

2.4 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Economic Development regarding British Airways' decision not to allow surfboards and kayaks on board its passenger aircraft:

Further to news that from the 6th November 2007 British Airways will no longer accept surf boards and kayaks on board its passenger aircraft, what steps, if any, is the Minister taking to reverse this decision?

The Bailiff:

May I ask that you put the question as approved, please, Deputy?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Further to news that from the 6th November 2007 British Airways will no longer accept surf boards and kayaks on board its passenger aircraft, what steps, if any, is the Minister taking to request that the airline reverse this decision?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I ask my Assistant Minister to rapporteur for this question and 7, 8 and 15 as they all relate to Harbours and Airport matters?

The Bailiff:

Yes. Assistant Minister?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Economic Development - rapporteur):

Following the announcement I immediately asked the Airport Director to seek further information from British Airways on the matter. British Airways have advised that while its network-wide decision stands, it will continue to accept such items as those noted by Deputy Lewis for groups booked to travel through some of the airline's travel agent partners which specialise in sporting tours providing that prior notice is received. Prior notice will allow British Airways to put alternative arrangements in place to handle such items for groups. Research shows that only a very small but of course very important number of customers choose to travel with larger items and British Airways will track these numbers over the course of the next few weeks. The airline states this process will help find a solution that will allow customers to travel with larger items of sports equipment through British Airways or British Airways' partners. It is worth restating that this disappointing change to baggage policy is not unique to Jersey but applies across the whole British Airways network.

2.4.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As the Assistant Minister is no doubt aware, Sir, Jersey has a long history of sporting excellence with surfers competing at international level in all parts of the world and this will also cause problems for sporting enthusiasts coming to the Island. If other airlines were to follow suit, this would be disastrous for sports in Jersey. Does the Minister not agree?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

We clearly recognise the value of event-led tourism and sporting activities and in that regard the restriction on carrying of larger items of sporting equipment is disappointing and clearly will have an effect on sporting activities of that nature. So clearly we are keeping a very close eye on developments. Currently other airlines have not followed suit and so there are a number of opportunities. As far as groups are concerned, as I have already mentioned, British Airways have stated that providing bookings are made through travel agents that group activities will be allowed to carry their necessary larger items.