

15 January 2026 - Peter Hargreaves

To: Scrutiny Communications <Scrutiny@gov.je>

Subject: DFDS Ferry Contract

Dear Sirs,

I attach comments on the DFDS contract & service , together with my JEP article on it dated 23 June.

DFDS, The Quality of the Service and Work Arounds

I attach my article from the JEP which reports on an interview with Chris Parker responsible for DFDS's services from Jersey. You will see it highlighted their poor start and suggested how it might be improved. It seems if anything things have got worse and clearly in Jersey the impression is that our interests are of little interest to DFDS. Talking to DFDS staff & French customs & Border personnel It is clear that they, if not DFDS management, consider this is the view of Jersey travellers. Talking to staff at Poole their view was that DFDS was not committed to Poole as a destination.

The outcome is unsurprising that with a decent cheaper service visitor numbers to Guernsey have increased but have decreased to Jersey.

We have a house in Brittany and family in the UK. Therefore we have made triangular trips DFDS to the UK, Brittany Ferries to Brittany & DFDS back from St Malo which highlights the poor DFDS service and that it is over expensive. Their weighting on freight is also unwelcome when Jersey residents are, or perceive they are, suffering a cost of living crisis.

A particular problem is that DFDS leaves too early from St Malo and returns too late necessitating staying in hotel accommodation there, increasing still further the new higher cost of journeys, Our reaction is to visit Brittany less frequently, but, when we do, stay longer, a work around.

Unsurprisingly St Malo has given preference to the home team, Brittany Ferries, so DFDS the interloper is disadvantaged in the availability of berths etc, This should have been recognised from the beginning.

DFDS's spend on advertising sponsoring our superb cricket team & advertising on the Liberation bus service has if anything a negative impact. This is supported by an AI enquiry about advertising to a population which has experience of a superior service. See below.

Something it highlights is the particular negative impact on the less well-off/ less mobile, This is supported as Scrutiny's requests on Facebook etc for feedback in

particular from these groups & those with children & dogs etc, This created a negative reaction, which should have been foreseen, as it appeared wotkish suggesting the views of these groups would be given more attention than other travellers. Actually it reflects, because of the cost and unhelpful departure & arrival times, that these groups are not using DFDS. Those who are are the better off with more expensive vehicles. This was reflected in a response we received when talking to staff in St Malo that the better off with expensive vehicles are representative of Jersey's population. We know they aren't, but it is another outcome of the DFDS approach, only the better off are travelling, day trips to St Malo, which were taken in the past just not happening,

The negative cultural impacts of the DFDS approach, by not working with Guernsey and making links to Brittany and Normandy more difficult should have been given greater emphasis. It is culturally damaging when our links with Guernsey and near France should be enhanced not made more expensive, slower and less convenient.

Where do we go from here?

So poor has been the DFDS service to date, there can be no confidence it will improve nor that Jersey's needs will be taken into account. As a result, DFDS will continue to run with few passengers, increasing the likelihood it is running at a loss on the service and therefore that it will be further neglected by DFDS compared to its profitable routes.

If the existing contract doesn't include a service level provision covering the issues raised here it should. If DFDS has met the service level provided for then this represents a failure by the ministers and civil servants in setting such a low bar. This is likely to be taken into account both in Jersey's forthcoming election and contributing to the low opinion expressed by much of the electorate with the civil service. If the service is to continue the service level should be renegotiated, subject to transparent renegotiation.

Better still would be to recognise that there just isn't sufficient demand to support Brittany Ferries with links to Guernsey, DFDS with links to Jersey, competition over links to the UK and France and neglected inter-island links.

Such realism could lead to two possibilities:

- 1) DFDS withdraws recognising it has significantly failed to impress and will be unprofitable over the extended contract period, or
- 2) The two Islands and two companies agree to work together to work out a workable schedule at acceptable prices, benefitting all. The forthcoming Election and new government provide the opportunity for such a political change.

AI response

Service provider A is replaced with B which then provides a significantly costlier & poorer quality service. B then spends highly pitching its service to a population which

has experience of the previous better service. What is the impact on the population of users?

The replacement of Service Provider A with Provider B, under the described conditions, is likely to have multifaceted negative impacts on the population of users. Below, I outline these effects in a structured manner, drawing on principles of consumer economics, behavioural psychology, and market dynamics. This analysis assumes a context where users have limited alternatives, such as in regulated industries or essential services, though outcomes may vary based on market competition and regulatory oversight.

1. Economic Impacts

- **Increased Financial Burden:** Users face higher costs for the service, which could strain household or organizational budgets. This may lead to reduced disposable income for other necessities, potentially exacerbating socioeconomic inequalities. For instance, lower-income users might forgo the service altogether if it becomes unaffordable, resulting in exclusion from essential benefits previously provided by A.
- **Diminished Value Proposition:** The combination of elevated prices and reduced quality erodes the perceived value of the service. Users may experience opportunity costs, such as investing time and resources to mitigate the poorer performance (e.g., seeking workarounds or supplementary services).

2. Quality and Satisfaction Impacts

- **Decline in Service Experience:** With poorer quality, users encounter frustrations such as unreliable performance, reduced features, or inadequate support. This can manifest in tangible disruptions, like slower response times or frequent failures, leading to decreased productivity or well-being.
- **Heightened Dissatisfaction and Frustration:** Having direct experience with Provider A's superior offering, users are prone to comparative dissatisfaction. This "contrast effect" in consumer psychology amplifies negative perceptions of B, fostering resentment and a sense of loss. Surveys in similar scenarios (e.g., utility or telecom transitions) often reveal sharp drops in customer satisfaction scores.

3. Psychological and Behavioral Impacts

- **Resistance to Marketing Efforts:** Provider B's heavy investment in pitching—through advertising, promotions, or public relations—may encounter skepticism or outright rejection. Users' prior positive experiences with A create a cognitive anchor, making them less susceptible to persuasive messaging. This could result in "advertising fatigue"

or backlash, where aggressive campaigns are viewed as manipulative, further eroding trust.

- Behavioral Responses: Users might engage in adaptive behaviors, such as voicing complaints through reviews, social media, or regulatory channels, potentially leading to collective action like petitions or boycotts. In competitive markets, some may switch to alternatives if available, though inertia or switching costs (e.g., contracts, setup fees) could trap others. Over time, this may cultivate apathy or resignation, where users tolerate the inferior service due to perceived helplessness.
- Long-Term Attitudinal Shifts: Repeated exposure to such transitions could breed cynicism toward the industry or service providers in general, diminishing overall user engagement and loyalty. In extreme cases, it might influence public opinion, prompting demands for policy interventions like antitrust measures or consumer protections.

4. Broader Societal Implications

- Potential for Market Distortions: If B's pitching succeeds in misleading new or uninformed users, it could perpetuate inefficient resource allocation, where marketing expenditures outweigh service improvements. However, for the experienced population, this may highlight market failures, such as monopolistic tendencies or inadequate regulation.
- Equity Considerations: Vulnerable subgroups (e.g., elderly users or those in remote areas) may suffer disproportionately, as they often have fewer options to adapt or seek redress.

In summary, the primary impacts on users include financial strain, reduced satisfaction, and psychological resistance, potentially culminating in advocacy for change. To mitigate these

effects, stakeholders might consider enhanced regulatory scrutiny or incentives for quality improvements. If this scenario pertains to a specific industry or case, additional details could refine this assessment.