

2.2 Deputy S. Power of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding a trial of 2 electric Smart cars supplied by the JEC.

Can the Minister advise the Assembly whether the department's trial of the 2 electric smart cars supplied by the Jersey Electricity Company was successful and whether he has any plans to specify that hybrid diesel electric buses should be incorporated into the future Connex and/or public bus transport fleet?

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

Transport and Technical Services is not currently involved in a trial of electric cars and did not conduct any official trial of the aforementioned Smart cars. However, I am supportive of such initiatives and the department will keep a watching brief on the market for both electric and hybrid vehicles and assess their suitability and costs to be used within the States fleet. I did express some public support for the Smart car scheme and I am pleased to inform the Deputy that the Minister for Planning and Environment took the wheel of one of the cars and tested it personally, and I am sure he will find the Minister's views most illuminating, as I did. As far as plans to specify hybrid buses in the future, negotiations on the contract extension included an agreement that Connex will support the introduction of hybrid vehicles and I am aware that the company is now assessing vehicles of this nature. I am very keen to see such vehicles operating on the Island's bus network, and both Transport and Technical Services and myself will progress this matter and monitor it very closely.

2.2.1 Deputy S. Power:

I thank the Minister for his reply. Could I ask the Minister to clarify what happened to the 2 electric Smart cars that were featured in a handover ceremony by the Jersey Electricity Company to his department?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I regret to inform the Deputy that no such handover ceremony took place. I wish it had done. The cars are extremely expensive and cost about £19,000 each, so having 2 presented to the department would have been a sheer delight. Regrettably, no such handover took place.