



Notes of evidence

Name of meeting	POLICY COMMISSION FOR BUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Date and time	WEDNESDAY, 29 APRIL 2009 AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT IOW
Commission	Cllrs Jonathan Fitzgerald-Bond (Chairman), Charles Hancock, John Hobart, Peter Humber, Roger Mazillius, Ian Ward
Officers Present	Mr Jonathan Baker (Democratic Services), Mr Ashley Curzon (Economic & Tourism Development), Mr Paul Thistlewood (Democratic Services)
Stakeholders	None
Apologies	Cllr Henry Adams, Mr Stuart Love

1. **Notes of Evidence**

RESOLVED

The Notes of Evidence arising at the meeting held on [7 January 2009](#) were agreed

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

4. **Cross Solent Travel Costs – Blue Paper**

4.1 The Chairman advised the Commission that during the course of the Cross Solent travel costs enquiry, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) determined to undergo an investigation as requested by the local Member of Parliament.

4.2 Whilst a lot of work had been done by the Policy Commission, including hearing and recording evidence from the three local ferry operators between the Island and mainland UK, the Council would not be in a position to change fares, but merely provide a case to assist with any further enquiry.

4.3 The Commission also expressed some surprise that whilst the ferry operators had provided evidence, there was modest contribution from the business and tourism sector to put forward evidence for reducing the price of ferry fares.

- 4.4 Members wished to place on record their appreciation and respect of the willingness of all the ferry operators to attend past meetings and provide evidence as well as being open to questions and criticism.
- 4.5 Whilst the Island Ports Sustainability Study demonstrated potential for a fourth ferry operator, Cllr Hancock expressed his disappointment that this option was not explored further, believing that the best way forward in bringing prices down was to introduce more competition. The Chairman advised members that the OFT had advised that they would contact Cllr Hancock to discuss this further.
- 4.6 Cllr Mazillius stated however that it was his opinion that previous evidence from the ferry companies presented to the commission suggested that a fourth ferry operator would not result in lower prices and that there would be insufficient business during off peak times to justify an additional provider.
- 4.7 Members of the Commission discussed suggested amendments to the Blue Paper and the Chairman advised that the final agreed paper would be presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Economy, Leisure, Planning and Property for the Cabinet to note.
- 4.8 It was duly noted that as it was the final meeting of the Policy Commission for Business and Infrastructure before the local election on 4 June 2009, the Commission Members wished to place on record their thanks to the Chairman for his good work on the Policy Commission for Business and Infrastructure.

4.9 RESOLVED:

THAT the Blue Paper be amended at Paragraph 5.1 by adding "by a high level of such costs." at the end of the paragraph

THAT the Blue Paper be amended at Paragraph 5.3 by changing the second line from "and it is hoped" to "as it is expected" and on the third line - add "at / or" before "below inflation."

THAT the Blue Paper be amended at Paragraph 5.5 so the first line starts - "In view of the concerns expressed by Island residents, as exemplified by the number of supporting signatures referred to in paragraph 6.1.2, to arrange to set up regular meetings with the ferry companies to explore...."

THAT subject to the above amendments added, the Blue paper be agreed.

CHAIRMAN.....DATE.....