



# The Forgotten Ferry



The States of Alderney in March 2014 invited interested parties to submit proposals for the operation of a ferry between Alderney, Guernsey, Jersey and France. The original requirements set out in the PSO were subsequently modified to omit UK and add France and Jersey to the route structure.

The States specification included a requirement for a £30 Guernsey-Alderney day return fare at which level it was inevitable that the service would require some degree of subsidy.

Bumblebee Marine Limited is an established operator with an existing route between Guernsey and Alderney and an excellent working relationship with the people and government of Alderney. It is well placed to operate the proposed service, having proved its ability to operate a reliable service on the route since commencing trading in 2012. Its strong branding and marketing have made it almost a household name in the islands. With its acquisition of Island RIB Voyages in Guernsey in 2015 it now handles around 6,000 passengers each season.

Criteria for the vessel were defined taking into account meteorological data and considering hull forms and propulsion types. Prices were obtained for both new build and used vessels. It was concluded that the services could be operated to a schedule capable of being operated by a single crew shift using a 25m – 30m fast catamaran. A Guernsey-Alderney transit time of 45 minutes was envisaged.

In order to keep down capital costs and the lead time to service provision, purchase of a used vessel was recommended. Costings were based on the purchase and operation of a representative vessel with a total capital cost estimated at £1.4m. Such amount would be fully financed by the operation but would require a capital guarantee.

The vessel should be able to carry some baggage and have provision for pets and bicycles. The carriage of freight appeared impractical.

In accordance with the States' original requirement, a schedule was prepared to cover operation between April and the end of September with variations for peak months of July and August. The schedule allows operation with one crew and provides for some rest and maintenance time. In July and August there would be four Guernsey-Alderney day returns per week, one Jersey-Alderney day return and one Dielette-Alderney day return. All these days would also allow Alderney residents and tourists to travel outwards to these destinations.

Extensive marketing would be done in conjunction with VisitAlderney. An annual budget of £25,000 was set for Alderney Express.

Revenue projections, a cashflow and a profit and loss account have been prepared, which demonstrate the level of subsidy which will be required for the operation. The total subsidy required averages out at £85,000 per annum over the five-year period of the contract.

The subsidy should be seen in the light of the benefit to the economy of the day visitor average spend. With the passenger numbers projected and an estimated spend of £50 the economy will benefit by some £2.9m over the five-year contract term, averaging £585,000 per annum.

We believe our proposal, which still stands, answers most of the requirements of a ferry for Alderney and stand ready to provide the service, given support from the States of Alderney. As the incumbent operator we have extensive contacts, the technical and management skills and a proven marketing ability to make such a service work.

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