

# Economy Secretary offers Pembrokeshire £3m per year for removal of tolls

In October 2017 the Welsh Government announced it would be scrapping the tolls on the Cleddau Bridge in an effort to increase economic competitiveness and better connect people, communities and businesses with the jobs, markets and facilities they need.

Now in a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of Pembrokeshire Council, the Economy Secretary has offered £3m per annum to cover the loss of revenue as well one off payments to cover the removal of the toll infrastructure and to cover redundancy costs for those staff who might lose their jobs as a result of the change.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“Abolishing the tolls on the Cleddau Bridge is the right decision for Pembrokeshire and its surrounding areas. I am confident that it will serve to accelerate local economic growth, better connect our businesses and communities, and make it easier and cheaper for people to travel to access the quality employment opportunities they need.

“Indeed a study commissioned by Pembrokeshire County Council shows that the removal of the tolls will support the areas economic development strategy, providing a boost to its local economy, to the Enterprise Zone and to the small and medium-sized enterprises in the area.

“However we absolutely recognise that the decision to abolish the tolls will have implications both on the Council’s budget and on the employment status of the majority of those workers who have been manning the booths.

“With this in mind we have offered the Council a generous deal of £3m per annum to cover loss of revenue as well as additional funding to cover redundancy costs and toll infrastructure removal.”

Paying tribute to the staff who will be affected by the toll removal, Ken Skates added:

“I know that the Council is making every effort to deploy the toll staff who will be affected by this change but unfortunately I understand that some redundancies will be unavoidable. I appreciate how difficult this will be for the workers and their families and would like to thank them for their public service and wish them every success in finding new employment.”

The two-year Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru included £2m in 2019-20 to remove the tolls on the Cleddau Bridge. The Cleddau Bridge tolls are set to be abolished in Spring 2019.