

Tamar Crossings – the Tamar Bridge and the Torpoint Ferry – are owned by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council and operated by a Joint Committee on their behalf.

In spring 2024, Tamar Crossings applied to the Department for Transport for a toll increase. This is a legal process and only the Government can approve changes to the toll. The increase was set at the minimum level needed to:

- Meet rising costs
- Maintain a small reserve for future works

Following Government approval, the toll increase was implemented in May 2025. However, as part of an ongoing financial review, we have found that the TamarTag scheme currently costs more to run than it generates, meaning other parts of the business are subsidising it. This is not financially sustainable.



What are we proposing?

The TamarTag administration fee is currently set at 80p per month, regardless of the number of crossings you make each month. The fee has remained the same since 2014 despite the rising costs described above. We are therefore proposing to increase the monthly administration fee to £2. Increasing the administration fee to £2.00 would:

- Cover the actual cost of running the scheme
- Avoid the immediate need to reduce the TamarTag discount or increase tolls
- Help prevent deeper cuts to services or maintenance

In other words, this option allows us to protect:

- The 50% TamarTag discount, and
- The overall quality and safety of the crossings

How could this affect you?

Here are a number of examples of how you could be affected:

Example 1:

Person A commutes between Devon and Cornwall three times per week by car using the Tamar Bridge (12 crossings per month).

	With TamarTag	Without TamarTag
	Toll Price + Admin Fee	Toll Price
Current cost per month	£18.80	£36
Proposed cost per month	£20	£36

Example 2:

Person B runs a business from Torpoint and travels in their small van 6 days per week into Plymouth via the Torpoint Ferry (24 crossings per month).

	With TamarTag	Without TamarTag
	Toll Price + Admin Fee	Toll Price
Current cost per month	£36.80	£72
Proposed cost per month	£38	£72

Are there any other options available?

We identified the administration fee increase as the option that would have the lowest impact on user's costs without sacrificing any quality of service. However there are a few alternatives to increasing the administration fee:

Freeze the fee and increase the toll: We would need to apply to the Department for Transport (DfT) for permission to do this. Having only recently implemented higher tolls and considering the amount of time taken to request and approve the increase, this is not considered a viable option.

Freeze the fee and reduce the discount: We could reduce the discount offered with the TamarTag. The discount is currently set at 50% of the standard crossing fee but we could reduce it (e.g. 40%) instead of increasing the administration fee.

Increase the toll in line with inflation: We are considering introducing an annual increase to the Tamar Crossings fee to reflect inflation. We will need to apply to the Df T for permission to do this, so this is not a viable short term solution.

Apply the admin fee to each Tag rather than to each account: Some accounts have multiple tags, but currently only pay one admin fee.

How is Tamar Crossings funded?

Unlike many transport services, we do not receive any regular funding from Government or from either Council. Everything we do is mostly funded through toll income from you, the people using our crossings. Our income depends on how many vehicles use the crossings, and the toll and discount levels in place. In recent years, traffic levels have changed due to factors such as:

- More people working from home
- Increased use of public transport

At the same time, our costs continue to rise due to:

- Inflation
- Higher maintenance and safety requirements
- The need to invest in infrastructure that is ageing

In simple terms, if our costs are higher than our income, our reserves start to run out and we are legally required to maintain a prudent minimum reserve. If reserves are fully depleted and no action is taken, there is no external funding available to cover the gap. We are at a point where our reserves are forecast to run out by 2028/29. **We must take action now.**

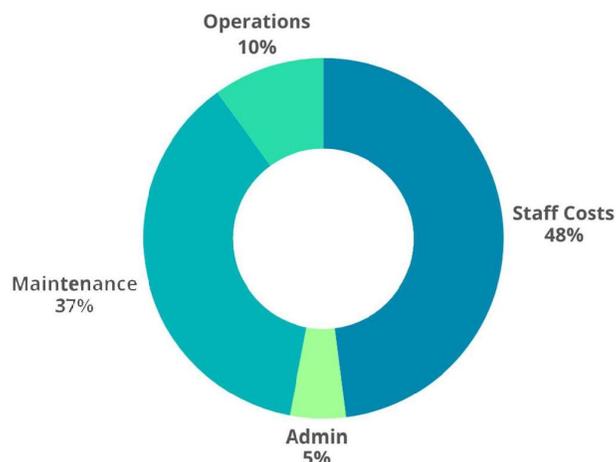
What does the toll and administration fee pay for?

This income pays for:

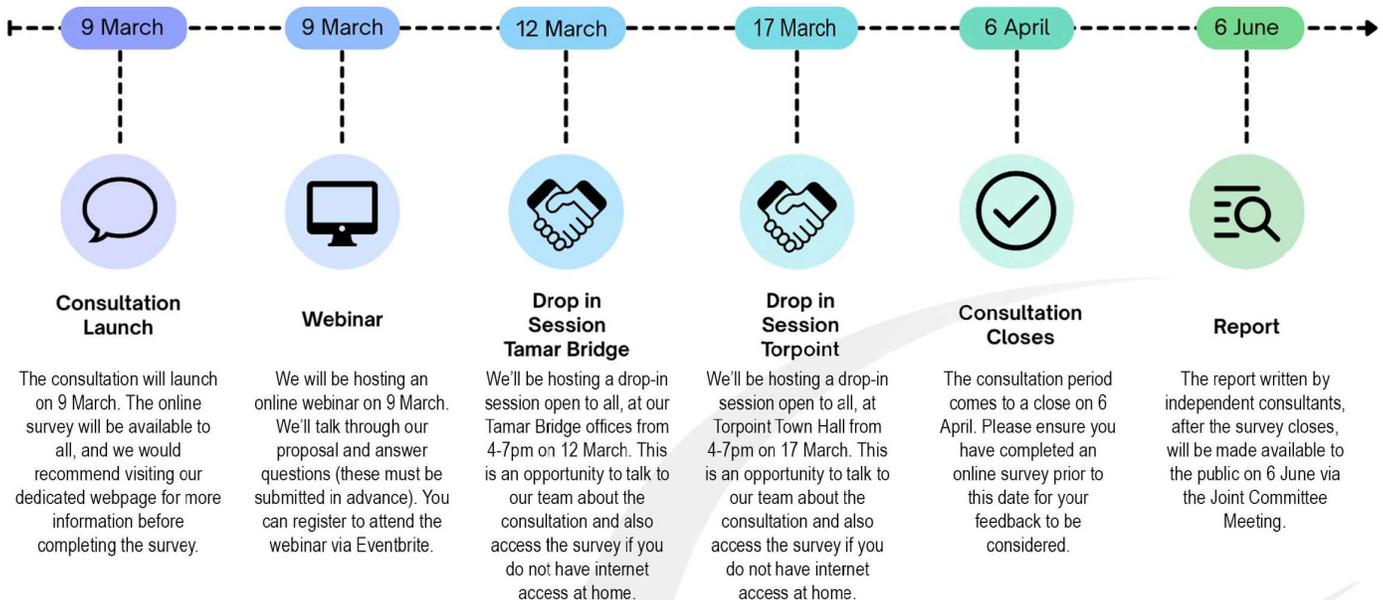
- Over 110 staff (30 at the bridge, 75 at the ferry, and 7 split across both)
 - Operating a service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
 - Day-to-day operation of the bridge and ferry
 - Essential inspections, maintenance and safety work
- Major improvement projects to keep both crossings safe and reliable

Any surplus is kept in reserve for major future works, but any shortfall reduces those reserves.

Before proposing any changes, we carried out a detailed review of our finances, including an independent audit and a six-month internal “deep dive” into all budgets. This has led to us cutting budgets, reducing spend, and looking at reducing services. To make any further reductions would have a significant impact on the service users receive, including delays and fewer safety inspections.



Consultation timeline



How to get involved

Join our Webinar on 9 March from 6pm - 7pm

Come to one of our drop-in events

Tamar Bridge Visitor and Learning Centre – Thursday 12 March anytime between 4pm and 7pm
Torpoint Town Hall – Tuesday 17 March anytime between 4pm and 7pm

Complete our online survey linked below

The findings of the survey will be processed and analysed by an independent agency. If you feel that you need more information before completing the survey, please visit our website, get in touch on consultation@tamarcrossings.org.uk or consider attending one of our drop-in sessions or webinar.

Scan here to visit our website



Scan here to complete the survey

