



Environment Scrutiny Panel Green Street Police HQ: Traffic and Parking Review hearing with St. Helier Parish Roads Committee

THURSDAY, 24th JANUARY 2013

Panel:

Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade (Chairman)
Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin
Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John
Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

Mr. R. Le Brocq - St. Helier Parish Roads Committee
Mr. N. Blake - St. Helier Parish Roads Committee
Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier

In attendance:

Scrutiny Officer

[15:15]

Deputy J.H. Young (Chairman):

I formally open up the second afternoon session of the Environment Scrutiny Panel to consider the Green Street Police Headquarters, the traffic and public car parking aspects or implications of this proposal. With me on the panel is Deputy Jeremy Maçon, who is chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel and he is with the Environment Panel to ensure that the piece of work that Jeremy did joins up, as it were, with this particular review. Jeremy has reviewed the police proposal separately and reported on it. With me is Deputy Steve Luce and Constable Rondel and Members of the Environment Panel, myself John Young and our Scrutiny Officer. If you would

like, please, to introduce yourself and tell us in what role you are going to be speaking here to us, please, about this.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Right, I am Robert Le Brocq; I am on the Parish Roads Committee and I am a former Constable of the Parish of St. Helier, so over the last 20, 25 years, I have chaired a lot of meetings on the Roads Committee and dealt with a lot of problems, created sometimes by States departments.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Thank you for that. Your colleague, please?

Mr. N. Blake:

Nigel Blake, Roads Committee.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Right, so you are both current members of the Roads Committee?

Mr. N. Blake:

The St. Helier Roads Committee.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Can you just tell us, just for procedure, what is the formality within the Parish at the Roads Committee? Do you have a role in that? Are you chairman or is there somebody else who is chairman?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

No, the Constable normally chairs the meeting.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Okay, thank you. Well, you did approach us and say that you had some comments, and of course, before this session we pulled together what we thought were the relevant key documents, and of course we did see that there was a written representation signed by Mr. Stievenard on behalf of the Roads Committee which was in those papers, and also we had the response to it from the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources. Those papers are in that document, so we thought we would invite you this afternoon to briefly (I think we want to try and cover it in the 15, 20 minutes, if we can) cover what are those key points in your submission about the traffic and car parking effect of this project. Would you like to do that?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Our main concern is that we do not feel that this is a suitable site because we are going to lose 91 parking spaces. We are concerned about the implications for businesses in St. Helier and people who work in St. Helier, and also residents in the area. The parish have been keen to provide residents' parking in this area, but it is a no-go, because of the problems that would arise. Talking long-term, and I think this is the point that has been missed out completely on this site, there is an opportunity on this site, on the Route du Fort end, to create perhaps 4, 5, 6 levels of parking with 100 cars at each level, and that would allow in the future, when Green Street needs demolishing, for the demolition to take place. You could then, in actual fact, create underground parking at Green Street with accommodation on top, and I think a golden opportunity has been missed. The other point I would make is that there is a proposed motorcycle area on the other side of the road, right alongside a residential home. I do not think that is a very good idea. Following a meeting held by Deputy Noel in about April, I attended and got quite concerned about the plans and said why had other sites not been looked at. The list of sites I got, they certainly had not been looked at, the opportunities, and one of those was the St. Clement's Road/Cleveland Avenue car park, and I was told that was too long and too thin; it would be difficult to build a police station on it and the main concern was the cells have got to be above ground. I do not believe in criticising something if you do not try and give an alternative.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Can I just stop you, Bob? I hope you do not mind. Our terms of this reference for this very brief study is purely to look at the transport and parking implications of this particular scheme. Pure practicality dictates that we do that, otherwise we will be here for a very long time. So what we are going to do is just listen, try and assess the evidence from wherever it comes, and the effect, and report on that.

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

Chairman, I have got a question if I might come in straight away? Mr. Le Brocq, you have just said that you objected strongly to the motorcycles next to the old people's home on the south side of the road, and yet in our representation letter here from the Parish of St. Helier signed by John Stievenard, it says the Parish welcomes the proposal to establish motorcycle spaces.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

But I do not think they have taken the implications. Police officers work pretty well varying shifts, and we have police officers come off at 6.00 am, perhaps John Stievenard did not take it all in, but my ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Is John Stievenard involved in the Roads Committee?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

John is the senior technical officer at the parish.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So he is not putting forward the position of the Roads Committee, he is putting forward the position of the parish?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

He put forward the decision of the Roads Committee.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So the decision of the Roads Committee is different from the opinion of the Roads Committee? If you are here as the Roads Committee today, but in your opinion you do not want 40 motorcycle parking spaces next to the ...

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

What I am saying is that by putting the motorcycles on the other side of the road, and it was brought up earlier when I was listening to your discussions, I have concern that motorcycles revving up at 6.00 am alongside a residential home.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

How do we then have a letter from the Roads Committee saying the parish welcomes the proposal?

Mr. N. Blake:

Excuse me, can I come in? We were led to believe that the actual motorcycle parking was on-site. That is what we were led to believe from day one. It has only come later that it is across the road.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Can you clarify it? From whom were you led to believe?

Mr. N. Blake:

I think we had some representative that came in to speak to the Roads Committee. I can't ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

From ...?

Mr. N. Blake:

From Planning, it must have been. No, from the police station, from the police station. It was a police officer who came into discuss.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

It says in Mr. Stievenard's letter, and I agree that it is not specific, but it does say: "The additional motorcycle spaces in the immediate vicinity." Now, that "immediate vicinity" does not convey to me "underneath the building."

Mr. N. Blake:

I was given to understand, when were spoken to, that it was on-site.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Was that the expectation of the Roads Committee, in your view, as a member, that those spaces would be on-site?

Mr. N. Blake:

On-site. And "on-site" means "on-site." I mean, not across the road.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

What does "in the immediate vicinity" mean to you?

Mr. N. Blake:

It touches it. You have got to cross 4 rows of traffic to get to it. I am sorry, that is not ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

Perhaps we ought to continue.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes, sorry, I am just trying to establish.

Deputy J.H. Young:

No, (overspeaking) that question in, Steve, or shall we ask the...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

No, can I finish? Sorry.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Okay.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

When we discussed the matter with the Constable, we asked the Constable on what grounds he did not agree with the Roads Committee, and he said: "Well, I think it would be good for the building industry and for businesses in Colomberie." Nigel said: "Well, it does not matter where the building goes, it will be good for the building industry," so really that cancels that one out. I cannot see that all the police officers and all the staff are going to go shopping down Colomberie every day.

Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John:

Can you tell me at the time of this meeting that we refer to here, 10th September, who chaired that meeting, was it the Constable? Was there divided opinion at that time on that Roads Committee when this letter was sent to the Planning Department?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

I think the Constable sort of mentioned it, that he could not support the Roads Committee's view; he took a different view. He is entitled to.

The Connétable of St. John:

How many members are on your committee?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

There are 5. I do not know if you know, but the Constable has the final say. We are basically advisers to the Constable. We take a different view from the Constable, and that is ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

What we are going to do is we are going to hear from the Constable shortly and we will get the Constable's position. But what you are saying is, as a member of that committee, your representation is a fair reflection of what the committee itself considered on 10th September? Are the arguments still the same as what is in that letter?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

I made a comment earlier about if you have a different view from what is being proposed you see if you can find an alternative. I went out of my way to go and find an alternative. I found 2 other sites that could possibly be used, but which have been excluded. One of them had not even been considered.

Deputy J.H. Young:

I think if we could record in our notes, and we will record, that you have said that you personally have gone out and made an effort to find them, but I think in terms of this review we cannot explore them, I am afraid.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes, you are right.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Maybe after that now, so I think Deputy Maçon wants to ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

Yes, it arises from your letter and the subsequent response from Deputy Noel. At point 2, where you say that it does not appear that the access is user-friendly, is I think what you said. The response from Deputy Noel was that he finds it difficult to understand your conclusions. I wonder if you can just explain further for us point 2?

Mr. N. Blake:

Yes, for instance, the vans for the police station cannot go down to the car park underneath because there is not the head-room. Therefore, for prisoners who are brought to the police station, it has to be unloaded on the road and across the pavement, into the police station. When that happens, if there is a bit of trouble there, anyone walking down the road has got to actually walk down the road to miss the problem. Surely that is not the right way for the public to see our police force working.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Is that a fact? Have you ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

No, that is not correct, surely.

Mr. N. Blake:

We are told the vans cannot be kept on-site. So if the vans cannot be kept on-site ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I think there is a difference between being kept on-site and having secure access.

Mr. N. Blake:

If you cannot get the van down there ... the trouble is ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am not an expert, but I am aware of the fact that you cannot unload prisoners in a non-secure environment, and that is a non-secure environment you are describing, so I cannot believe that that is the case.

Mr. N. Blake:

This is information we have.

Deputy J.H. Young:

We will check when we see the Minister for Home Affairs later. We will need to check that. But what you are saying is your comment 2 is basically dependent for the reason that your committee believes that there will not be a secure area inside for the loading of prisoners?

Mr. N. Blake:

That is my personal opinion; it is not the committee's.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

By my coming here, unfortunately because we had concerns, Taylor Young did a report. We did not get that until 8th October, so we had already discussed the application and we raised a number of concerns. Further information came where they actually produced ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

So they have answered your points?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

They have answered our points on that.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Can you just help us with this? We only have (and this is obviously our fault) the document that pre-dates that submission. Could you just point out which of these 6 points that you raise are now still valid?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

I believe so, yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

What, are they all still valid?

Deputy J.H. Young:

The first one deals with ...

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Sorry, could you refresh my memory?

Deputy J.H. Young:

... future-proof. In other words, I think you have made the point about future-proofing when you spoke about the Green Street car park extension. We have just covered point 2 which is about access-friendly, although it does go a little bit further, your comment, to talk about pedestrian access into the building. We talked about that a little bit with T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) but we still have to talk to the Minister of Home Affairs about how visitors will access the building, particularly those who are disabled. So we are going to do that questioning later.

Mr. N. Blake:

They do not have car parking in Snow Hill for people visiting the police station. There is a major problem there, because people queue up to get into Snow Hill. Therefore the queue has to be divided again so that there are places for the people visiting the police station to park.

Deputy J.H. Young:

So Snow Hill is generally full, in your view?

Mr. N. Blake:

Yes, when I have gone there ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

Working day or weekends, or ...?

Mr. N. Blake:

Mid-mornings; if I go to town mid-morning, it is full.

Deputy J.H. Young:

There is a queue?

[15:30]

Mr. N. Blake:

There is a queue. Now, if someone does get in there and goes to the police station, the person comes out and he has got to cross the road twice, and he holds up the traffic and that traffic is going to build up and go down through the tunnel. We heard earlier at the meeting that a bus stops for a minute. What is going to happen? People crossing the road there are going to cause problems as well. I do not think that is a friendly way for a police station to work, that people have got to cross a major road to get to it.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Do you have a view of the ease of pedestrian access from Snow Hill across to the other side of the road for the new site of the police headquarters? Is that access easy? Is there a proper crossing there?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

We do not have the detail on that. I have spoken to Deputy Noel and he has assured us that this would be taken care of, but we did not get any further than that.

Deputy J.H. Young:

So if there were improvements, that would deal with it ...?

Mr. N. Blake:

Well, no, it would cause problems in the tunnel. If you press the button and it takes you a minute to cross the road, the traffic builds up in that period of time because it cannot move.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Have you had discussions with T.T.S. about this?

Mr. N. Blake:

No.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

No.

Deputy J.H. Young:

But it is an issue about ease of access for pedestrians from the dedicated spaces at Snow Hill to the police headquarters?

Mr. N. Blake:

Also coming from where the motorbikes are parked, across the road there. There are 4 rows of traffic to cross there. Again, you are stopping traffic in the tunnel.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Sorry, just to clarify, because I think you are making 3 points there, and if you can just confirm that is the committee's view, (1) we have got an issue potentially with the traffic flows when people try to access into Snow Hill, so there is a car issue there.

Mr. N. Blake:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The second one is the pedestrian crossing from Snow Hill side to the Green Street car park side; that is the second issue that you have just said will impact on traffic flow.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Then the third one is the crossing from where the bus stop is, which will be the motorbikes to the police station.

Mr. N. Blake:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just confirm that all those 3 are separate issues but they are all concerns of the Roads Committee?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

They are all concerns, yes.

Deputy J.H. Young:

They have yet to be discussed as to how they could be ...

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes, and a concern that perhaps we have not touched on is that there is a pedestrian crossing at the end of the tunnel which is used by all the people coming up Green Street that cross on to an island in the middle, so that is another crossing. So they have said that there will be a crossing opposite the station, across the road from the station, to the motorcycle pull-in. You touched on it earlier when I heard you talking, this reduces the road going east down to one lane, and from the plan I have got here (this is what was provided for us) the traffic is 2 lanes coming from the east going into Green Street and through the tunnel.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

That is as it is at the moment.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes.

Deputy J.H. Young:

So what you are saying ...

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

But they are going to narrow the road, according to this. You touched on it earlier and they are going to narrow the pavement because they want to create a pull-in.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

No, they do not want to at the moment. We suggested to them this morning that they look at the possibility of putting a bus pull-in on both sides of the road and that would do away with the motorcycle parking.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Right, it ...

The Connétable of St. John:

Can I come in there, chairman? What you are actually saying, instead of having just one set of lights at the moment, for crossing over, we would probably have 3.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. John:

At the moment we get back-ups right the way through the tunnel at peak times because of those lights and other issues, so that means you would have considerably more back-up right the way through the tunnel and right the way out east, with 3 lots of traffic lights.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

That depends really on how many pedestrians are in the area.

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes, admittedly.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

But you are going to actually increase the number of pedestrians in the area by putting the station here, I would assume.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Well, you cannot decrease it by not putting the station there.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

You cannot decrease it, and if you have got 200-odd staff ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

Can we find out what dialogue you have had? You have identified these problems, these issues, and you have clarified them for us today. Have you had any responses from T.T.S., the ministry or planning to say what will be the solutions to those that they have put in place?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

No, as I said, we asked the Constable because, obviously, with his States connection, how it would improve the area, and he said it would create more footfall down Colomberie.

Deputy J.H. Young:

We will speak to the Constable about that shortly. I am just anxious that we get these problems out and that the Roads Committee will be ...

The Connétable of St. John:

Can we have a copy of that report? Who did that report?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

This one was done by Taylor Young.

Deputy J.H. Young:

What is the date of that, please?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

The date is 8th October.

Deputy J.H. Young:

I do not think we have seen that, have we?

Scrutiny Officer:

I do not think so.

Deputy J.H. Young:

That has been done particularly for the Roads Committee?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes, it was for the attention of the Senior Planner; that is what was given to us.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Who is the Senior Planner, may I ask?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

I do not know.

Deputy J.H. Young:

But it was addressed to you at the parish?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

It came through the Roads Committee.

Deputy J.H. Young:

But it is addressed to you at the parish - where?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

States of Jersey, Planning and Building Services Department.

Deputy J.H. Young:

So it is a planning officer's document?

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Yes.

Deputy J.H. Young:

We have not found that. We have not been provided with it.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

But as I say, our concern is the future environment of St. Helier, very much so. That is what the Roads Committee is all about. We deal with all the applications that come from Planning and discuss those once a month, go through all the drawings, and make our observations.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Thank you for that. I am sure we will need to check whether that particular document was on the planning website, because all of the planning papers we took were off the published website, which is what should be publicly available for this proposal. I think, colleagues, do you ...

The Connétable of St. John:

I would like sight of that report, if at all possible; the report from Taylor Young.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Yes, if we can please have a copy of that.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

There is something I should perhaps bring to your notice, that over the years, particularly as Constable and on the Roads Committee, I have had problems with States departments, and I said that in my opening. I had problems with First Tower School, Safeway site, and now the proposed

headquarters. We had problems with the Girl's College when the Girl's College was moved. A week before, they said to the parish: "We have problems on the roads; would you and Constables in St. Saviour like to meet up and sort it out for us?" That is my concern, is that once again here we have a situation where we are shoe-horning the police headquarters into a site that in our opinion is unsuitable and can cause all sorts of problems. One of the concerns I also had was that there would be, we were told, parking places for disabled outside the building for 3 spaces, which would be shared with people servicing the building, and I just cannot believe that they ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

We are going to check that, because that has come out at previous hearings and when we see the Minister for Home Affairs we are going to follow that point up. I think we are probably going to have to draw to a close, time-wise. One more point?

Mr. N. Blake:

Every business in town is moaning that there is never enough parking for them. Every person that comes into shop moans that there is not enough parking for them to park and we are going to do away with more parking spaces, so the town is going to wither.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Thank you for that comment.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Can I just make one comment? I have got a development I am proposing in St. Helier. I have been told and have met the planning officers, and I am contradicting what they are saying, in that they are telling the public: "You have got to provide X number of parking places," and yet, when it is a States department, different story altogether.

Deputy J.H. Young:

We have alighted on that point from our earlier meeting and we have asked for copies of the planning guidelines and so on, and so we are going to be following that point up. Can I close that session, because I promised the Constable that he would have an equivalent amount and I want to make sure that we honour that. Thank you very much.

Mr. R. Le Brocq:

Thanks for giving us a fair hearing. Thank you for your time. Thank you.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Obviously, you can sit and wait and listen. Welcome, Constable, and thank you very much for agreeing to our revised plan of action, and I am sorry we did not get it quite right at the start. Obviously, Constable, you are the head of the parish and please could you tell us what the parish position is on the proposal for Green Street and what are the key factors as far as you are concerned, that you think are relevant to our consideration of car parking and traffic?

Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

By all means; thank you for inviting me. I suppose the parish has 2 positions on this. I am in the position of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, because it is fair to say that the Roads Committee of the parish has a statutory duty or statutory right to comment on planning applications, and we do that by a vote. We normally agree, because the committee has a good deal of consensus, but occasionally we don't agree, and occasionally comments have been put to planning about developments which I have not agreed with, but I have been in a minority, and there the matter has rested. I think the difference here is that the matter is coming to the States for debate, and as a States Member I have to take a position on my conscience, rather than simply being the voice of the Roads Committee, and I made it clear to the Roads Committee that, while I share a lot of their views, I do have concerns particularly about the short-term impact of the proposals. I have to take a balanced view on the benefits and dis-benefits of this application, and for me, the benefits outweigh the dis-benefits. Parking, I suppose it is hard to see any benefits in the parking and the traffic. There is no doubt, I think, in the short-term, both in the construction phase and in the early years of the new police station, that it will have an impact on traffic in surrounding areas. It will increase the loading on the roundabout and the tunnel; there will be more hunting for spaces in the area and that will impact on residents in Havre des Pas. But I do not know that that necessarily means that we should not take the opportunity of building a new police station. If I can very briefly touch on the major benefits: apart from the fact that it produces a new police station which I take as read, it will free up a large site in the north of St. Helier for housing, open space, and indeed for parking, which is the current police station site. The Roads Committee has made its views very clear that it does not want to see town cramming on the police station site; it wants to see a mix of uses, including community centre, open space, and as I say, a good amount of parking. It will, and Bob alluded to this earlier, assist in the regeneration of Colomberie and Havre des Pas by providing increasing footfall and patronage of retail and hospitality outlets. There is no doubt that you will effectively have 2 very large practices; the private sector have taken on Lime Grove House (State Street have moved in there) and the police next door in a public sector building. You will be talking about upwards to 1,000, probably, people working and visiting the area, and that has got to have an effect, I would say a positive effect, on retail and hospitality businesses in the area. Bob said, of course, that will happen wherever you put the police station, which is true, but I think the fact is that if the police station does not go into the current site, there will be a delay of probably several years while we look for another site, and I

would maintain that Colomberie needs that regeneration now; it does not need to wait. Of course, it will provide work for the construction industry; we heard the other day on the news how desperate they are for jobs. Again, that would be true if we built the police station somewhere else but the construction industry needs that work now. So if there are not huge things wrong with the proposals, then I do not see that the short-term problems that it is going to create should stop the proposal going ahead because I think the benefits on the longer-term will outweigh the dis-benefits. I invite the committee to think ahead to what Fort Regent Roundabout will be like if it has these 2 major buildings on it. It will have the Lime Grove House and then a new police station. It will, effectively, I think, enhance the area. We mentioned this to the police when they spoke to me about the plans, it is an opportunity to really improve the environment presented by the roundabout, which is pretty boring at the moment; it is just a couple of trees and some flowers. But the roundabout could be enhanced environmentally; there could be a water feature on it. But more than that, we will be peopling the area, there will be a lot of pedestrian movement because there has to be, because there is that limitation on vehicular movement, and if the sustainable transport policy is to work (and the States of Jersey had better hope it does work, because otherwise the Island will be gridlocked with cars) then more people will be walking in the vicinity and bicycling in the vicinity of the police station. I think the other thing that strikes me about this is that in any other part of Europe if you said to a community of 30,000 souls: "We're going to build a brand new public building next to a car park," the last thing you would expect to hear would be complaints about traffic and parking. We are building a police station next to a car park, so how can there be problems in parking? I accept that we have been told that the police are going to take up some of the spaces, but Green Street car park has been earmarked for redevelopment and expansion for years, and what I am hoping we are going to get in the debate (and I have not heard this yet), I am hoping we are going to get an assurance from the minister or the assistant minister that, within an acceptable timeframe, Green Street car park will be redeveloped. It needs redeveloping, it is very ugly and it is fairly dysfunctional in the way that it operates. Let us build a new car park which will service the police station and the surrounding area and provide all the parking that we want, whether it is disabled parking, visitors to the police station, or indeed essential staff who have to park to get to work. I think that is just about all I wanted to say. There are other sites in the area: Snow Hill car park of course must be increased in size. I have had an assurance that there will be improvement in the crossing facilities from the Snow Hill car park because at the moment there is nothing to get you across apart from, I think, one of those beacons. I think we do need to have a safe way of getting from town through Snow Hill to the new police station, if people are to walk there, because at the moment it would be too dangerous.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Thank you, Constable. If I can just sum up, I think where you have made a very clear and cogent case is that there will be short-term problems, but the long-term economic benefits with all the caveats you set out about redeveloping the existing multi-storey car park and so on, early days, will deliver that vision that you have just outlined. I think a couple of points arise. Could I just challenge you a little bit? You said about Housing releasing a current housing site, being a major site for housing, obviously at Summerland(?); would that not be the case wherever the police headquarters go?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Should that not be ...

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think the problem is that putting it off and saying that we can build the police station somewhere else, they have done a good search, as far as I am aware; they have looked at a lot of sites. It seems to me that the States is very good at putting off difficult decisions and what will effectively happen is nothing will happen for at least 2 or 3 years while the search recommences.

Deputy J.H. Young:

So delay?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

As we know, there is a housing crisis.

Deputy J.H. Young:

You spoke about servicing the businesses in the area; T.T.S. told us yesterday that the majority of car parking in Green Street is commuter use, about 90-odd per cent, and the majority of it is for people already working in the east of town area, Colomberie area, Grenville Street, Green Street, and so on. Also, he did tell us that the police will be starting work at 7.00 am on shifts, and therefore they would get first dibs at the available space, which is clearly going to displace people who already work in that area away from that area. Could it not be argued that that actually goes against some of the economic stimulus that you are seeing by locating that car parking there?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

These are operational issues. There is no reason why the police station should not make it mandatory that its staff, if they are not able to take more sustainable ways of getting to work (like

cycling and other forms) then tell them to go to Fort Regent, to Pier Road. We have the embarrassment of, I think, a practically empty car park. Whenever I try and make the case that we need more parking, I am always reminded that Pier Road is sitting empty. So I think there is an opportunity. I think T.T.S. are right about that, that there is an opportunity for commuters who are able-bodied enough to go to Pier Road car park. That can be done with pricing mechanisms; we could make it cheaper to park in Pier Road and then people would go there rather than Green Street.

Deputy J.H. Young:

We spoke about pricing mechanisms yesterday with T.T.S. because what we learned is that there are no sophisticated pricing mechanisms, either to treat shopping car parking differently to commuters, or the locational issues; there are none at all, none at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

There are on Sand Street now, because it is more expensive if you try and use Sand Street as a commuter.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Excepting Sand Street, yes; although the evidence was that there are people just prepared to pay what it costs. That is what we were told yesterday. But coming to the Pier Road issue, the thing we raised yesterday is that it is in the Island Plan that ultimately Pier Road might be redeveloped for housing if the free space is sustained. Is that something that is in line with your urban vision, that Pier Road might disappear as a car park and you have housing there?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Aesthetically it is not pleasing. You would not build it there today, but it is a bit the discussion about Minden Place. I do not think there is any realistic possibility of knocking down any car parks when we have a shortage of parking, certainly at certain times of the day. I would rather see pricing mechanisms used to make Pier Road more attractive, and possibly a hopper bus, as well, being run by the new bus company, to make the hill less of a disincentive.

Deputy J.H. Young:

So it has got a place to play in this ...

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think so.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Therefore you would go along with the T.T.S. proposal that there should be some displacement of the parking at the police headquarters demand to Pier Road?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I would, but I think one has got to remember that T.T.S. originally said that the Gas Place car park would be displaced into Green Street, and then a couple of years later that has been forgotten about and now Green Street has got to be displaced into Pier Road. I understand the cynicism of people who feel that we are just moving the parkers around and certainly it is the case that when we redevelop the Jersey gas site by the town park, when we redevelop the police station (if that is what happens) we have got to make sure that public parking has got a part in all of those developments.

Deputy J.H. Young:

I do not know if you heard the discussion with the Minister for Planning and Development, did you, just now?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

No.

Deputy J.H. Young:

We asked him about that, because T.T.S.'s submission is that the loss of parking in Green Street would be replaced from those public parking in those private developments, which includes Le Masurier's, and of course we know that Le Masurier's is not going to happen. We asked the Minister what certainty or what confidence he could give us about those. I think it is fair to say that we did not get clarity on that. I think Steve Luce has a question.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes, Constable, it is my view that with a new comprehensive bus service that at least three-quarters of the Island will have direct access by the bus to the roundabout at the top of the tunnel, and my vision would be to encourage people, as their first priority when they are thinking of travelling to the police station, that the first thing they would think of would be to take the bus, for that reason. Would you care to comment on the fact that there might well be the width within the road in front of the proposed police station for dedicated bus stops where the buses actually pull off the highway, rather than remain on the highway and stop the traffic.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think that is a really good idea that has come forward, and there was certainly some doubt and confusion about what the pull-in area was going to be used for, and this idea that it could be used

for a disabled person if it was free, and then by services. I think far better to make sure that public transport has a priority access to the police station and that you have the walking link so that if people are walking from town they can get across, as I said, from Snow Hill. But equally, I think there is no reason why police officers should not be encouraged, and again, incentivised, to go to work by bus. They do not all have to drive.

The Connétable of St. John:

Is it true, Connétable, that you have a reputation of being anti-car and reducing car use at all cost? Given the ...

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I do not know if it is a reputation; it is not up to me if it is a reputation. If you are asking if I am anti-car, absolutely not. I have been banging on about the loss of parking in St. Helier for several years, and I amended the Island Plan successfully, and the Transport Policy successfully, to increase shopper parking in St. Helier, so I am particularly concerned about the loss of shopper parking, because that is essential for traders. But of course it has to be said that Green Street is out of bounds a lot of the time for shoppers, because it is full of commuters, so that is why I have been trying to get Snow Hill increased in its capacity.

The Connétable of St. John:

But given that something like 1,100 cars an hour at peak times pass through the tunnel and it is a major artery from east to west ever since the tunnel was built, because of the industrial estate at St. Saviour, the way you have been explaining what you would like to see in the vicinity of the new police headquarters, in my mind it seems that before long we will have that pedestrianised or brought down to everything at snail pace and there will have to be another tunnel to move traffic around the Island. Your views that you have just expressed seem to me that you are quite happy to see this building go there and you are not listening to your colleagues on the Roads Committee who seem to have their feet on the ground. That is the way it is coming across, and you heard what your colleagues said.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

As I said when I started, it is a balance of views. I did not mention pedestrianising the tunnel or the roundabout. What I said was you must be able to get to the police station on foot. At the moment you cannot get across Green Street because there is no crossing facility. I think that is the limit to what I said about pedestrian movement. In terms of the number of cars using the tunnel, one accepts that Jersey's rise in traffic is frankly unsustainable, and if you would prefer an Island that is gridlocked, then we just have to keep on having a degraded bus service and making it difficult for people to work and bicycle.

The Connétable of St. John:

On that point you also heard your members of your Roads Committee mention that you have got a nursing home across the road and it was of concern to them that vehicles, motorcycles, et cetera, would be starting their engines at 6.00 am or whatever time it is. Do you not agree that that is of concern?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, and that can be managed. There are a lot of operational issues that need to be managed when you create any new public building. It does not mean that you do not build the public building because of the danger someone might be revving up a motorcycle. There is a ...

The Connétable of St. John:

We are talking about 50-odd motorcycles, basically.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

In that case, you do not put it there if it is going to be a problem.

The Connétable of St. John:

Therefore, you would agree with your committee in that respect, that that is not the right place to have a motorcycle park?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Motorcycle parking is again something that the Roads Committee has been trying to increase. We are on the record as having provided more and more motorcycle parking because more and more people are using 2 wheels.

The Connétable of St. John:

I am very grateful for that because I cycle. I have a motorcycle.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

But you cannot put it underneath people's windows when they are sleeping, so you have to find places that do not inconvenience the public. But a problem in locating, whether it is a motorcycle or disabled bay, does not mean that the whole plan to move the police station to Green Street is wrong. It may simply mean that you need to think again about the motorcycle parking and the disabled provision.

The Connétable of St. John:

Do you consider the site is large enough for a police headquarters that was supposed to take everything and you finish up with a site where some of the vehicles, et cetera, and equipment be held at La Collette and the remainder ... do you believe that we are trying to put a quart into a pint pot?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think that is very much a question for the Minister for Home Affairs who tells us, and his police chief tells us that the site is big enough and they are happy with the building. I am not qualified to say who is right, because I am here to talk about the impact of the proposals on St. Helier, not whether it is going to make a fantastic police station or not.

The Connétable of St. John:

You will have heard the question I put earlier to ... no, you were not in the building earlier, sorry. There are 2 bus stops on either side of the road proposed. Are you concerned that, with the amount of traffic, i.e. buses, that circulate from east to west through the tunnel that will be able to stop in any one hour, shall we say there are 50 in an hour, and each of them stops anything between half a minute to a minute, you could have a 10 minute delay just caused by the buses with tailbacks, given that at the moment there are no plans for lay-bys. Is that not of concern to you?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

You have far less delay if you have a lay-by. If you do not have a lay-by it would be unacceptable. But if the bus is pulling off the road, then I do not see how that is going to impact the traffic.

The Connétable of St. John:

Currently under the drawings, there are no lay-bys.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think it would be a good idea to introduce it.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Yes, I think it is something that has come up in all of our sessions. There seems to be a consensus that that would be a good thing. Deputy Maçon wants to just get into the discussion in the last few moments.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes, just one final question from me. It is to do with the issue of accessibility which is raised in Deputy Martin's proposition, and it is slightly related to the buses but also parking outside, which

the Roads Committee does highlight as an accessibility issue, and I am just wondering if we could hear your thoughts on it. Given that the police station is a 24-hour service station, that for example at the moment, if there is an emergency, for example, a parent has to go down and collect their offspring, for whatever reason, there is the ability then to go straight into the police station and park there outside, collect what might be ... well, I do not think they still keep them if they are intoxicated .. anyway, for whatever reason might be upset or whatever, there is that ability to collect and kind of go immediately outside the police station, which certainly seems to be an asset for public use, whereas in this particular example that may not be the case. I think that is a concern which the Roads Committee has highlighted, as well as an attitude of Deputy Martin. Would you care to comment on that type of example?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think that is why I started off by saying that I think Green Street car park needs to be redeveloped and expanded, because again, in an ideal world, if you wanted to pick up your kiddie from the police station, or any relative of any age, you would drive into the car park and there might even be a floor dedicated to people visiting the police station, and you would park up and you would go into the police station. But that is clearly the aspiration. We are not going to get it straight away if we move into this site, but as I say, we have been talking about knocking down this car park and building a better one, for years. I suggest that we get on with it.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Would you go as far as saying this should be seen as a phased development, ideally? All the vision that you have outlined could be enabled by the police headquarters on the front of the site and then a redeveloped car park with all the accessing and servicing meeting the requirements that you have set out, as phase 2?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think that certainly would have avoided the current problem we are having, the political problem, that if those bringing this proposition had realised the strength of feeling about the loss of car parking, even if we are just talking about 100-odd spaces, then they could well have brought it as a package of proposals which would be the new police station followed by a new car park, and they probably would not have a problem.

[16:00]

Deputy J.H. Young:

That is a very interesting suggestion. We have not touched upon on-street car parking, but I think in Deputy Martin's submission she does draw a link between the loss of car parking spaces at Green Street and the difficulties she says and the desire that exists among Havre des Pas

residents and its surroundings to have a resident's car parking scheme. I think she says that it has not been possible because of the ...

The Connétable of St. Helier:

There is not the capacity.

Deputy J.H. Young:

They are hunting for spaces. Do you have any thoughts on that?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, I mean ...

Deputy J.H. Young:

It sounds as if to me that that would not make any difference, even if we had this enhanced car park, as it were.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

The residents' car parking schemes only really work where you have that reservoir that will take the cars that cannot get in. Because there will always be more people who want a resident's parking permit than there are spaces on the street, so in every scheme you have to have a car park that they can go into if they cannot find a space. That does not happen in the north of town because there is not one, and it does not currently happen in the Havre des Pas area, although I suppose people can park in Green Street; it is just that it is a long walk at night-time, to Havre des Pas.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Thank you. Thank you, Constable. I will close that particular session and we are adjourned. Thank you very much.

[16:02]