

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY DEPUTY G.P.
SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 2008

Question

Following the withdrawal of flights or operators from certain routes to and from Jersey over the winter period, will the Minister inform members what connections to the north of England (Leeds/Bradford, Durham/Tees Valley, Newcastle, Doncaster, Liverpool) will be available to Islanders over the period October to March?

Answer

The global airline industry is currently facing unprecedented trading circumstances as a result of the high global oil price. As recently as last week, we have seen the collapse of the airline XL, the UK's third largest tour operator, as just one more reminder of how fragile the industry is.

A reduction in air services from Jersey over the winter period is normal and that every year airlines reduce capacity to meet the typically lower demand.

Although airlines are still finalising winter 2008/2009 schedules, it is fair to say that with the vastly increased costs they are facing there may well be deeper reductions this year. An example of this is the recently announced suspension of winter services by bmibaby to Birmingham. However, the full winter schedule is expected to be known by the middle of October.

Notwithstanding this, I am pleased to advise that low-cost carrier easyJet will continue to operate a thrice-weekly service to Liverpool over the winter period and daily services to Manchester and Nottingham East Midlands will be retained.

As anticipated, services to Leeds Bradford, Durham Tees Valley, Newcastle and Doncaster will be suspended for the winter but will return to the network as planned for summer 2009.

We must continue to acknowledge that considerable work has been done to increase air services to Jersey. Had we not grown the level of business so successfully over the last two years with new services by bmibaby, bmi, easyJet, Jet2, Flybe, Aer Lingus, Blue Islands and Lufthansa, we could have been in a more precarious position than we are this coming winter season.

I am confident that, despite the current challenges of the industry, the work that Jersey Airport has undertaken to gain more business means we are likely to achieve the planned growth of around 5% this year.