

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 14th MAY 2013**

Question

Would the Chairman advise whether his Panel is reviewing, or is about to review the bus service and, if so, what is the approximate timetable proposed for this review?

Answer

The Environment Scrutiny Panel has monitored developments with the new bus contract through regular contact with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and his officers in both public and private briefings since early last year. Members have been kept closely informed of the challenges faced by LibertyBus in taking over the bus service from the previous operator and how they are being addressed.

The Panel recently attended a presentation given by Mr Dai Powell, the Chief Executive Officer of LibertyBus' parent group. Mr. Powell explained the ethos of the company as a social enterprise, which aims to provide the best possible bus service to the Island within the available public funding, and to return a significant proportion of its profits in the form of community benefits to Islanders. Ways in which the company could help to provide additional services within the community are already being explored.

The Panel is aware that not everything has gone to plan for the new service. It is also unfortunate that the company has experienced significant industrial relations problems in making the changeover. The Panel hopes that these difficulties can be overcome soon, to enable LibertyBus to deliver the best service to bus users.

The Panel discussed the bus service with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services most recently at a public hearing held on 18th March, when the company's plans and performance to date were discussed in detail and at length. In view of the significant difficulties experienced over and above what might normally be expected in a transition period, the Panel concluded that it was important to give the opportunity for regular services to settle in before considering a review.

The Minister for Transport and Technical Services had already agreed a period of 100 days for the company to sort out any initial problems. The Panel considers that a clearer picture of how the new service is performing should be available by early July. Changes to the service took place in March, and further improvements for the summer are planned to come into effect from 27th May. The Panel therefore feels that after the end of June there should be sufficient information available to enable a clear assessment of how the service is progressing, and will consider whether a full Scrutiny review is required at that time.