
Post-construction works to remove the plaza and barriers begins	October 2014
Post-construction works completed	Spring 2015