

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST CLEMENT**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 15th JANUARY 2008

Question

Would the Minister confirm that several sailings of both conventional ferries to the UK in the week prior to Christmas ran as much as seven hours behind schedule, despite fair weather and if so, would he account for these anomalies and state whether any breach of Service Level Agreements occurred as a result?

Answer

As widely covered by the media, the Commodore Goodwill experienced an incident during berthing operations whilst manoeuvring in St Helier Harbour during strong winds on Monday 10th December. Damage to the vessel caused as a result of this incident, meant that she had to be taken out of service for a number of days.

The priority for all concerned at this time was to ensure that the vital supply of freight to the Island from the UK and France during the run up to Christmas was maintained with minimum disruption.

The Commodore Goodwill was replaced by the Coutances on 13th December when a two vessel schedule was resumed. The Commodore Goodwill returned to service on 19th December, albeit on reduced power.

For five days, the Commodore Clipper carried double the usual amount of freight in order to maintain the necessary level of freight service in the run up to Christmas. The resulting increase in loading and discharge times led to delays to sailings of approximately 3 hours.

When the Commodore Goodwill returned to service she was running on only one engine. This technical issue has resulted in longer delays to sailings for this vessel – two of which were in excess of 7 hours.

The Service Level Agreement with Condor Limited covers passenger and car ferry shipping services between Jersey and the UK. This agreement does not cover the carriage of freight.

I can confirm that there was no breach of the Service Level Agreement which sets out the requirement for regular scheduled services with at least one fast ferry and one conventional ro-pax vessel. Delays caused by technical or adverse weather issues would not result in a breach of the Agreement however, in the event of technical problems resulting in a delay over 4 hours, passengers are entitled to cancel their bookings and receive a full refund.

Despite adverse weather conditions, by using other vessels in their fleet and by chartering an additional vessel, Condor Ferries made every effort to ensure that business and customer demands for freight were met. Indeed they were met at minimum inconvenience to the Island during the time the service was disrupted.

Deputy Alan Maclean, the Assistant Minister for Economic Development with responsibility for Jersey Harbours, and I observed first hand Condor's Port operation in the run up to Christmas. We were impressed with the efforts made to minimise the impact of the disrupted service and would like to thank Condor for the considerable efforts made to ensure the resilience of our Island service during what were difficult conditions.