

Response to Green Paper 10 June 2010

Competition, Licensing and Regulation in the Car and Passenger Ferry Market

Question 6 - Comments

1. I confirm from my experience that the service and capacity has improved, but I am told that the Northern route travellers would benefit further by having some of the vessels re-scheduled to provide a direct route from each island to the UK, thereby minimising passenger travel time from each Island.
2. There is no mention of the option of beneficial discount to Islanders, similar to that available on the Isle of Wight routes, where a 5% discount is available to their local residents.

I appreciate that the local travelling public have a Frequent Traveller facility, but this does not compare with some of the prices that the travelling public from the UK are able to enjoy.

Other local discounts generally are designed to fill up the vessels on the less attractive times and days, but for many travellers these options are not convenient or otherwise available to them.

3. In question 5 in the Green Paper, this indicates a threat by the way it is worded, that if a respondent answers in the affirmative i.e. in favour of new legislation and an independent regulator, it will then cost an estimated £250,000 per annum to undertake.

It is interesting to note that a recent comment made on the local news from the retiring Head of the Guernsey Electricity Company, questioned the cost benefit analysis of their equivalent of the JCRA.

I too agree to question what cost benefit analysis the Island would gain, as I am sure apart from price controls administered outside Government, the Economic Development Department and Condor could work out an acceptable agreement for local residents as is available in the Isle of Wight, and I understand that Condor owns one of the local ferry companies servicing the Isle of Wight.

The UK and Continental passengers appear already to have a price structure that supports the tourist industry, but which generally speaking is not available to local residents.

4. I question whether the Southern route has sufficient capacity as in recent weeks I am told, passengers have been experiencing difficulties, especially at week ends, even as foot passengers, to travel on the specific ferry that they require.

If this is the case, if Condor wishes to maintain a monopoly, then they may have to consider retaining Condor 10 for the Southern route, if alternative competition is not to be considered. Such competition may also encourage the reduction in the price structure by use of efficiency savings on current operational practices.

5. Recently it appears that Condor's policy of using the new Condor Rapide Ferry to support their Northern Route Operation through the break down of their other vessels at the expense of a regular on time scheduling on the Southern Route. Thereby inconveniencing the travelling public on the Southern Route to a second class service of experiencing 1 - 3 hour delays.
6. Previous competition, namely Emeraude Ferries and HD Ferries showed that the current operator did significantly reduce its fares, and if there is still a desire to maintain a monopoly, then I see no reason why the local Jersey travelling public should not have the same opportunity as the residents of the Isle of Wight in benefiting from a competitive price and at the same time benefiting from an all year round service.

If Government have to show their efficiency savings in order to achieve an acceptable standard of service to the community that it serves, then I see no reason why that if an operating company wants to retain a monopoly then it too should provide the same quality improvements at a price structure that already services other small islands within this hemisphere.

7. To conclude, this survey process in my opinion has gone on far too long and all the time that the two Islands are engaged in this extended consultation, especially in these difficult financial times, it is only the travelling public that are suffering.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Fox." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and 'F'.

Deputy Ben Fox