

Objective One case study public realm



Objective One is
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The Objective One Partnership
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

King Harry Ferry
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The projects in the Public Realm investment cluster support the conservation of the environment of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where it contributes to economic regeneration, particularly the economic vitality and viability of our towns and villages.

The historic environment and cultural heritage of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are fundamental building blocks in the strong sense of regional distinctiveness and identity felt in the area, which in turn is a major contributor to the product of Cornwall. This distinctiveness is a key strength and developing the ability to secure economic benefits from the heritage is a key plank in achieving a sustainable and successful economy.

King Harry Ferry

The seventh King Harry Ferry, launched into service in May 2006, offers a more environmentally friendly, quiet, efficient and extended service on the River Fal.

A ferry has operated over King Harry Reach on the River Fal for more than 500 years, providing a vital transport link between the Roseland Peninsula and Truro, Falmouth and the West of Cornwall. The new chain ferry is eleven metres longer than its predecessor and can carry 34 cars - eleven more than the older version. Because it is larger and more fuel efficient the ferry will reduce the length and amount of car journeys in the region, encourage more visitors and reduce emissions by 75 per cent.

When the King Harry Steam Ferry Company changed ownership in 2001 one of the most important issues on the agenda was building a new ferry, since the current one was already 27 years old. £981,750 of Objective One ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) was invested in the £3 million project which will help to ensure the future of the company and means a sustainable replacement and repair plan can be drawn up.

The new ferry was constructed in Pendennis Shipyard, in Falmouth, with architectural input from the Grimshaw Partnership, a company which also designed The Education Centre at the Eden Project. It took a year to build the new ferry, which made its first trip on May 9th 2006.

Thanks to the addition of glass panels, passengers can now enjoy a spectacular view downstream on the trip between Feock and Philleigh. Clear viewing plates over the drive wheels means passengers can also see how the chain mechanism works. Associated IT equipment will track nearby traffic flow and provide information on ferry waiting



The seventh King Harry Ferry, launched into service in May 2006

times. Journey time can be cut by up to 30 minutes on a return trip to the Roseland Peninsula.

“We are absolutely delighted that within five years we’ve managed to deliver a new ferry for our passengers,” said Tim Light the managing director of the King Harry Steam Ferry Company.

The first recorded crossing at that point on the Fal took place on September 19th 1889 with just two people aboard – the secretary of the King Harry Steam Ferry Company and a representative of the Gazette newspaper.

During the Second World War the River Fal was used for preparations for the Normandy Landings and D-Day, mainly by American Army and Navy. General Eisenhower was a recorded passenger of the King Harry Ferry during an inspection of the preparation of D-Day. However, the ferry service was in danger due to the poor quality of coal used. After the problem was mentioned to a high ranking US Naval Officer, the ferry was supplied with best steam coal till the end of the war.

The Ferry has always been praised for its reliability, the only time the Ferry stopped operating for a longer period was the first half of 1951. Ferry number four was about to replace King Harry Ferry number three, but when being tugged from Penzance the rope broke and the appointed rescue ship had to rush to the aid of a tanker in Bay of Biscay. The Ferry ended up drifting into the rocks, where it got badly damaged. It took four months to repair it.

The Ferry, one of only five chain ferries in the country, supports an average of 200 commuter trips a day and is a vital lifeline for people living and working in the area.