

2024.11.25

2.12 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding recycling collection facilities in St. Brelade: (OQ.227/2024)

Will the Minister outline whether any decision has been taken, or is being considered, regarding the continued Government support for recycling collection facilities in St. Brelade, and other similar facilities around the Island, and will he explain the rationale for any proposed changes?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. The provision of bring bank recycling sites is still under review but I must be clear a final decision has not been made, which I confirmed at my Scrutiny hearing last Wednesday. I can also confirm that our current 3-year contract runs until January 2026. The review is part of the department's usual budget-setting process and is considering the fairness and equity of some parishes having multiple bring bank sites plus kerbside collections and others having minimal or no provision. A presentation was made to the Comité des Connétables in July and discussions have continued to take place to understand the individual circumstances of each parish. We will not be closing any bring bank facilities in the first half of 2025 while their engagement with the parishes continues, a position I confirmed with the Connétables yesterday evening and have notified to Deputy Tadier following the lodging of P.85. I am also delighted at the amount of emails from Islanders I have received expressing support for the bring bank facilities and I hope that working together we can significantly increase our recycling rate in the next 18 months. Thank you.

2.12.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

One of the things that was mentioned in that Scrutiny hearing was the possibility that parishes should pay essentially for those facilities. Does he accept that the problem with asking parishes to pay for these facilities is that they are potentially used by people from outside the parish and does this not mean that the appropriate way to provide them is through the Government and that this would also mean that centrally-provided facilities can be provided efficiently without duplication?

The Connétable of St. John:

That is featured as part of the consultation that we have people moving from one parish to another for the convenience. Currently we have some 17 sites across the Island, not all well located, I would suggest, and there is definitely the potential for consolidation of sites. I would also suggest there is the potential for consolidation for green waste as well. Thank you.

2.12.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Notwithstanding the Minister saying that no decision has been made, there was a publication in our parish magazine *La Baguette* last week in which the Constable informed parishioners that the Infrastructure Department has advised the parish "that they will discontinue the provision from 1st January 2025 as a cost-cutting measure". Can the Minister explain why the parish was under that impression that very clearly the facilities would be closed, that the provision would be discontinued, not from when the contract ends but from 1st January 2025? It has taken a lot, I think, of correspondence from both parishioners, Islanders and politicians for the area to get involved in order to perhaps trigger what appears to be a U-turn on this.

The Connétable of St. John:

As I said in my earlier response, we presented to the Comité des Connétables back in July. My Assistant Minister received feedback from Constables last Monday at the Comité meeting and our recycling officer has been out and about meeting with each of the parishes. It certainly was our intention to stop the recycling centres from January but we have taken on board all of that feedback and the more recent feedback that we have received. Thank you.

2.12.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister accept that there needs to be some continuity here in the sense that St. Brelade is being billed as the second urban centre for Jersey after St. Helier? Whatever we think of that, I think it is probably factually correct that it is certainly an urban hub and that it is not just used, as Deputy Renouf said, by those who live or pay rates in St. Brelade but many people who come to visit or shop in St. Brelade, walk at Les Creux, for example, will also bring their recycling to those areas. Does he accept that there might be consideration about rationalising where in Jersey the recycling centre should be but that they do provide a valuable supplementary to those parishes which may already have kerbside recycling but certainly to those who do not have it?

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes, I can inform Members that I have been involved in recycling since 2006 when St. John became the first parish on the Island following an initiative by the former Deputy Andrew Lewis to introduce kerbside recycling. We have learnt a lot in the consultation, we can be more efficient. We have currently got, as I said, 17 sites. People may be surprised to know that St. Helier has just one and St. Brelade has 3, along with St. Clement. We are looking to do what we can at best. Absolutely, we have to put more effort into recycling and that is what we are consciously looking to do. Thank you.

2.12.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can the Minister say, given that this was, in answer to Deputy Tadier's question, definitely something that had been proposed, to close all the services down, how much money it would have saved and putting that in the context of the total budget, what was the rationale for that cut?

The Connétable of St. John:

We have had to look at what services we continue to do within the Infrastructure Department and which services we do not continue to carry out. We have all had to do that in all of our Ministries as we are finding increasing costs and our desire not to put up prices to match those costs; 58 per cent of the Infrastructure budget goes on fixed costs and not on staff, so we have seen significant pressure in that area. I am happy to write to the Deputy with the exact figure, it is a significant figure, but it is commercially sensitive because of the contract. Thank you.