

Clive Chatters, Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority, said:

'I am angry and upset that misleading reports by the media of important long-term plans for the future of the New Forest are causing unnecessary distress for people.

'The National Park Authority's plans **do not mention tolls or toll booths at all** and the media reports are wrong to do so.

'The entire "story" appears to be based on misrepresentation of three words in a 182-page document. The plans mention "road user pricing" in a long list of various tools that *may* be considered at some point in the future to help reduce the impacts of road traffic on the tranquillity and environmental quality of the National Park.

'The idea of pricing is nothing new and features in other transport plans for the New Forest area already. There are no specific plans for road pricing at all at this stage.

'To turn a single phrase in a consultation document into such scare-mongering stories is irresponsible.

'We want to have a sensible debate about the way the New Forest National Park should be over the next 20 years and beyond. Traffic has a real and increasing impact on the things that make the National Park special and people should consider in responding to these plans what they would like us and our partners to do about it. If people have other ideas for tackling traffic issues we are keen to hear them.

'I urge everyone with a genuine interest in the New Forest National Park to read the plans and respond either on-line or on paper on the forms provided. In that way, their views will be taken into account by Authority members before any decisions are taken on the final plans.'