4.16 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the performance of the DFDS ferry service. (OQ.110/2026)

Will the Minister provide an update on the performance of the DFDS ferry service since it began operating in Jersey, assessed against the indicators of the ferry concession agreement, and please provide the number of cancellations over the past 6-month period, and that provision is in comparison against the performance of the previous service provider?

Deputy F.G. Voisin of St. Helier North (The Minister for Economic Development):

Between March 2025, when DFDS began operating Jersey's services, and October 2026, the company operated 3,889 services, 97 per cent of which were on time or had minimal delays. Over that period, 266 scheduled sailings were cancelled because of the weather and 94 because of technical or operational issues. Where cancellations occurred, DFDS ran 124 replacement sailings. I would like to point out to the Deputy and all Members to the Government's open data site on which DFDS's operational performance reports are published every quarter. Looking specifically at the last 6 months, DFDS scheduled 1,404 sailings but did not operate 103 of those; 61 because of *force majeure* events or those outside of the operator's control, and 42 for reasons which could be attributed to the operator. However, DFDS put on an additional 52 sailings over that period. In the equivalent 6 months in 2024, Condor Ferries reported 29 cancellations across its combined Jersey and Guernsey network, comprising one fault and 28 no-fault events.

4.16.1 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

What assessment has the Minister made of the impact of DFDS performance on tourism visitors numbers and the tourism confidence?

Deputy F.G. Voisin:

Well the figures speak for themselves. In the first year of operation, sea arrivals were down by about 15 per cent, if my memory serves me correctly, and this year we are maintaining the same number of arrivals as last year. Of course, there will be a reduction in overall numbers against the previous operator simply because, as Members will know, there is no Jersey/Guernsey interconnection. Also, passengers that were wanting to sail from St. Malo to Guernsey would also sail on the old Condor vessel.

4.16.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I understand that there is a policy in place, that may be a legal requirement for DFDS, that if there is a sailing which is delayed, for example, of over 120 minutes, you can claim back 50 per cent. I know this because I did that with travelling. Can I ask the Minister why this is not publicised more? Because anyone who is on a sailing of such where one person can claim that compensation, every booking can claim that compensation. Is it something that the Minister feels he could do more as a department to publicise in terms of people's consumer rights, especially given the monopoly situation that DFDS enjoys in Jersey? If not him, would he take this issue up both with DFDS and the Consumer Council to inform people of their rights?

Deputy F.G. Voisin:

Yes, I think we can certainly take this up with the Consumer Council and also DFDS. I think it is an important point that if passengers are entitled to a refund of some sort, then they should be aware of their right.

4.16.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Indeed, I think it would be a good way to make sure there is more money in people's pockets that they can spend in the economy. Would the Minister go one step further and make a requirement that DFDS should inform all passengers of their rights who have been booked on that? So rather than them having to apply for the compensation, they can be more proactive in making recompense for the loss that the passengers have experienced.

Deputy F.G. Voisin:

I am all for putting money into people's pockets. The other thing is of course we do need DFDS to be profitable so they can afford to buy new vessels. I will certainly give the Deputy an undertaking to look into this more closely and make sure that adequate information is provided to customers.

4.16.4 Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Following the Minister's recent reply, will the Minister consider undertaking an assessment of the impact that cancellations and delays may affect the Jersey economy, particularly the hospitality retail and agricultural sectors?

Deputy F.G. Voisin:

I think the issue is that the majority of cancellations are as a result of bad weather. For example, one of the vessels had a fire on board and that severely interrupted the service provided. What I would say in DFDS's defence is that they have put on a considerable number of additional sailings. While it is unfortunate that passengers get disrupted, I think that DFDS have done a reasonable job in making sure that our freight, especially our food, gets to Jersey. I believe that they should be given a pat on the back for making sure that our supermarkets were full of food after the recent storms. However, I will undertake to certainly make sure that customers are availed with the information to claim a refund. I can talk to my officers about doing an assessment, but these cancellations and delays are not voluntary, they happen for a good reason. Sometimes there are technical problems; the majority is it is wind.