



## Elected Members

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Ms S Zamenzadeh  
National Transport Casework Team  
Department for Transport  
Tyneside House  
Skinnerburn Road  
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Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7AR

**Date:** 23 April 2020  
**Ref:** KT/RB/JS  
**Officer:** Ray Bryan  
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Dear Ms Zamenzadeh

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

The ferry provides a very useful strategic link for residents, commuters, businesses and visitors between Poole/Bournemouth and the Swanage area, reducing traffic on the congested alternative A35 and A351 routes 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.

We support the company's objective of replacing the ferry by 2034 and in the council's view, the replacement ferry needs to provide greater vehicle capacity and faster throughput. Its replacement should also take into account environmental considerations and climate change, 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. It is unfortunate that this has not happened in the past as this has delayed the date by which a new ferry could be purchased on a number of occasions. For example, in 2018 we were told the company aimed to have a new ferry in place for 2026.

In respect of the proposed toll rates by class, we are particularly concerned about the increase under the current proposals for pedestrians, cyclists and local bus services using the ferry. The council has policies to promote the use of sustainable, active travel modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The Sandbanks and Studland peninsulas linked by this ferry are great examples of outdoor recreation areas used to improve people's health and wellbeing. The proposed fare increases run contrary to local and national policies 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 buses 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 motorcycles 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Bryan', written in a cursive style.

**Cllr Ray Bryan**  
**Cabinet Portfolio Holder**  
**Highways, Travel and Environment**

Copies to: Cllr Gary Suttle, Councillor for Swanage Ward  
Cllr Bill Trite, Councillor for Swanage Ward