

## Proposed Changes to VBS - Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers have been produced to provide further information on the proposed changes to VBS. These reflect the feedback received to date through consultation with the Felixstowe Port Users Association (FPUA) and discussion with members of the haulage community:

<b>Q1</b>	<b>What charges are being proposed?</b>
A1	<p>Initially the following types of charges and changes to VBS were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory inclusion of container information to create a booking</li> <li>• Guaranteed booking charge</li> <li>• No Show charge</li> <li>• Peak booking charge</li> <li>• Off Peak booking charge</li> <li>• Late Notification charge</li> <li>• Secondary Gate charges</li> </ul> <p>Following discussions with the FPUA and members of the haulage community it has been recognised that a simple charging scheme is preferred by the industry. With this in mind the following charges are now proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A booking charge for peak period bookings</li> <li>• A No Show charge to reduce the number of bookings made which fail to be utilised.</li> <li>• A charge for Guaranteed Bookings (see question 3 for information on Guaranteed Bookings).</li> </ul>
<b>Q2</b>	<b>How much are the charges proposed?</b>
A2	<p>In line with the initial consultation when VBS was introduced in 2007, the proposed charges are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak period booking charge= £2.00</li> <li>• No Show charge = £30.00</li> <li>• Guaranteed booking charge = £15.00</li> </ul> <p>Any future proposed charges, for example secondary gate charges (see question 11), will be communicated when proposals are clearer.</p>
<b>Q3</b>	<b>What is the purpose of Guaranteed Bookings?</b>
A3	<p>To reduce the high level of calls placed to the Customer Service Centre (CSC) when bookings are not available, a small allocation of bookings outside of the general “bookings pot” will be made available. These will be charged at £15.00 per booking made and will be non refundable. This facility will be made available to hauliers in the expectation that these will be used in exceptional circumstances only.</p> <p>The CSC will no longer be dealing with calls concerning access to bookings when all bookings have been taken. If there are bookings available they will be accessed via the Internet only.</p>
<b>Q4</b>	<b>Why are charges being introduced now?</b>
A4	<p>The main reasons for introducing VBS charges at this time are to encourage more off peak traffic and efficient use of the port’s resources; additional costs are incurred by the port to service those peak operations and provide VBS-related services to road hauliers.</p> <p>There are two particular concerns with VBS at present. Firstly, the current number of bookings made by road hauliers who then fail to arrive is unacceptably high (between 12%</p>

	<p>and 15% of all bookings). This is leading to inefficiency in the use of the port's limited resources. Attempts have been made to address this through various measures without success and it is now necessary to look at alternative ways to manage this problem. Introducing a No Show charge is one way of doing this and is intended to encourage hauliers to either use or return unwanted bookings so that they can be allocated to other customers.</p> <p>Secondly, while some progress has been made in influencing haulier arrival times at the port, there is still a noticeable peak at certain times of day. The proposed introduction of a peak time booking charge is therefore intended to encourage hauliers to arrive out of peak hours and to allow the port to recover some of the costs associated with peak operations (additional resource, fuel, equipment utilisation and the knock-on impact on other port operations).</p>
<b>Q5</b>	<b>What are the amended service levels and why?</b>
A5	<p>As discussed with the haulage community, to improve haulier turnaround times, the port requires pre-advance on the specific container(s) required in order to schedule work. Until we can establish those specific requirements within the necessary timeframes indicative service levels will be adjusted as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1-part job = 60 minutes 2-part job = 80 minutes 3-part job = 100 minutes 4-part job = 120 minutes</p> <p>Feedback received as part of the consultation process to date has indicated the need for consistency in relation to service levels. These service levels are by no means the target for the port and we are confident that these times for multi-part jobs can be significantly improved with timely provision of the required information by hauliers.</p>
<b>Q6</b>	<b>What is the booking charge refund proposal and how would this work?</b>
A6	<p>Going forward it is proposed that bookings which are not completed by the port in accordance with the service level guidelines will have the associated booking charges cancelled.</p> <p>We continue to have issues with the number of bookings which fail to meet the late notification timescales for the provision of information. The booking charge will not be cancelled for any bookings which have been flagged as Late Notification bookings.</p>
<b>Q7</b>	<b>Why will the system automatically return bookings to the exchange?</b>
A7	<p>We are keen to improve the administration of bookings for those hauliers who use the system as designed. Bookings that do not have qualifying containers associated with them within a certain timeframe before the booking time commences, are more likely to be unused and reduce the efficiency of the system for all users. Introducing a change that will automatically return these bookings to the exchange and make them available for use by other customers will improve the availability of bookings and the efficient operation of VBS.</p>
<b>Q8</b>	<b>What are the timeframes for the Automatic Return to Exchange and Late Notifications?</b>
A8	<p>Three hours before the booking time commences any bookings without the containers associated with them will be returned to the exchange. Any bookings which are created or amended 2.5 hours before the booking time commences would be flagged as Late Notifications and would not benefit from the cancellation of booking charges, should the indicative service levels not be met.</p>
<b>Q9</b>	<b>Will the Late Notification rules apply to Empty Containers?</b>
A9	<p>Late Notification will only apply to import containers and full export deliveries. Bookings for empty containers will be able to be made and amended right up until arrival at the gate and</p>

	would not be considered as Late Notifications. Empty containers will be eligible for the cancellation of associated booking charges should the indicative service levels not be met.
<b>Q10</b>	<b>What are the further future charges being considered?</b>
A10	<p>VBS provides booking information which details the timeframe a haulier is expected to arrive and also highlights, in advance, any issues which need to be resolved prior to the haulier arriving on site. The level of incorrect or incomplete bookings, as well as the arrival of hauliers outside their booked slot, increases costs for the port and can lead to delays for the haulier concerned. The current proposed changes should go some way to address this but further changes may be required. These additional options are being considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of charges for secondary gating activities for those unable to complete processing at the gate complexes.</li> <li>• Introduction a charge for the use of the Remote Access Code.</li> <li>• Introduction of a mechanism to enable hauliers to request a report for a VBS booking which will detail the containers exchanged and times.</li> </ul>
<b>Q11</b>	<b>What is the proposal for pre-allocated bookings?</b>
A11	<p>In response to the feedback received during the consultation meetings, it is recognised that the manner and resources required to secure current bookings is a concern for some hauliers. In response, the pre-allocation of a certain number of bookings to hauliers is being considered, providing certain qualification criteria are met. The qualification criteria for such a system are under review but may, for example, be based on the number of jobs a haulier carries out at the port in a particular period. We will also review the volume of pre-allocated bookings to ensure that a sufficient amount of slots remain available to be booked through VBS for those hauliers who do not meet the qualification criteria for pre-allocation.</p> <p>The final qualification criteria will be based on the principles of fairness, transparency and non-discrimination. Prior to implementation a further communication will be provided outlining the details for pre-allocated bookings.</p>
<b>Q12</b>	<b>Will I need to re-register for VBS despite already having an account?</b>
A12	<p>Yes. All current VBS users will need to re-register and provide a direct debit mandate. Further details will be provided prior to the introduction of any changes to ensure there is no disruption to VBS services. Failure to do this will result in the removal of access to VBS going forward.</p>