

2019.03.26

9 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the parking charges at Jersey Airport: [OQ.82/2019]

Was the Minister, as shareholder representative, informed of the 14 per cent pay rise in parking charges at the airport before they were introduced?

Deputy S.J. Pinel (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

Sir, may I ask the Assistant Minister to answer that question, please?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy L.B.E. Ash of St. Clement (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

It is a fairly short answer: yes, we were informed.

3.9.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I expected such a fairly short answer. Does the Minister agree that such a pay rise is well beyond the cost of living and, therefore, inappropriate to put upon Islanders, who use the airport on a regular basis?

Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

No, I do not. It is an increase of 10p. It is the first increase since 2011. I did have a look, last night, through some of the other airports, just so we could compare; 80p we charge. Luton is £8, Stanstead £5.50, Birmingham £5.10 but you have an hour in Birmingham, they are slightly more generous, Edinburgh £4 for 15 minutes and Gatwick, Heathrow and Manchester £4 for 30 minutes. I think we are still pretty reasonably priced at 80p.

3.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Will the Assistant Minister advise the Assembly whether the airport is self-financing all its developments? I am not trying to advocate higher parking charges, by the way, but is it not true that the airport is receiving no money from the States and has to finance its developments through its own means?

Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

Yes, that is true. Obviously, the Ports, who run the airport, do have to self-finance. They will have to loan money to redevelop the terminal, which now, as I am sure the Deputy is aware, has to come under international air regulations.

3.9.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given the Assistant Minister's answers, should Islanders be expecting even more significant rises in parking charges in the future?

Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

That is not really for me to say at the moment. I would expect that there will be cost-of-living rises, ongoing, but the whole parking issue at the airport is shortly to change with the development of a new terminal; for instance, there will be no set-down immediately outside departures.

3.9.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister has compared Jersey and its airport with other large cities, such as Edinburgh and their parking charges. But would he also compare, for comparison purposes, what the relative parking is at their airports and their city centres compared with Jersey, which has an 85 pence hourly parking rate in St. Helier, with its airport charges?

Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

It is a question about airports, rather than city centres, I think. I will give you a comparison with the Isle of Man, which is £1 at the airport, so we are still 20p cheaper than the Isle of Man.

3.9.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think it is relevant, because one equates the cost of living in our place where we live and if you pay 85 pence for parking in the town centre, the maximum with a pay card, you might resent paying a significantly higher amount at the airport, whereas in a big city like Edinburgh, which has very ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, is there a question?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes. Does the Assistant Minister acknowledge that in comparing with U.K. cities, which have completely different parking charges and structures, that he is not comparing like-for-like and being unhelpful in his comparisons to the Assembly?

Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

I feel I have been very helpful, giving you the comparisons with the airports to which we travel to from here. I have given you comparisons with the Isle of Man, which is an island jurisdiction. The cost of living in Jersey, I would say, is fairly similar to London, so we would be looking at Gatwick and Heathrow, which are £4 for 30 minutes, so we are £3.20 cheaper.

3.9.6 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am sure the Assistant Minister understands that the cost of parking in Luton and Edinburgh is irrelevant to me, to this Assembly, or this question. When presented with the information about this 14 per cent parking charge rise, could the Minister confirm whether he challenged the leadership at the airport on their reasons for doing so and pushed back, so to speak?

Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

No, I did not. The only thing I did challenge on is why it had taken since 2011 for us to make such a move.