

Ms S Zamenzadeh  
National Transport Casework Team  
Department for Transport  
Tyneside House  
Skinnerburn Road  
Newcastle Business Park  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
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Date: 24 April 2020  
Our Ref: Sandbanks Chain Ferry  
Contact: Councillor Andy Hadley  
Email: andy.hadley@bcpcouncil.gov.uk  
Tel: 07884 008781

Dear Ms Zamenzadeh

**Re: Bournemouth – Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company Ltd – Toll Increase Application Feb 2020**

I am writing in response to the application by the operators of the Sandbanks – Studland Ferry for an increase in tolls from 1st April 2021. The ferry provides a very useful link between Poole and the Swanage area, reducing traffic on the congested alternative A35 and A351 routes (22 miles around the harbour) and making a positive contribution to reducing emissions and improving air quality in the Purbeck towns and villages through which those routes pass.

The council is concerned that increasing fares will lead to increased traffic on the road network around the harbour which will negatively impact upon congestion, air quality, quality of life and lead to increased journey times for businesses and commuters.

Higher costs will deter visitors from using the ferry service, putting more seasonal traffic on the road network. Low income households will also be disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of access to jobs, health care, education and leisure. There are significant numbers of people who commute across the ferry, and it is used by emergency ambulance services. The desire to peg increases to the RPI is also not supported, it is most unpopular with rail travellers, and would likewise be a burden on especially local and frequent users.

We support the company's objective of replacing the ferry in 2034 and in the council's view, the replacement ferry needs to provide greater vehicle capacity and faster throughput. Its replacement should also address environmental considerations and climate change (both adjoining local authorities have declared Climate Change Emergencies) and therefore must be powered by a sustainable alternative to diesel. We support the company's stated claims that funds will be ringfenced for this purpose and that dividends to shareholders will not be paid in order to increase these funds.

The council has policies to promote the use of sustainable, active travel modes including public transport as well as walking and cycling. The Sandbanks and Studland peninsulas linked by this ferry are great examples of outdoor recreation areas used to improve people's health and wellbeing. In respect of the proposed toll rates by class, we are very concerned that under the current proposals, pedestrians and cyclists would be included in the increase and that cycles continue to be treated the same as motorcycles. There is significantly more marshalling involved in dealing with motorised traffic.

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We are also concerned that registered local bus services are charged the same rate as coaches which will translate through to higher fares for bus passengers. The regular user tariffs also favour motorised vehicles.

The proposed fare increases run contrary to local and national policies (e.g. Decarbonising Transport: Setting the challenge published by the Department for Transport (DfT) - March 2020) to encourage sustainable, active travel and to promote good health. It is therefore the council's view that the proposed toll increases for walkers, cycles and local bus services are excessive, and we submit that they should remain unchanged at their April 2020 levels.

In conclusion, should the Secretary of State be minded to support the request for an increase in tolls we would ask that this is selective and that tolls for pedestrians, cycles and local bus services are not increased. We also ask that any decision is accompanied by a requirement on the company to ensure adequate reserves are available to replace the ferry by 2034, and that this uses a more sustainable propulsion method than Diesel.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Hadley', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Councillor Andy Hadley**

**Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure,  
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council**