

### **5.3 The Deputy of St. Mary of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the criteria for the purchase of new buses:**

What criteria, if any, does the Minister use when assessing which new buses to buy for our public transport network, and can he update Members on progress with the purchase of these new vehicles?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis (Assistant Minister for Transport and Technical Services - rapporteur):**

In the first instance I need to clarify that it is not Transport and Technical Services who purchase vehicles but the bus operator Connex. However, Transport and Technical Services have been working closely with Connex over the last few months to help with the specification of 5 new Enviro 200 buses which Connex have procured to come into service within the next few weeks ready for the summer season. Connex have worked hard with the designers to maximise the benefits of the increase in cabin space these buses provide in order to improve the comfort of the passenger, and I look forward to seeing them in service soon.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Supplementary, Sir, the Minister accepts that he ...

**The Bailiff:**

I am sorry, Deputy, we are not quorate, so usher, can you summon Members back please.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Can we have the Constables back in, Sir?

**The Bailiff:**

Sometimes it is the Constables, sometimes it is the Senators and sometimes it is the Deputies.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

It is particularly early this morning.

**The Bailiff:**

Very well, we are now quorate again. Deputy of St. Mary, you were going to ask a supplementary question.

#### **5.3.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Thank you, Sir, if I can remember it. Yes, I can. The Minister accepted that T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) is responsible for, as he said, working closely with Connex on the specification of new buses, so he does accept responsibility for this aspect. He mentioned the comfort of passengers, and I welcome that, and that is indeed important. Could he enlarge on the provision within these new buses for buggies, for enough space for people's shopping, for wheelchairs and for bikes?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

The current bus size is 2.365 metres wide and 8.9 metres long. It is a 29-seater, with 14 standing. The new buses will be 2.44 metres wide and 10.77 metres long, which is a 35-seater with a possibility of 22 standing which also includes one space for a wheelchair or other.

### **5.3.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:**

The Deputy of St. Mary touched on the question I was going to ask, but we did not get a comprehensive answer, so I will ask the question also. I just wondered whether you had discussed with Connex the possibility of provision being made for bicycles to be carried on buses. I am sure there are plenty of people who live in the outlying Parishes who would like to cycle more but the prospect of cycling up Beaumont Hill or Queens Road would probably prove a little bit too difficult, so I would be very interested to know what thought you have given to that.

### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I thank the Deputy for that question and the department has been looking at that very problem. We have had a demonstration by Connex of a suitable bike rack which fits to the rear of certain buses. There are obviously certain safety precautions, rear view cameras, *et cetera*, but it is something the department and Connex are both working on and hopefully we will be seeing something in the not too distant future.

### **5.3.3 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I am very pleased with the answer about cycles because we do need to have as many competitive advantages in the tourism market as we can have. I would say that the important matter is provision for our visitors as well as for locals. Can the Minister confirm, firstly, will there be a round-the-Island route in the summer schedule, and secondly, does he not agree that it would be a fantastic idea, a good idea, if that route was able to carry bikes? Because I can see the marketing advantages for the Tourism Department if that was to be the case.

### **The Bailiff:**

I am not clear what that has to do with the original question, but anyway.

### **The Deputy of St. Mary:**

To do with the specification of the buses.

### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I would be delighted to see that, as I am, shall we say, a born-again cyclist. I am trying to lose weight and I do cycle more now than I used to as a young child. I would like to see either a trailer fitted to the bus where bicycles could be put on, or I think the most realistic option would be a safety cycle rack where bikes could be fitted to the rear of buses and, as I say, Connex have demonstrated one of those models to us and it is something we are looking into. Whether it will be this summer, I am not too sure, but it is definitely in the pipeline.

### **The Bailiff:**

We come next to the question which Deputy Le Claire is to ask. Do you still wish to ask the question, Deputy?