

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES BY
DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th APRIL 2008

Question

With regard to the Connex bus service, would the Minister state:

- (a) whether he intends putting the service out to tender when the current contract expires and if not, why not,
- (b) over what period the new buses were amortised from the start of the service and their present value,
- (c) whether he has considered purchasing the fleet in order to facilitate a change of operator if desired,
- (d) whether he believes in the 'user pays principle' and, if so, why he does not apply this to the bus service?"

Answer

- (a) I have not yet made a decision as to whether the bus service will be put out to tender when the current contract expires in September 2009 but I can assure the Deputy that I will inform States members as soon as a decision has been made.
- (b) The original fleet of vehicles were leased over the length of the contract, that is 7 years and the residual value at the end of the contract was assumed to be £18,000 per vehicle. I do not know the current value of these original vehicles as the fleet has been supplemented since 2002.
- (c) I have considered whether the States, through the Vehicle and Garage Plant Account, should purchase the fleet not only to facilitate the changeover of operator but also to reduce the risk should an operator choose to leave the Island and to ensure an appropriate vehicle replacement programme is implemented to smooth the procurement cycle. However, the current contract specifically includes the facility for an incoming service provider to acquire the current operator's fleet at market value and I am comfortable at present that this provides the security the Island requires.
- (d) In general, I do support the 'user pays principle' but not where there is clearly an element of providing a service for social reasons. If all bus passengers, including our senior citizens and children, paid the full cost of the service, the average fare would be £1.80. I do not believe that this would be acceptable to the public and certainly it would not support efforts to optimise public transport to reduce congestion and pollution from road traffic.