

# TravelWatch - *ISLE OF MAN*

**Arrey Troaitt – Ellan Vannin**

**Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers**

[www.travelwatch-isleofman.org](http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org)

## **MEDIA RELEASE: TravelWatch Encourages Public to Respond to Survey on Future of Ferry Services**

Back in July, passenger watchdog TravelWatch welcomed the Minister's Tynwald announcement that the Department of Infrastructure was to hold a public consultation on the future of ferry services, and now welcomes the survey questionnaire issued on 28 September.

The survey seeks the views of passengers and freight users on issues such as preferred departure times and choice of ports in North West England and Ireland, and requests the rating of items such as frequency of sailing, comfort and reliability of service.

Although a tick-box format may be easier for the Government to handle, the watchdog believes that this consultation is so important that there should be opportunity for informed comments from passengers to identify and highlight significant current issues, for the Steam Packet to address over the next few years. After all, from the Minister's stated three future options, it appears most unlikely that any company other than the Steam Packet will have any involvement prior to 2022, at the earliest. Therefore, TravelWatch suggests that the public may wish to add their comments on .....

- What do you like and dislike about travel on the Ben my Chree?
- What do you like and dislike about travel on the Manannan?
- Fast ferries offer faster crossings but are more prone to cancellation in adverse weather.
- Assuming the main ferry is a conventional ship, should the second vessel be a fast ferry or conventional ship?

Another significant omission is a question asking for views on passenger facilities and public transport connections at the ports, especially Liverpool. It is vital that the views of the travelling public are available to Tynwald, at the start of the Government's discussions and negotiations with Peel Ports, for the replacement of the Liverpool landing stage. TravelWatch understands that the agreement for the Steam Packet's use of the landing stage ceases at the end of 2016, that there are concerns that the stage is nearing the end of its design life, and thus may become unavailable. Therefore there is a need for a long term contract, with no unintended detrimental consequences, for new multi million pound river-berth facilities, which apparently are expected to be paid for by Manx interests. For the service to remain attractive for foot passengers, TravelWatch advocates strongly that any new facility in Liverpool should be located within walking distance of the city centre, and its bus and rail stations and that public transport links are available at any new ferry terminal.

**TravelWatch is encouraging passengers to respond by completing the survey, and by expressing any additional concerns and views, either on-line or in writing, to the Director of Ports, Sea Terminal Building, Douglas, IM1 2RF, before the closing date of 9 Nov 2015.**

October 8<sup>th</sup> 2015

### Note to Editors

Brendan O'Friel, Chair of TravelWatch, will be available for further comment if required on 833636.