

STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 18th JANUARY 2005

On 19th October 2004, the States approved a report and proposition of Deputy Le Hérissier which, amongst other things, charged the Environment and Public Services Committee to prepare a revised Bus Transport Strategy and present it to the States for approval within 3 months. That timescale is very nearly upon us and I want to advise the States what the Committee has already done and what it proposes to do.

When the States approved the Bus Strategy in July 2001, the States and the public felt that the Island would now be able to put in place an efficient and effective public bus service funded by public subsidies which were transparent and value for money.

The Bus Strategy contained five separate elements within its proposition –

1. **To agree that competitive bids should be sought from bus operators** - the tendering exercise took place in late 2001/early 2002 with interviews conducted with interested transport operators.
2. **To agree that a licence of up to 7 years should be awarded to the operator which best fulfils the specification and which is prepared to work in partnership with the states to enhance the quality of bus services in the Island** - this was achieved and Connex started operating in September 2002. A Service Level Agreement is in place and, in the main, the bus network is working well.
3. **To charge the then Public Services Committee to prepare and present to the States any necessary law amendments** - all required amendments were subsequently drafted and approved, with the exception of certain licensing and regulatory functions that might have passed to the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority. That aspect remains under review until an Integrated Public Transport Strategy has been determined.
4. **To request the Committee to investigate proposals to provide for public subsidies for bus services where required in such a manner as to provide transparency and an assurance that value for money is being obtained** - subsequent Committees have not been able to provide an alternative funding stream for the buses but the current Committee has now successfully gained States approval to utilise parking income over and above the costs of running the car parks and this has now been approved by the Privy Council. Moreover, the information now received on a regular basis from the bus operator provides the Committee with key statistics indicating the profitable and unprofitable routes, ridership on different routes, how that ridership is made up and an analysis of the concessionary fares.
5. **To request the Committee to consult with other interested parties to ensure that bus services meet the needs of the travelling public and to monitor the effectiveness of bus operations** - the Committee has consulted on any changes proposed and receives input from the Jersey Bus Users Forum. Moreover, as mentioned already, the Committee does regularly monitor bus operations, but has not yet set targets for increasing bus usage.

The Committee has made significant strides in achieving the key proposals within the Bus Strategy. However, it has been unable to develop the services as it might have anticipated primarily because the Committee of Inquiry into certain aspects of the tender process has meant the Committee remains unable to progress key initiatives until that Inquiry has reported. For example, the issues surrounding the payment of the shift allowance stifled various Committees' efforts to effect changes in the bus services to the advantage of the travelling public.

The first year of Connex operations was, inevitably, a learning exercise. The Committee had no meaningful data from the previous operator which would have helped either the Committee or the new operator to understand the business. However, a comparison of Year 2 against Year 1 results show some encouraging trends at a time when visitor numbers were down. The key statistics of interest are –

- (i) total passengers journeys slightly reduced from Year 1 at 2.4 million;

- (ii) average passengers carried during winter schedule up by 2% or nearly 3,000 a month;
- (iii) average passengers carried during the summer down by 6%;
- (iv) annual income maintained at £2.1 million despite slight fall in passenger numbers;
- (v) States subsidy per passenger journey increased from 90p to £1 due to static revenue and passenger journeys and increased contract costs;
- (vi) 18% of passenger journeys are provided free for concessionary pass holders.

Easylink ran in both years, in Year 2 having been granted an exemption by the Environment and Public Services Committee. There is no doubt that the Island needs a summer tourist service to complement the regular network. The Committee wants and aims to provide a fully integrated system, but this does not necessarily imply that there will ultimately be a single operator.

What will the Committee deliver?

At the next States sitting, the Committee will provide a detailed report on the progress to date of the Connex bus service, with additional information on the school services.

The Committee is developing a Sustainable Traffic and Transport Strategy and workshops have already been held. Within the next few months, a consultation document will be published. That will aim to gather the views of the public and other interested parties into how all the different elements of transport within the Island, including buses, cars, taxis, other forms of transport, roads, and parking, can fit together in a more cohesive manner, in order to deliver a better public transport system for the Island. Buses will be a key component in this debate and the Committee needs to understand what the public's priorities are, before making fundamental decisions as to the future.

The Committee aims to integrate the public and school bus services as much as possible in September 2005. This will be an ongoing process and discussions will be held with the Education, Sport and Culture Committee to ensure we meet the needs of the customer at minimum cost to the public. This may entail some staggering of school start and finish times, but there will be consultation with interested parties before any decisions are made.

The Committee would like to integrate summer services but, understandably, the current operator will not invest any further until there is certainty from the outcome of the Committee of Inquiry.

PUBLIC BUS SERVICE	2002/3 Year 1	2003/4 Year 2
Total passenger journeys	2,483,000	2,446,000
Paying passenger journeys	2,044,803	2,013,127
Free concessionary journeys	438,495 (18%)	433,234(18%)
Average fare (paying passengers)	£1.03p	£1.06p
Average passengers carried per calendar month (winter)	169,720	172,507
Winter schedules income(gross)	£995,231	£1,113,152
Average passengers carried per calendar month (summer)	283,560	266,577
Summer schedules income (gross)	£1,121,642	£1,012,437
Annual income (gross)	£2,116,873	£2,125,589*

Annual contract cost	£4,341,593	£4,593,840
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