

2.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the cost of “lay-over” facilities for buses on the Albert Pier:

Would the Minister identify the cost of renting “lay-over” facilities for buses on the Albert Pier and advise the cost of other facilities provided as part of this arrangement?

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

The annual rental cost for the bus drivers’ facilities on the Albert Pier is £44,000 in the first year, rising to £53,679 from year 2. The premises have been rented from Harbours and the rental has been independently validated. They require refurbishment and extension to provide a canteen and restroom at a cost of £184,296 including all fees. Furthermore, because this facility introduces a third operational site for Connex, as they will continue to operate out of the La Collette depot as well as Liberation Station and the Albert Pier premises, a minibus driver is required to ferry staff to and from the various sites as well as requirement for some supervision at the Albert Pier. This cost amounts to £27,500. The estimated increase in utility and servicing costs of the canteen over and above that currently provided in Nautilus House at the Weighbridge is £4,350 per annum.

2.3.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister accept... notwithstanding the excellence in many respects of the new Liberation Station, would he not accept, Sir, that it is totally unforgivable to have added these costs to his budget when no indication was given that these additional infrastructure costs were going to be incurred? Secondly, Sir, could he tell us - when he is for ever complaining about his inability to lift one extra weed on the Islands’ roads - where this money is coming from?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The fact of the matter is that in moving from the Weighbridge, the drivers for Connex were faced with losing canteen facilities. I will not go into extensive detail on the Deputy’s supplementary question because Deputy Power has a primary question on the subject of transfer from La Collette and the Buncefield issue which is a very significant feature in all this. The monies will obviously have to come out of the budgets associated with running a bus service within the Island and, no, I do not... I sincerely hope that this is not an unforgivable move; I hope the States are not just in a forgiving mood but will understand precisely the reasons why I have had to take these measures, frankly in order to make sure that the bus service continues to run properly and efficiently.

2.3.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I have received some complaints and concerns from residents in the district that live down there that are going to be affected by the increase to the traffic out of all of this. I would just like to ask the Deputy why in the past when we considered alternative locations for the buses - namely up St. John’s Road - there was consultation with the residents, why in this instance there was not any?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

My department has received one complaint from a resident who lives on the route between Liberation Station and the Albert Pier. In reality the Albert Pier area has been in the past used by Easylink as a bus lay-over position and to a large extent there is a very considerable amount of traffic running between the Elizabeth Terminal, the Albert Pier and roundabout by the underpass. Frankly speaking, I do not think that this move of Connex Buses will make any significant difference to the existing traffic situation. The reason for picking the Albert Pier site as opposed to some distant location is that in order for buses and drivers to have lay-over opportunities and rest breaks, it is absolutely critical that those can be carried out as near to the bus station as possible, otherwise it will interfere with timetabling arrangements which will, therefore, have a knock-on effect to make the entire operation less efficient than it currently is.

2.3.3 Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour:

Does the Minister intend to raise bus fares in the not too distant future in order to cover these unforeseen costs?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The Minister has no intention of raising bus fares but may be forced to.

2.3.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

It is quite helpful the response that the Minister gave me in regards to my last question. I would just like to ask how many buses are we talking about parked there and how many bus movements are we talking about on a daily basis? If the Minister does know, can he tell us, and if he does not know, can he inform us at a later stage.

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I can give an educated guess as to the first part of the Deputy's question, Sir, and that is effectively the lay-over facilities will be used by the entire bus fleet at one time or another because all drivers are entitled to go to a break at their canteen. How many bus movements, Sir, that will involve over the day I simply do not know off the top of my head but I will undertake to give the Deputy a response to that.

2.3.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister not acknowledge - notwithstanding the excellence in many respects from a customer point of view of Liberation Station - that this was a major planning flaw and he has basically inherited a highly defective project in that regard.

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The Liberation Station project goes back to a States' decision of 1996, which as a Minister acting in an executive role, I have now carried through. I am very happy to sit down with the Deputy at a time at his convenience and go through the very fascinating history of the development of Liberation Station. I have my own views on the matter but they are not pertinent at this juncture.