

News Release

Date: 18 December 2014

Department reviewing strategic sea services

The Department of Infrastructure is considering long-term options for the provision of the Isle of Man's strategic sea services.

Expressions of interest are being invited from operators who can provide passenger and roll on/roll off freight ferry services to and from the Isle of Man.

The current User Agreement between the Isle of Man Government and the Steam Packet Company is in place until 2020, with both parties having an option to extend until 2026.

The Department is looking beyond the expiry of the current agreement to ensure the Isle of Man's ferry requirements are fully served into the future.

Operators have until 12 noon on Wednesday 7 January 2015 to register their initial interest. Applicants will then be invited to continue in the discussion process.

Infrastructure Minister Phil Gawne MHK said: 'Strong and dependable sea links are of significant importance to an island nation such as ours. Manx people require reliable, year-round ferry and freight services at competitive prices to meet their travel and business needs. Ferry operations also have a fundamental role to play in efforts to attract new investment and grow the economy.'

He added: 'The Department has a good working relationship with the Isle of Man Steam Packet, which has provided an excellent service over many years. There is no commitment to entering a new agreement with any operators at this stage. The current agreement with the Steam Packet still has at least five years to run and the Department is simply exploring options for the future as part of a long-term strategic review of the Isle of Man's sea services.'

Interested parties must have experience of passenger and roll on/roll off freight ferry services, including the operation of high speed craft. Companies will be expected to:

- Maximise local employment wherever possible

- Operate services through an Isle of Man-based company for the payment of taxes
- Meet all relevant safety and employment standards
- Be able to evidence the ability to operate reliable year-round services to Liverpool and Heysham
- Have an established record of providing passenger and roll on/roll off freight ferry services
- Have an operating model intended to generate increased passenger traffic

In addition the interested party will be expected to meet the following requirements:

- Vessels will be required to provide daily freight capacity of at least 5,000 metres
- Vessels will be required to provide daily passenger vehicle capacity of 1,500 vehicles
- Ro Pax vessels must have a minimum speed of 18 knots and fast craft of 30 knots
- Vessels will be required to provide daily passenger capacity of 6,000 persons
- Vessels must be registered on the Manx Shipping Registry

Interested parties can register their interest by emailing Mrs Ann Reynolds, Director of Ports, ann.reynolds@gov.im or writing to her at the Department of Infrastructure, Sea Terminal, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 2RF.

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