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From: Andrew Parsons [mailto:aparsons888@gmail.com]

Sent: 21 April 2020 13:54

To: NATIONALCASEWORK <NATIONALCASEWORK@dft.gov.uk>

Cc: Nick Boulter <nboulter@studlandparishcouncil.org>

Subject: Bournemouth-Swanage Ferry Fare Increase - OBJECTION

Attn Sandra Zamenzadeh

Dear Ms Zamenzadeh,

I note from the Sandbanks Ferry website that the Ferry Company is applying to increase its fares once again. Please log this as an objection. This preliminary objection is on several grounds:

- There has just been a public enquiry (as required by statute) into a very recent application(2018) by the Ferry Company to increase its fares by some 33%. The inspector found against this application and it may be considered that by making continual applications the the Ferry Company is attempting to game the system. The intention of a public enquiry is surely that the evidence be weighed and a reasoned decision be concluded from this evidence. The party that is unhappy with this decision cannot repeatedly make new applications attempting to obtain the result that they require by attrition. The enquiry process is not one of attrition or endurance but a weighing of the evidence and if it is to have any value there must surely be some finality in the conclusions reached.

- The evidence shows that the funds required by statute for the expected renewal of the equipment of the company (the ferry, surfacing the road etc) that a responsible business would have in a sinking fund have simply been appropriated every year by the Directors. The barrister employed by the Purbeck councils at teh last enquiry stated that he could make a good argument that the accounts and these practices were fraudulent.

- The under-performance of the Ferry company, the current economic conditions and the already high price of the Ferry fare means that there can be no justification for any increase. The Ferry forms an essential part of the highway from Bournemouth to the Isle of Purbeck and any argument that use of the Ferry is optional is specious, spurious and out of step with reality. This was brought home one winter a few years ago when the Ferry was off for a couple of months for its biannual maintenance and the roads authority (what do they use for brains?) decided to resurface the other road, closing it down to one lane, into the Isle of Purbeck. The queues lasted for hours and this was in the winter. On a busy summer, tourism is a major plank of the local economy, both the Ferry and the overland route are chock a block with traffic, the poor holiday makers having to suffer queues often of some hours in their cars. Use of the Ferry is not optional but an integral part of the transport infrastructure of the area.

It is likely that there will be another public enquiry and since the arguments to be assessed rely on a good deal of accounting and financial evidence it is surely appropriate, and indeed essential that the inspector appointed be suitably qualified in this area. This is not a planning inquiry.

In previous applications the Ferry Company has made the statutes (the various Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Acts) under which it is regulated available on its website. It has not done this for this application and if there is to be fair, evenly balanced inquiry these must be made available to the objectors who will hold the conduct and performance of the Ferry Company to account with reference to its statutory obligations. To this end perhaps the House of Common Library, or whatever might be the correct department might put these on line. A good argument regarding demand and propriety could be made for this.

As stated above please add this to the objections to the Ferry Company's proposed fare increase,

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Parsons CEng, LLB.