

3.10 Deputy J.H. Young of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the frequency of the route 12 day time bus service:

When the Minister approves the new CT Plus timetable, will he ensure the frequency of the route 12 daytime bus service to the residents of Noirmont, Portelet and Ouaisne is improved or the service at least restored between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. each day as provided by the previous operator?

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

I should first point out that both the service 12 and service 12a follow the same route between St. Helier, St. Aubin, St. Brelade's Bay, La Moye and Corbière. Service 12 terminates at Corbière and follows the reverse of the above route back towards St. Helier and service 12a extends to L'Etacq before returning to Corbière on to St. Helier. The standard 12 route operates in the early morning, 6.15 a.m. to 9.20 a.m., the evenings 5.00 p.m. to 11.48 p.m. while the extended 12a route forms the daytime service. Since Liberty Bus began operating the public transport network on 2nd January between 10.00 a.m. and 4.50 p.m., all departures on the 12 and 12a have operated exactly the same times as both autumn/winter 2012 timetable and the autumn 2011/spring 2012 timetable under the previous bus operator. Specifically, buses in the westbound direction call at Portelet at 11.37 a.m., 1.37 p.m., 2.37 p.m. and 4.37 p.m. and buses in the eastbound direction call at Portelet at 9.56 a.m., 10.56 a.m., 12.56 p.m., 2.56 p.m. and 3.56 p.m. with an additional journey at 4.16 p.m. Monday to Fridays only. The only change under Liberty Bus has been the way these departures are depicted within their timetable booklets. As service 12 has been separated out from service 12a and printed on different pages, it is possible this mistakenly gives the impression that daytime buses do not operate to Portelet. As the casual reader might look into the service 12 timetable pages, they conclude that there are no buses calling at Portelet between 8.56 a.m. and 5.22 p.m. I understand that Liberty Bus plan to revise the format in the next timetable booklet publication so that all services to Portelet appear on the same page.

3.10.1 Deputy J.H. Young:

I thank the Minister for his masterly answer. Is he saying that casual readers of the new timetable - and I am pleased to see Members have got it - particularly those residents who live in that important part of my Parish constituency, have misunderstood? What they are saying is that they used to get a half-hour service and this is important and now they propose to have a 2-hourly service. Is he saying that somehow this has all got confused and they are wrong?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

What I am saying is because it is separated out in their directory, it is misinterpreted. All I can say is turn over the page. [Laughter]

3.10.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Does the Minister not think it makes a mockery of the States of Jersey supporting the tourism industry to potentially remove a bus service from the number 20 bus route up at La Pouquelaye or La Grande Route de Mont a l'Abbe to be precise? Also, what consideration is he going to give to those elderly people who have to walk an additional half mile to catch the bus?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, this is a question about the route 12 bus service to Noirmont, Portelet and Ouaisne. That is the thrust of the question. We are not going to open questioning to every bus route on the Island. [Laughter]

3.10.3 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

Notwithstanding that route 12 appears to be travelling west, I have been told by Parishioners that they have been waiting for the service near Millbrook only for it not to appear and I wonder whether the Minister can confirm this and advise what he is doing to rectify it.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

All services are up for discussion at the moment. More meetings are being held and any deficiencies are being rectified as soon as possible. If the Constable would like to contact Liberty Bus, I am sure they would be happy to hear from her.

3.10.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Minister not confirm that the times he has read out do not allow for the timely conveyance of Deputy Young's Parishioners to appear before the Planning Applications Panel? [Laughter]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Minister, I suppose this is probably not within your scope of expertise. [Laughter]

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I have no idea what time the Planning Applications Panel starts but I am sure we can accommodate them.

3.10.5 The Connétable of St. John:

Given the questioner's luck within St. Brelade on route 12 to have had or having a 2-hour service or a half-hour service, is there any chance that route 12 could be redirected to St. John and we have the half-hour service there? [Laughter]

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, Connétable, I am not going to allow that one. If I may say so, it was an imaginative effort.

3.10.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Would the Minister not agree that this is symptomatic of the Island-wide bus service at the present time and would he not agree that it would have been better for the new operator to have followed the old Connex routes until it was realised what changes, if any, were necessary because things are changing almost on a daily basis and people are now getting used to getting back in their cars?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, in hindsight I would agree but the Deputy is well aware of the problems that we have had with CT Plus Liberty Bus and they are being rectified on a daily basis and I am urging CT Plus Liberty Plus to pull out all the stops to get everything sorted as soon as possible [Aside] ... no pun intended.

3.10.7 Deputy J.H. Young:

Would the Minister accept that there is considerable confusion and will he make attempts, please, to try and communicate clearly in a form that people can understand that the frequency of the bus services will be restored to not less than it was previously, particularly where they are subject to delays, missed buses and so on and route 12 can sometimes take more than 2 hours to get where they wish to go?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It is my wish not just to match the previous bus service but also to exceed it and I am having now weekly meetings with Liberty Bus to ensure that that happens.