

Cowes Floating Bridge Operators Meeting

Items Discussed:

Concept design presented for the operating crews of the Cowes Chain Ferry to discuss the new design and gain feedback from an operational point of view. Also discussed proposed machinery and machinery space set up. The following points were noted:

- Single pilot house being located on north side in the centre. It was felt that this was a good idea. Initial thoughts were that it may restrict the view at West Cowes side, being able to look at the road. Other options were discussed for instance locating it on the south side however it was felt that with the use of cameras this would be the best position for the pilot house.
- Chain Wash system. It was discussed that there is a problem with a build-up of seaweed in the chain troughs particularly around the guide wheel. It was discussed that a chain wash system could be installed in the chain trough which would help break down the sea weed that gets wrapped around the chain. It was also noted that the Bramble Bush Bay use a fire hose to wash the chain trough out of the sea weed, at the same time testing the firefighting system. This was felt to be a good idea and that fire hydrant locations should be positioned to enable this practise to be carried out.
- The issue of grounding was raised and it was noted that grounding always seems to occur on the east side of the river only. A question was asked to find out if anything was going to be incorporated into the new design to try and eliminate this problem. A depth gauge is going to be fitted and trialled shortly on the existing floating bridge, depending on the success of this, a depth gauge could be incorporated into the new floating bridge design.
- Operation of the ramps was also discussed. The primary control/operation of the ramps will be done from the pilot house. It was suggested that local control be included to allow the operator on the car deck to be able to open or close the ramps should they need to without having to go to the pilot house to do this.
- Wash down facility was also raised. It was felt that a wash down system, using fresh water would help the operators to clean the ferry at certain intervals.
- The inclusion of a bike rack was also raised. It was discussed that it could be useful to have a bike rack on the vehicle deck to help with the stowage of bikes. It was felt that with the crossing time being so short that cyclists may not want to store their bikes in the rack but prefer to hold onto them themselves for the crossing.
- The main engines and auxiliary generators were discussed. It was proposed to have two main engines, each one capable to cover the full load of the bridge ensuring 100% redundancy. It was proposed that a third auxiliary generator would be preferred. It was felt that with the space available this request could be accommodated.

- Main and auxiliary engine exhaust system. It was discussed whether a dry exhaust or wet exhaust system should be used on the new floating bridge. It was felt that for ease of maintenance and with the amount of seaweed found in the river, a dry exhaust system would be preferred for the new bridge.
- Two fuel tanks are proposed for the floating bridge. It was discussed that the tanks should be cross connected and that all engines can be fed from either tank to allow greater flexibility in the fuel system.
- The crew recreational area, area to make tea and coffee, was also addressed. The initial concept design had allowed for this in the pilot house, however, it was felt that it would be better to locate this outside of this space and incorporate it into the car deck area.

Conclusion

The general conclusion was that the concept design is good and it is felt that it will work well for the operation intended.

The proposed duplication of the machinery space to improve redundancy and safety was considered beneficial.