

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO
THE STRANGFORD LOUGH FERRY SERVICE TIMETABLE**

A CONSULTATION PAPER

The consultation period will end on 11 December 2015

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Design and Consultancy Services
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September 2015

transportni

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Background

TransportNI is considering an amendment to the Strangford Lough Ferry Service timetable to provide an additional early morning sailing from Portaferry on weekday mornings.

Over recent years TransportNI has received several requests for a permanent early morning sailing from Portaferry. The first sailing from Portaferry on weekdays is at 07.45 and is generally at full vehicle capacity.

Since 2011, an additional sailing at 07.15 from Portaferry has been provided during the annual refit of the MV Portaferry II. During the refit the smaller ferry, the MV Strangford, is in service and does not have the capacity to cope with the demand for the normal first sailing at 07.45. The early sailing is welcomed by many commuters from Portaferry who either have to travel by road to get to work on time or get to work later than they would prefer.

Passenger count records show that, on weekdays, the early morning demand exceeds the demand for the last sailings in the evening. In response to this demand and requests from the public and public representatives, TransportNI has decided to explore the possibility of making the early sailing permanent.

Constraints

- An extension of the ferry operating hours would result in an increase in operating costs and would require significant changes to the terms and conditions of employment of the ferry crews. It has therefore been decided that an additional early sailing would have to be offset by cutting back the timetable somewhere else.
- To comply with legislation on noise nuisance during specified hours at night, it will not be possible to provide an earlier sailing from Strangford.

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/noise-nuisance-and-neighbours>

Proposed Timetable Change

The proposed change is to introduce a sailing from Portaferry at 07.20 on weekdays all year round. This would be offset by dropping the last two sailings in the evening (Sunday to Friday) from 1 October to 31 March. From 1 April to 30 September the existing evening sailings will be unchanged. Over the course of the year, the total number of sailings offered by the ferry service will be the same.

Times are proposed new timetable. Times in brackets are existing sailings.

From Strangford Departs on the hour and half hour	First Sailing	Last Sailing 1 April – 30 September	Last Sailing 1 October – 31 March
Weekdays	07.35 (07.30)	10.30	10.00 (10.30)
Saturday	08.00	11.00	11.00
Sunday	09.30	10.30	10.00 (10.30)

From Portaferry Departs at quarter past and quarter to the hour	First Sailing	Last Sailing 1 April – 30 September	Last Sailing 1 October – 31 March
Weekdays	07.20 (07.45)	10.45	10.15 (10.45)
Saturday	08.15	11.15	11.15
Sunday	09.45	10.45	10.15 (10.45)

Passenger Numbers

The numbers of passengers and vehicles on the early and late sailings during the 2014 – 2015 financial year are given below.

	FROM STRANGFORD			
	April 14– September 14		October 14– March 15	
	Avg Passengers per sailing	Avg Vehicles per sailing	Avg Passengers per sailing	Avg Vehicles per sailing
07:30	11	6	15	8
08:00	9	4	9	5
22:00	15	5	8	3
22:30	11	4	8	3

	FROM PORTAFERRY			
	April 14– September 14		October 14– March 15	
	Avg Passengers per sailing	Avg Vehicles per sailing	Avg Passengers per sailing	Avg Vehicles per sailing
07:15			15	10
07:45	57	23	73	21
08:15	69	17	104	17
22:15	7	2	3	1
22:45	6	2	3	1

Comments

TransportNI would like to hear your comments on the proposed timetable change.

Comments may be submitted in writing, by e-mail or by telephone. The consultation is open until 11 December 2015. A summary of all comments received will be published on the Department's website at the end of the consultation period.

Comments can be sent to: Mrs Katrina McMahon
TransportNI
Strangford Lough Ferry Service
Rathkeltair House
Market Street
Downpatrick
BT30 6AJ

Telephone: 0300 200 78 98

E-mail : roads.strangfordferry.feedback@drdni.gov.uk

Decision on the proposed timetable changes

TransportNI will make a decision on the way forward following consideration of all comments received.

Legislative Background

The Department operates the Strangford Lough Ferry Service under Part VIII of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. Article 103 gives the Department the authority publish a timetable as it considers fit.

Consultees

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Newry Mourne and Down District Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Ms Margaret Ritchie MP

Lady Sylvia Hermon MP

Jim Shannon MP

The Consumer Council

Portaferry Community Collective

Strangford Community Association

Strangford Community Association Developments

Maritime & Coastguard Agency

General Public