



Report 08.509
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Committee Transport & Access Committee
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Trial Seatoun ferry service

1. Purpose

To consider the future of the trial Seatoun ferry service.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

At its meeting on 13 February 2008, this Committee agreed to a three month trial of a ferry service between Wellington/Eastbourne and Seatoun. The trial began on 3 March. The trial was subsequently extended to 28 September.

The trial involved diverting the 8.05am sailing from Eastbourne to Wellington, and the 5.30pm sailing from Wellington to Eastbourne, to travel via Seatoun. A new sailing was also added in the afternoon, to travel from Wellington to Eastbourne via Seatoun.

The Committee agreed that for the trial to be considered to be successful, passenger numbers on the diverted trips, plus the ones either side of them, should show a net growth.

The cost of the trial was to be met by the operator.

4. Trial results

The trial results are as follows:

Morning:

- Patronage on the 8.05am sailing initially dipped slightly, but it has since recovered and grown in line with other services. It appears that around

half of the existing Wellington bound passengers transferred to earlier and later direct sailings, but were replaced by new passengers.

- Overall patronage on the three morning peak sailings surveyed (7.45am, 8.05am, and 8.35am) has increased by around 20% (March to May 2008, compared to the same period in 2007).
- Of the 'new' passengers, 18-20 are travelling between Eastbourne and Seatoun (mostly Scots College students), and about seven between Seatoun and Wellington.

Afternoon:

- Patronage on the new 3.40pm sailing is relatively low outside of the Seatoun – Eastbourne leg, which is primarily designed to take Scots College students home.
- Patronage on the 5.30pm sailing has reduced by about half, with most passengers appearing to have transferred to the earlier 5.15pm direct sailing. Few passengers are travelling into or out of Seatoun.
- Overall patronage on the five peak sailings (3.40pm, 4.30pm, 5.15pm, 5.30pm, and 6.10pm) has increased significantly (30%), but the increase is mainly on the direct 5.15pm and 6.10pm sailings.
- Of the 'new' passengers, about five are travelling between Wellington and Seatoun, and 18-20 between Seatoun and Eastbourne.

The trial can be regarded as being somewhat successful to date, with new journeys being made and overall patronage up significantly on the services monitored. Patronage growth on these services is much higher than for ferry patronage as a whole, which increased by only 6%, between the March-May period in 2007 and the same period in 2008.

However, the number of people using the service to/from Seatoun is small. There are a substantial number of new passengers travelling from Eastbourne to Seatoun, but these are almost exclusively students travelling to or from Scots College in Strathmore.

5. Options for the future

The ferry operator has indicated that it wishes to continue with the service on a permanent basis. This would be at no cost to this Council. As the trial has met the criteria set by this committee, it is suggested that the service be allowed to continue permanently.

6. Communication

The decisions of this Committee will need to be communicated to the public and operator following the Committee meeting.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Agrees to continue the Seatoun ferry service on a permanent basis.***

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