

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 30th APRIL 2019**

Question

What is the cost per year of –

- (a) running the school bus service; and
- (b) the bus service as a whole;

and what is the Minister's assessment of the prospective cost of making the bus service outside of school hours free to children and students?

Answer

The bus operating contract, including the school bus network, was tendered as a single service and there are no longer separate payments to the operator in respect of the school bus service. It is not possible to provide an exact figure, although the school bus network was originally determined to represent one-third of the total net cost. In 2017, the most recent year for which figures are currently readily available, the cost to the public of supporting the public transport network was approximately £3.6m when disregarding the reimbursement of concessionary fares, therefore the net cost of the school bus network is in the region of £1.2m.

The cost of introducing free bus travel for young persons is not simply the value of the current fare revenue that would be foregone, as the elasticity of demand for bus travel amongst this group is unknown, therefore it is impossible to determine a figure. It is very likely that free travel would generate significant additional demand which the current level of passenger capacity on the bus network would be unable to satisfy, and alleviating this would initially require a doubling of service frequency on many services, which would potentially generate further demand subsequently. The cost of supplying additional buses and bus drivers would impose significant extra operational costs on the contract which could not be covered by the additional revenue that might accrue from other fare-paying passengers.