

2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the extension of the current contract of Connex to provide Public Transport Services:

Will the Minister be extending the current contract of Connex to provide public transport services or will he be going to public tender?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

First of all, may I refer the Deputy to an answer I gave in written questions, and written questions page 4 is very similar to this. The Deputy I am sure will note that the current contract with Connex is due to expire in September 2009. There are, within that contract, provisions to extend it up to a maximum period of 3 years. But in all circumstances I need to assure the Deputy and the Assembly that whether the contract is extended or not, the outcome will be that it will go to public tender in all circumstances. As it happens, I am currently considering extending the existing contract and I am doing so, hopefully, with the advice of the Scrutiny Panel, to whom I sent a copy of the contract, they have recently asked for some further information which Transport and Technical Services Department will supply and, in due course, I intend to bring notification of my decision to the Assembly.

2.6.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister clarify; when he says irrespective of what happens it will be going out to tender, what precisely does he mean by that?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

What I mean precisely, Sir, is that at some stage either as at September 2009 or within a maximum time period of 3 years the existing contract will cease and the contract for provision of public network bus services will go out to tender for a new service operator and should the existing service operator happen to win that particular tender process then the current operator would continue.

2.6.2 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:

Could the Minister please explain to Members the advantage that he obviously seems to perceive of continuing to employ Connex for 3 further years without the competitive tender process and to decide whether they continue or not?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I think one of the most obvious advantages is that Connex very recently won the Business Enterprise Award of the Year for the whole of the Island. That is one of a number of advantages. I have reams of entirely successful year on year passenger figures and fare revenue figures, and I would be happy to share those with the Deputy.

2.6.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister confirm that he is totally happy with the contract upon which all the risk-bearing rests upon the States and none of which rests, it appears, upon the operator?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I had no part in the drawing up of this contract which was dealt with by States Members who preceded me, and I am not a signatory of it. The manner of operation of the contract is clearly a variation on how previous operations were conducted. I have taken advice at a very high level of expertise on whether this type of contract is satisfactory in general, and whether this particular contract specifically is a satisfactory type of contract, and I am satisfied that it is.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry, I did say final question, Deputy. We have a lot of questions so I think one needs to keep a sense of proportion on each issue.

