

2.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the costs associated with the bus texting service and the relocation of buses to the Albert Quay:

Are the costs associated with the bus texting service and the relocation of buses to the Albert Quay incorporated within the renewed contract entered into with Connex and, if not, who bears these costs and how much are they?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

The short answers are no and yes. As previously advised to the States, the annual cost of the text messaging service is £25,200. This is being funded from within the Transport and Technical Services revenue budget because it was a T.T.S. initiative which piggybacked on the back of the electronic stand allocation system which was required at Liberation Station. As previously stated, it is hoped that advertising revenue will in due course offset some or all of those costs. In respect of the Albert Pier facility, the first year cost of utilising that is estimated at £76,000 and this has been incorporated into the contract with Connex. In answers to my questions to the Deputy on 1st April I advised him of payments to Connex relating to the original contract for the scheduled services, the newer schools leisure service and also additional payments relating to the operation of Liberation Station which includes the Albert Pier facilities. The extended contracts include all those elements.

2.8.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

When the Minister promoted the new contract or the extension of the contract with Connex he mentioned about £100,000 repayment. Is this a case, Sir, of the good Lord giveth with one hand and taketh with another? Are we getting a net benefit or is this £100,000 somehow being subsumed in other costs that Connex is bearing?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The Lord moves in mysterious ways and indeed this may have the hand of the Lord upon it but, in due course, no, Sir, this is not about taking money back with one hand. This will see total net deliveries to the public. Indeed it is only this week that we have seen the first full benefit of the extension of the contracts which is that previously relief services on key commuter routes in the Island are now permanent scheduled services and in due course will appear in the timetable. So we are already seeing the benefits.

2.8.2 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:

Can the Minister tell Members whether there is a provision for any incentives for Connex built into the new contract with them for improved services, for instance?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I have explained this to the Assembly before but clearly not in an adequate way. There are incentives within the contract itself where Connex notably achieves much higher passenger levels revenues, but essentially the main control over the operator is a series of effectively penalties or disincentives such that if buses are arriving outside an agreed envelope, the department is able to mount penalty points over a particular period of one year. There is a list of what constitutes penalties. I would be very happy if the Deputy would like to come and see what those are. That is really how the operation is administered.