

2.11 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the transfer of staff from Connex to CT Plus:

Will the Minister inform Members how many bus drivers have now been transferred to CT Plus on full-time contracts from Connex, how many driving positions remain to be filled and whether non-driving staff, that is administrators, cleaners and mechanics, have been transferred, and if not, why not?

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

The CT Plus contract will commence on 1st January 2013. That is the date on which staff are eligible to transfer from Connex to CT Plus. They will then start employment with CT Plus at that time. No staff have been transferred as yet, they will transfer on 1st January 2013 and their first operational day with CT Plus will be Tuesday, 2nd January 2013. All eligible staff including drivers, administrators, cleaners and mechanics either have been or will be offered positions with CT Plus. The process of arranging the transfers of eligible staff is ongoing. Please see my written response to question 7268. T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services), Connex and CT Plus continue to work together to facilitate the transfer of staff from Connex to CT Plus. Because the process is ongoing, I cannot confirm the exact numbers of staff who have decided to transfer because this is changing on a daily basis but I am pleased to say the general response has been very positive. Thank you.

2.11.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister state when these people may be expected to have a look and examine a potential contract for their jobs and will he guarantee that none will be made redundant come 1st January?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, most have signed contracts already. As of Friday, 30th November 2012, transfer letters have been issued to all eligible staff except the night-time cleaners and accounts manager, these will be issued earlier this week. In general the few personnel that have chosen not to transfer have done so for personal reasons, for example being close to retirement. The additional and replacement full-time drivers required will be in the first instance recruited from within the existing pool of part-time driving staff where suitable. CT Plus has had over 100 applications from Islanders who would like to join the bus service, the majority of whom have the necessary qualifications. CT Plus also intends to train and recruit from the Island's Back to Work Scheme. Currently, 53 drivers are required for the start of CT Plus' service from January 2013, an increase of 8 full-time permanent driver positions. For the summer service, CT Plus will need to increase this by an estimated further 12 full-time driving positions.

2.11.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Is that 10 minutes for questions now, following that statement by the Minister? Can the Minister confirm whether or not, he did say that the first operational day will be Tuesday the 2nd, can he confirm whether the staff are expected to go in on New Year's Day in order to train, and if so, what kind of... how many of them will be expected to do that?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Not to my knowledge.

2.11.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Minister endeavour to find out because I have heard... presumably it is a new contract. The outgoing company leave on 31st December, that leaves only one day before operations can start. The training presumably must start on 1st January and I have heard information to that effect so would the Minister go away and perhaps confirm whether that is true or not?

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

I think he has undertaken to do that already.

Deputy M. Tadier:

That would be great.

2.11.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Without apportioning blame, tempting though it may be, would the Minister confirm that one of the issues has been this very strange notion of a contract? There appears to have been a formal contract and there appears to have been an informal set of conditions forming yet another contract. Would he agree that this has been the situation and that he has taken every step possible to ensure that there is never a repetition of this kind of conundrum and these problems of wrestling with what is or what is not the definitive contract?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Absolutely, and I thank the Deputy for his questions. The contract says that I will use my reasonable endeavours to transfer staff but I will use my best endeavours to transfer staff. I mean, I can only deal with formal agreements. Informal agreements, I am afraid, are not valid.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Do you wish a final supplementary, Deputy Southern? I think it should have been Deputy Trevor Pitman but I think he was hiding. Deputy Trevor Pitman first.

2.11.5 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I do not deliberately hide, you know. Could the Minister clarify, he said that the vast majority had already signed contracts. Could he just enlarge upon that for the Assembly with some figures as to what sort of percentage we are dealing with because there seems to be some dispute, confusion around that statement?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, it is still about 30 but I believe some members are still on holiday but I believe it may be 3 or 4 who will not be transferring, they may have other jobs, they may be retiring.

2.11.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that clause 18.3 of the Connex contract states that the Committee, now the Minister, shall ensure that all of the contractor's staff are taken on by the incoming service provider on the same terms and conditions as apply at the date of the issue of the tender? Is that the fact, and has he ensured that that will happen?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, in fact it has been improved upon. I believe it is equivalent.