

## **STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION**

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The bus service that links Gibraltar Airport to La Linea continues to be a complete waste of money and those funds could put to better use elsewhere. It is obvious that the vast majority of arriving passengers prefer to exit in Gibraltar and then cross the frontier into Spain, in the same way that they prefer to come into Gibraltar to catch the flight rather than catch the bus from La Linea.

The amount of money that the taxpayer has had to pay in this whole venture is disproportionate to the use which is made of the service. It will be recalled that there have been a number of costs associated with the renewal of flights between Gibraltar and Madrid, initially by Iberia in December 2006. The Government constructed a second building, which they call Terminal 2, at a cost of £391,580.48. They also purchased three Cobus 3000 airport apron buses to ferry passengers between terminals at the airport at a cost of £74,615.21 per bus. This is an additional cost of £223,845.63 for the three buses.

The running costs of the Gibraltar Airport shuttle bus have also been considerable in the period of time that it has been in operation. The bus has to attend every time that there is a flight to or from Madrid without knowing whether there is going to be anyone interested in making use of the service. The Government is charged for each round trip regardless of whether anyone actually uses the bus or not.

The running costs of the shuttle bus since flights were started in December 2006 is already over £136,000. The route to Madrid was then abandoned by both Iberia and British Airways due to low load factors and poor demand which did not make the route economic to maintain. In April 2009 Andlous recommenced the Madrid service using smaller aircraft. The cost of the bus since Andalus started on the route is already over £22,000 and a ridiculously low number of passengers continue to make use of it.

The latest information available shows that from La Linea in October 2009 only 2 people used the bus, 1 person in November, 4 people in December and only 1 in January 2010. The bus to La Linea was used by 1 person in October 2009, 2 people in November, and nobody at all in December or January 2010. This makes a total of 11 people using the bus in both directions at the totally disproportionate cost of £6812 or £619.27 per passenger! The taxpayer still had to foot the bill even though the bus to La Linea was empty all December and January.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister with responsibility for Civil Aviation Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“The bus service was agreed as a temporary measure under the Corboda Agreement whilst the air terminal was relocated to the frontier fence. It is now glaringly obvious that passengers do not want to use the bus and that they prefer to enter and exit the terminal by coming into Gibraltar presumably to do some shopping at the same time. Given that the relocation of the air terminal is being provided in order to replace the bus, it does not say much for the wisdom behind the decision to embark on such a large multi-million pound investment when passengers clearly prefer to exit and enter through Gibraltar in the first place.”

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