



Meeting of Forth Estuary Transport Authority

25 February 2011

Forth Road Bridge Open Week 2011

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members on proposals to hold an Open Week at the Forth Road Bridge in June 2011.

2 Background

- 2.1 In October 2009 the Forth Road Bridge held its first ever Open Week. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for face to face contact with bridge users and the local community, and to educate and inform the public about the Forth Road Bridge and the work that we do here.
- 2.2 A special exhibition celebrating the history of the Forth Road Bridge and the work of the bridge authority was open to the public all week. This featured displays, models and audio visual exhibits from the bridge authority, their engineering consultants and contractors. Transport Scotland provided information on the planned new crossing.
- 2.3 Over the course of the week, over 50 young people from local schools and community groups were given extended tours of the bridge, including the opportunity to climb to the top of the towers 156 metres above sea level.
- 2.4 On the Saturday 296 members of the public were given guided tours of the structure by minibus. FRB staff escorted visitors to points of interest along the bridge deck and to the northwest main cable anchorage chamber. Over 200 visitors also enjoyed boat trips under the bridges on the "Maid of the Forth". Demonstrations were held in the car park showing how specialist teams recover overturned HGVs and a steady stream of children enjoyed playing in a bouncy castle overlooking the bridge.
- 2.5 A reception for Forth Road Bridge stakeholders was arranged following the FETA board meeting on Friday 30 October. The event was attended by local

politicians, transport officials, sponsors and other stakeholders, including the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change.

- 2.6 On Sunday 25 October a family day was held, allowing approximately 150 partners and children of FRB staff to see the bridge close-up and see where their parents or partners work.
- 2.7 The 2009 Open Week was sponsored by consulting engineers Atkins and Fairhurst, as well as contractors C Spencer Ltd, Tarmac and Raynesway Construction.
- 2.8 The 2009 Open Week was generally regarded as a great success, with over 1,000 visitors during the week, including over 600 on the Saturday alone. The response from the 461 feedback forms completed by visitors was overwhelmingly positive, with over 97% calling for the event to be repeated in future.
- 2.9 It is now proposed that a similar event should be held in June of this year.

3 Main Report

- 3.1 The proposed dates for the 2011 Open Week are 12-19 June. This timing provides the best prospect of good weather and long hours of daylight, and does not clash with any planned maintenance activity.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that the week would begin with a family day for FRB staff partners and children on Sunday 12 June. This will provide a dry run for public bridge tours and will allow staff to bring their families along while still remaining free to work during the rest of the week.
- 3.3 Materials from the 2009 exhibition can be re-used and added to as budgets permit. Additional exhibits will be invited from contractors and engineering consultants currently working at the bridge.
- 3.4 The bridge tours by minibus proved extremely popular during the 2009 event. It would therefore be our intention to offer a greater number of tours this year, probably over several days during the week.
- 3.5 It would also be possible to offer a limited number of extended tours including tower visits to selected local schools and community groups.
- 3.6 A reception for Forth Road Bridge stakeholders would be arranged following the FETA Board meeting on Friday 17 June.
- 3.7 Sponsorship would be sought to help fund additional activities as appropriate.

4 Financial implications

- 4.1 The costs of staging the 2009 Open Week included design and production of exhibition materials, radio advertising, other publicity, subsidy of boat trips, hire of minibuses, marquees and bouncy castles, and catering. These costs were offset by generous sponsorship provided by Atkins, Spencers, Tarmac, Fairhurst and Raynesway, meaning the final cost to the Authority fell within the £10,000 budget that had originally been set.
- 4.2 It is hoped that sponsorship can once again be secured to help make the Open Week a success. However, materials purchased in 2009 can be used again and lessons learned from the previous event will also help to reduce costs. Not every feature of the 2009 Open Week need necessarily be repeated.
- 4.3 A reduced budget of £9,000 has therefore been set aside for the 2011 Forth Road Bridge Open Week, provided for from within existing resources.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Forth Road Bridge's first Open Week in 2009 provided a unique opportunity to share some of the passion FRB staff have for the structure, and to explain to the people who live locally and rely on the bridge just how much work goes into keeping the bridge safe and open to traffic. Feedback from visitors was overwhelmingly positive, with over 97% calling for the event to be repeated in future.
- 5.2 June 2011 provides the best opportunity to hold another Open Week and, with the benefit of our experience from 2009, we are confident we can make another success of this year's event.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are asked to approve the proposal to hold an Open Week at the Forth Road Bridge in June 2011.

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Appendices: None
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