2026-46

REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE *FOR THE* ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY R. LE BRUN

Question 1

In light of changes in the housing market, workforce availability and recent operational challenges since the March 2023 consideration of an in-house bus service, will the Committee undertake a fresh assessment of whether Guernsey's bus network should be operated as a public service, with any financial surplus reinvested directly into improving services, workforce development and network resilience?

Answer

The Committee recognises the importance of ensuring that Guernsey's bus service remains reliable, resilient and delivers value for money for the taxpayer as public transport is an essential service for many islanders and plays a fundamental role in meeting the aim and objectives of the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Following a competitive procurement process, the Committee entered into a contract with the current operator for a fixed term of five years, with provisions for a potential extension. As part of those contractual arrangements, a formal review point is built into the contract after three years, at which time a decision will be taken on whether an extension should be offered. It should be noted that any extension would be subject not only to the Committee's agreement but also to the operator's acceptance.

Running an island-wide bus network is, however, a complex and highly specialised undertaking requiring expertise in areas such as fleet management, regulatory compliance, driver recruitment and training, scheduling, network planning, customer service, and operational resilience. There are a number of advantages associated with using an experienced external operator. These include access to extensive operational knowledge and industry expertise, additional resources that can be deployed to support on-island operations when required, wider management support structures, and specialist commercial planning teams that assist with route development, timetable design and service optimisation. An external operator can also provide greater resilience through access to broader pools of expertise and experience than may be available locally.

In addition, an in-house model would transfer a number of operational and financial costs and risks directly to the States of Guernsey. The States would need to establish and maintain its own specialist management capability, recruit, and retain sufficient drivers and engineering staff, manage industrial relations, oversee fleet maintenance and replacement programmes, and provide contingency arrangements for disruption, staff shortages, and service recovery. Any unexpected increases in costs, operational failures or staffing challenges would fall directly to the public rather than being shared or managed through contractual arrangements with an experienced operator.

Whilst recent service disruptions have understandably raised concerns, the Committee notes that many of the challenges faced by the current operator, including recruitment, workforce availability, and accommodation pressures, are not unique to the bus service provider. Were the service to be operated directly by the States of Guernsey, those same challenges would still need to be managed and resolved by the States, rather than the contracted operator.

The Committee therefore does not consider it appropriate to undertake a further assessment of alternative delivery models at this stage, given the existing contractual arrangements. However, when the contract reaches its formal renewal stage prior to any future retendering of the bus service contract, the Committee would expect all available options to be considered, including the continued use of an external operator, alternative contractual arrangements and the potential for direct public operation, to ensure that the model selected continues to represent the best outcome for islanders and taxpayers.

Question 2

Has the introduction of paid public parking ever been formally considered as a means of supporting the funding of public transport services, improving the visitor experience, encouraging greater use of sustainable transport options, reducing congestion, and easing pressure on some public parking provision? If so, why has that policy not been implemented? A previous Access to Information response confirmed that paid parking has been considered on several occasions and that enabling legislation was approved in 2009 but has never been brought into force.

Answer

The introduction of paid public parking has been formally considered on a number of occasions over many years, including through transport policy work undertaken in 2003, 2006 and 2009, and subsequently in connection with the Integrated Transport Strategy agreed in 2014. The Road Traffic (Parking Fees and Charges) (Enabling Provisions) (Guernsey) Law was approved in 2009 but has not been brought into force.

Successive committees have recognised that, if carefully designed and implemented, parking charges could help to manage demand for public parking, influence travel behaviour, encourage greater use of sustainable transport options and contribute to the more effective management of the road network. Revenue from parking charges could also contribute towards transport improvements and the provision of viable alternatives to private car use.

However, the approval of enabling legislation did not amount to approval of a particular paid-parking scheme. No subsequent Assembly has supported implementation of a scheme in the form presented. As proposals have been examined in greater detail, a number of issues have required careful consideration, including the effect on residents, businesses and visitors; the position of people with limited alternatives to travelling by car; the potential impact on economic activity; the fairness and proportionality of any charges; and the practical requirements for administration and enforcement. Previous proposals have also encountered both political and public resistance.

In 2023, the States directed the Policy & Resources Committee, working with the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure, to investigate revenues generated through transport, including fuel duty, distance charging, an annual tax on vehicle ownership and paid public parking, and to report back to the States. Significant work was undertaken during the previous political term, but, as the wider tax reform programme developed, other taxation workstreams were prioritised and specific proposals for paid public parking were not brought forward during that term.

Initial transport revenue measures are now being considered as part of the wider tax reform proposals due to continue being debated at the States Meeting at the end of September. Looking further ahead, the options remain to consider charges for long-term public parking areas, particularly where current arrangements facilitate all-day commuter vehicle storage rather than the turnover of spaces that supports shorter-term activities, including retail, and hospitality. There is also the disproportionate matter of some employers offering parking to their employees free of charge, compared with those commuters that use public spaces.

The Committee considers that any future proposal would need to have clearly defined transport and parking objectives, take account of social and economic effects, avoid disproportionate impacts on lower-income earners and people with limited travel alternatives, and be supported by appropriate consultation and effective enforcement arrangements. It would also be necessary to determine transparently how any revenue should be used, including the extent to which it should support public transport and other improvements under the Integrated Transport Strategy.

The total amount of officer time spent compiling the information required to respond to this Rule 14 was two hours.

Date of Receipt of the Question:	28 August 2026
Date of Reply:	11 September 2026