

23.06.13

14 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Town ‘Hopper’ bus service (OQ.114/2023)

Part of the question was answered earlier but it is the second part of the question, if I may, to focus on. Will the Minister advise what actions, if any, have been taken to promote the town hopper bus but, most importantly, can this Minister state what the current fare is for a single journey?

Deputy T. Binet (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. LibertyBus currently promotes its services by various means, mainly by social media, timetable booklets, bus station departure screens and bus stop displays. Single journey fares on the town hopper bus are the same as the standard LibertyBus fare structure. I often take the bus home of an evening and if my memory is serving me correctly I think they charge me £2.20. If that reflects the standard fare then that is what it would be. On the subject of bus passes I should probably mention the fact that most users of the town service are holders of concessionary passes.

3.14.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister whether through fares are available to use on the town hopper bus and, if so, how are they promoted?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am not familiar with any free fare situation, other than the fact that we have got concessionary fares and transfer ...

The Bailiff:

I think the expression he used, Deputy, was a through fare, as opposed to free fares.

Deputy T. Binet:

Through fares. Could I just check whether these are what is referred to as transfer tickets?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Correct; the word passed me by.

Deputy T. Binet:

Sorry, I was not trying to be pedantic, I just wanted a point of clarification.

The Bailiff:

No, it is important that we achieve clarity as well as brevity.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I should know because it was my colleague who introduced those.

Deputy T. Binet:

Could I suggest that the Deputy knows the answer to his question before he starts?

The Bailiff:

You can suggest that but you still have to answer it. Minister, quite often Members of the House ...

Deputy T. Binet:

To the best of my knowledge, we have concessionary and transfer fares in operation on the hopper bus.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Quite often people ask questions that they know the answer to, they just want the chance to supplementary questions afterwards.

3.14.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am slightly worried that the Minister is not using the AvanchiCard, because it means we could support a good Jèrriais word in action and also save himself money. So I hope he has not the same stance on the hospital project because we want to save as much money as possible. I know that is not a question but it is a slight hopefully welcome distraction. Given the fact that transfer fares do exist, and they were adopted by the previous Assembly, would the Minister remind the public and perhaps encourage Liberty to remind the public that if they use the hopper bus after coming in on another bus, where they have paid full price for their single ticket, they could have got a transfer ticket and used the hopper bus for free. So, will he remind LibertyBus to promote the transfer ticket for people who want to make throughfares?

Deputy T. Binet:

I certainly will. I have to say I got caught out by that coming back from the airport the other day. They very kindly let me off because I am a pensioner and I am sorry I do not have my voluntary card yet, I just simply have not had the time. I worked out it has cost me just over £12 already in unnecessary fares.

The Bailiff:

If necessary, I propose to add a couple of minutes of injury time to the end of the question period to allow for the diversions that we have had thus far, which perhaps now we could bring to an end.

3.14.3 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that the business model for a town hopper bus has never been a great success, and I go back to days of Deputy Southern's proposals, would the Minister agree that it would be better to review the existing situation and enable buses coming from out of town to arrive at the centre of town, to provide a better service for those who need to get to different places in the town?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am rather embarrassed because I cannot claim to be an expert on every bus movement, but I am certainly happy to take into account what the Constable has said and pass that on to the team.

3.14.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I, like others, wish to see the hopper service work, but clearly given it is not at the moment, would the Minister agree to make it more cost-effective and that further action needs to be taken?

Deputy T. Binet:

I did mention in an earlier response that the service will be reviewed later in the summer, so hopefully that will be part of it.

3.14.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just briefly on the fare structure itself and the fares, can the Minister confirm how LibertyBus charge per fare? So if there is a transfer fare, do LibertyBus charge another fare on the hopper bus, or how is LibertyBus claiming for the cost of the hopper bus, or is it a set cost that is just paid to run the service?

Deputy T. Binet:

That is a very interesting question and I have to be honest and say that I do not really know the answer, but I am very happy to find out and inform the Deputy at a later stage.