

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL
SERVICES BY DEPUTY J.H. YOUNG OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 5th MARCH 2013**

Question

Will the Minister provide details of the frequency of service and number of passengers carried by each of the “*Explorer*” buses during the summer of 2012 by the former bus operator and advise whether an equivalent standard of service will be provided to the same key locations by the new operator CT Plus for the summer of 2013 and, if so, will he provide details?

Answer

During the summer of 2012, three Explorer bus services were operated:

- Blue, serving the south and west of the Island
- Green, serving the east of the Island
- Red, serving St Peter’s Valley and the north

The summer timetable was in effect for the period 27 May to 29 September 2012. The above services operated daily as follows:

- Blue, seven departures between 09:50 and 15:50
- Green, nine departures between 09:30 and 15:30
- Red, twelve departures between 10:00 and 16:00 (three of which were short workings to Living Legend)

Recorded passenger numbers on these bus services during this period can be summarised as follows:

	From	To	Red	Blue	Green
	27/5/12	3/6/12	2664	2811	2655
	4/6/12	1/7/12	12393	13827	8920
	2/7/12	29/7/12	13733	12192	9767
	30/7/12	26/8/12	14555	11884	10047
	27/8/12	23/9/12	12386	13150	8937
	24/9/12	29/9/12	2062	2053	1207
Totals			57,793	55,917	41,533

Purely to provide context, recorded passenger numbers on service 15 (the busiest bus route) during the same period were:

	From	To	15
	27/5/12	3/6/12	16985
	4/6/12	1/7/12	62401
	2/7/12	29/7/12	71187
	30/7/12	26/8/12	71875
	27/8/12	23/9/12	65139
	24/9/12	29/9/12	13983
Totals			301,570

It can be seen that the combined Explorer service carried approximately half the number of passengers as the 15. The Explorer service as a standalone group of routes has never reached its full potential. It has previously required a duplication of resources that was often inefficient. LibertyBus feel that it may be possible to allocate these in a more structured way to improve the service for everybody.

For the summer 2013, which is scheduled to commence on 26 May and run until the end of September, it is planned to allocate the equivalent driver and vehicle resources that in previous years were required to operate the Explorer services onto other, parallel routes so that key passenger destinations (including the main tourist destinations) have at least as good a level of service as in 2012, if not better.

By way of an example, the 12, 12A, 14 and Blue Explorer services which in summer 2012 each ran once or twice an hour presented a confusing range of services to similar locations, with some journeys running practically empty and others heavily overloaded. These would ideally be replaced by a simpler, easier-to-promote trunk route with a high frequency core section, and suitably-timed variations/route extensions to additional destinations.

Simplifying the core network will allow LibertyBus to focus on marketing the journey opportunities possible on the standard network, rather than maintaining separate standalone networks for visitors and locals. This will allow more scope to replace the established and rather limited range of tickets with some much more suitable products that will encourage and allow the locals and visitors to get the best out of the bus network. LibertyBus who under the new contract bear the revenue risk will take the lead in this area.

The bus service is the Island's and so the final form the timetable takes will be dependant upon the response from the public and businesses to the summer timetable consultation in April. To allow informed discussion during the consultation, work on outline summer timetables has recently begun, with the goal in many cases of enhancing frequencies. However at this time and until the April consultation has been undertaken, it is not possible to meaningfully provide the level of detail requested for summer 2013.

While this does not directly relate to summer timetables, further to the above and in the interests of transparency, during 2012 the Explorer services also operated daily during a ‘shoulder period’ of 7 April to 26 May 2012:

- Blue, seven departures between 09:50 and 15:50
- Green, nine departures between 09:30 and 15:30
- Red, nine departures between 10:00 and 16:00 (without the summer-only short workings to Living Legend)

And also at weekends and during school holidays between 6 October and 4 November 2012:

- Red, nine departures between 10:00 and 16:00 (without the summer-only short workings to Living Legend)

Passenger numbers during these ‘shoulder periods’ were:

	From	To	Red	Blue	Green
	7/4/12	8/4/12	545	899	514
	9/4/12	6/5/12	5545	9347	4739
	7/5/12	26/5/12	5601	11016	6063
			6090	10246	5253
	6/10/12	21/10/12	1383	-	-
	22/10/12	4/11/12	1568	-	-
Totals			2951	-	-

It can be seen that, compared to the peak summer period, passenger loadings during either side of the peak summer season were considerably lower. The proposals for the ‘Easter’ timetable for 31 March to 26 May 2013 recognised this and proposed that services should be adjusted to match the needs of passengers.

Optimising the allocation of resources to ensure the most is made of the bus capacity available will allow improved ‘shoulder period’ service levels to be achieved elsewhere, where passenger demand is higher. Any changes to be introduced will reflect the results of the consultation for the Easter timetable with both the public and businesses, which closed on 1 March 2013. A timetable is at present being compiled on the basis of the comments received for approval and publication later in March.

While the 2013 Easter timetable will only operate for eight weeks, it is intended that the elevated ‘shoulder period’ services provided during this period will become the future norm for a new improved Island winter service. This will mean for the first time all core routes will have meaningful services throughout the year, including Sundays, to the benefit of resident and visitor alike.