

Dr Robert Seely MBE MP
Isle of Wight



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Islanders,

Ferry services are a concern for Islanders. I share these concerns. I have used every route between the Island and the mainland over the years. I hear from Islanders regularly about ferry services.

Until now, we have never had an agreed idea of what we collectively want. Services, timetables and prices are at the ferry firms' discretion.

This status quo has lasted 40 years. In that time, central government has been too hands-off. A government report into the ferries in 2009 gave them, wrongly, a clean bill of health. The Isle of Wight Council, despite being Island's transport authority, has never had a policy on the cross-Solent ferry market.

I believe that we need a new, joint approach, so I will write a plan for the Island. I will ask the Isle of Wight Council to support that plan, so that we have a common agenda.

As the first step, I have produced a report on cross-Solent ferry services. I am sharing this with Islanders. The report outlines what I believe the problems are and what the solutions are too.

Second, I am asking for feedback in the next two months so I can collate Islanders' suggestions.

Third, I will then produce a final report which I will ask the Council to support. After that, we can start to re-engage with government ministers, officials and the ferry firms themselves with a clear agenda and a clear list of priorities.

Change will not happen overnight. But as a first step to getting a better deal for the Island, we need a common agenda.

Kind regards,

Dr Robert Seely MBE MP, Member of Parliament, Isle of Wight

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