

BEFORE THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE (SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT)

IN AN APPLICATION DATED FEBRUARY 2020 – PROPOSED REVISION OF TOLLS

- THE TRANSPORT CHARGES ETC (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1954
- THE BOURNEMOUTH-SWANAGE MOTOR ROAD AND FERRY CO ACTS 1923 & 1986

BETWEEN

THE BOURNEMOUTH-SWANAGE MOTOR ROAD AND FERRY CO

Applicant

and

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

DORSET COUNCIL

BOURNEMOUTH CHRISTCHURCH & POOLE COUNCIL

& OTHER OBJECTORS

Respondents

**EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE COUNTER-PROPOSAL
OF THE 3 REPRESENTED COUNCILS**

Preliminary

- 1 This Note is provided pursuant to the directions of Inspector Vyse made on 16 November 2020 at the opening of this Inquiry. It is intended to explain the purpose, regulatory background and method of construction of the counter-proposal put forward by the three represented Councils, Swanage Town Council, Dorset Council and Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council (together 'the Consortium', as described by the Inspector). It is a summary document and not intended to introduce new evidence.
- 2 The counter-proposal itself, in the form of a spreadsheet table, can be accessed at <https://www.sandbanksferry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Dorset-Council-BCP-STC-Attachment-06-November-2020.pdf>.

Purpose of the counter-proposal

- 3 Insofar as any toll increases may be appropriate or necessary to achieve the purchase of a replacement ferry in due course, such increases need to align with the Consortium's goals for sustainability and with national and local guidance and obligations. The counter-proposal reflects the Consortium's role as a group of public bodies with statutory duties, especially (in this context) long-term and strategic planning responsibilities including transport and highways use and infrastructure. The bulk of that responsibility lies with Dorset and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Councils.
- 4 The proposed alternative pricing model is intended to be clearer for users, promote low-carbon active travel and ultimately provide the same level of income for the ferry company as it indicated in its proposal.

Policy background

- 5 The Consortium sets out below the principal policy goals and statutory responsibilities which it seeks to meet in the counter-proposal. The Transport Act 2000, section 108¹, requires the Consortium members to have a Local Transport Plan. The Consortium's transport plan has been agreed by the Department for Transport and adopted by the predecessor authorities of both Dorset and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Councils.
- 6 Local priorities for the Consortium members are set out in that Joint local plan: Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.²
- 7 The key policy statements from that Plan which inform the counter-proposal are:
 - a) POLICY LTP GEN-2 – to put in place measures to reduce traffic growth, encourage sustainable travel patterns and increase the modal share of alternatives to the car,

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/38/part/II/crossheading/local-transport-plans-and-bus-strategies>

² <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/documents/improvements-and-transport-planning/ltp3-bournemouth-poole-dorset-strategy-document-final.pdf>

including Providing, and promoting an enhanced range of alternatives to the car. (See p.39.)

- b) Chapter 8: Active Travel and “greener” travel choices: Widening opportunities for healthy lifestyles through integrating active travel into people’s everyday lives and providing supporting infrastructure – promoting a long-lasting culture of cycling and walking, and public transport use, where the private car is no longer the “natural” choice where suitable alternatives exist. (See p.58.)
 - c) POLICY LTP E-7: will work with LTP partners to increase opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians to integrate and interchange with public transport. This will be supported by working with public transport operators to better accommodate the needs of cyclists, in particular on bus, train and ferry services. (See p.61.)
 - d) POLICY LTP F-1: To encourage more sustainable travel patterns and modal shift to low carbon travel modes, a long term co-ordinated, integrated package of targeted Smarter Choices measures will be pursued. This will seek to inspire positive travel choices and raise travel awareness of public transport, active travel and smarter choices alternatives to car use, and their associated wider benefits to society including health and the environment. (See p.62.)
 - e) POLICY LTP F-4: Through enhanced alternatives to the car and information provision, sustainable access for tourism to, from and within Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset will be encouraged and supported with the aims of reducing carbon emissions, minimising the impact on the natural environment and supporting the local tourist industry. (See p.65.)
- 8 The most significant national policy guidance affecting the Company’s application and the Consortium’s response is *Gear Change – A bold vision for cycling and walking 2020*

(with a foreword from the Prime Minister).³ In summary, the key factors presented by that document which the counter-proposals seek to address are:

- a) cycling and walking measures are no longer seen as an afterthought but have moved to the very heart of considerations for all transport policy and planning;
- b) the creation of a new regulator, Active Travel England, with power to inspect highways authorities, is designed to alter the focus, implementation and maintenance of transport schemes;
- c) funding for transport and highways schemes will in future depend on including best practice plans to encourage cycling (under the aegis of Active Travel England).

Methodology (an outline)

- 9 The Consortium members have worked together to produce a counter-proposal that meets their collective and individual goals. The process has been supervised by Jack Wiltshire, Head of Highways, Dorset Council. The counter-proposal itself has been created by a team including Richard Pincroft, Head of Transportation/Sustainable Transport at Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council and Wayne Sayers, Transport Planning Team Leader, Dorset Council. It has proceeded through several iterations to meet the needs of each Consortium member and all of them.
- 10 In seeking to apply the policy and national guidance set out above to the increase in fares, the Consortium addressed the question of fare increases with regard to the following aims and considerations:
 - a) to prioritise the needs of, and to encourage, foot and cycle passengers: so that the charges for pedestrians and cyclists do not increase and are frozen for the duration of the proposed timeline (March 2032);

³

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

- b) to prioritise discounting for local residents making multiple trips: in order to allow pedestrian and cycle prices to be frozen, fares for bulk ticket prices should not be higher than the ferry company's current proposal;
 - c) to place the principal burden of increases on single-trip car use, which will affect predominantly occasional users and one-off visitors: to allow sufficient income to make the proposed changes and to meet the Ferry Company's stated amount required to purchase the replacement ferry, prices for individual vehicle journeys would need to increase at a faster rate than the Company's current proposal, but to a lower end price of £6.50 (compared to the Company's £6.75);
 - d) to ensure that tariff increases are straightforward, transparent and readily understood by local people: the increased fares go up in jumps over longer periods rather than by confusing small increments each year.
- 11 The counter-proposal has been designed so that total income generated over the forecast 13 years is enough to purchase the replacement ferry. The Consortium's proposal generates £49,188,165, which should be sufficient (based on the Company's own figures).

The process of creating the counter-proposal:

- 12 An alternative pricing structure was created to accommodate 5 classes of traffic:
- a) Class A – foot passengers;
 - b) Class B/C – Bikes & motorcycles;
 - c) Class F – Car;
 - d) Class G – Truck;
 - e) Coach and Bus.
- 13 This classification was then broken down further to include discounted ticket sales:

- a) Using the figures in the Company's Appendices to the Application, the Consortium disaggregated ticket prices to obtain the number of individual tickets sold by dividing the profit for each line by the cost of the tickets.
 - b) This number of tickets sold was then kept consistent for all of the years in the proposal.
 - c) The counter-proposal does not propose any price increase for pedestrians or cycles throughout the period covered in order to promote active, low-carbon, travel modes.
 - d) To accommodate this aspiration financially, the Consortium propose to have a stepped increase in single car trip tickets over the same period. (See further paragraph 14(b) below.) The Consortium notes that, on the Company's figures, the single car trip ticket type provides the greatest level of income for the ferry company.
- 14 A further stage in the calculation was to ensure that those using the ferry for commuting by car, many of whom are likely to have lower-income jobs within the Consortium's area, were not unduly disadvantaged by the counter proposal.
- a) The Consortium adjusted the figures to ensure that the multi-buy ticket options were no more expensive than they were in the Company's own proposal.
 - b) The Consortium then further adjusted the figures to ensure financial parity with the Company's application in order to meet approximately the same end point in terms of total income generated. For cars, for instance, this resulted in a three-stepped approach to increases rather than a gradual ratcheting up of prices in line with inflation of 12 separate increments.
- 15 The table of proposed fees also includes a column for each year showing the level of discount that the multi-buy pricing options provide. This was not used to develop the options but is merely to demonstrate the way in which the counter-proposal attempts to match the multi-buy ticket pricing options shown in the Company's proposal.

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