

2018.12.03

10 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding planned improvements in the area of the Weighbridge and Liberation Square ahead of ‘Liberation 55’: [OQ.223/2018]

Will the Minister explain to the Assembly what improvements are planned in the area of the Weighbridge and Liberation Square and how any such improvements are to be delivered in time for ‘Liberation 75’?

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

‘Liberation 75’ is a proposal to join Liberation Square and Weighbridge Place by extinguishing the section of road between the 2 squares to create one large improved public amenity space. It is proposed that it is completed by and opened on 9th May 2020 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Island. Thereafter, the new combined amenity space will be available for the continuation and enhancement of the numerous community activities the squares currently host.

3.10.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

This all sounds wonderful. Will the Minister undertake to brief me, as the Parish Constable, about the plans, and my elected roads committee, as soon as possible?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The joining of the squares has been discussed many times over the last 10 years, most recently in the work carried out by the previous Future of St. Helier Group. These discussions have not moved forward due to funding not being identified but funding will be put in place within the budget, which we will be doing this week.

3.10.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am the glad that the Minister alluded to the fact that it is not just ‘Liberation 75’ that will benefit from this really exciting project of public domain but there will be a legacy that will be left for future generations. Does the Minister agree that this is a great opportunity for culture and even sporting events in the Island to enhance the offering that we have in town and that currently there is not really something of this magnitude in terms of an open space that can be used for these kinds of events and other events in future?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Absolutely, I look forward to seeing the amenity spaces being well used by cultural events and sports events alike.

3.10.3 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Rather than extinguishing the road, can the Minister inform the Assembly whether electronic bollards were considered as perhaps a more cost effective way of allowing this to be used as and when for public amenity and allowing the travel-going public in order to carry on that route? If we lose the road it is going to have implications for the entire road network.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It is indeed, which is why the road engineers have been working on this for some time and doing lots of traffic modelling to see how much those slip roads are used and the knock-on effects of them being closed. But as soon as the funding is in place a board of stakeholders will be set up to decide the best way forward.

3.10.4 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can, therefore, the Minister please ask his department to look at, while they are considering these things, the viability of electronic raising bollards, so you could close off that area for public events but leave the road in use as and when it is necessary?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

All options are being looked at.

3.10.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can the Minister tell us whether the bus station is now going to be redundant? If they are closing off that area how are the buses going to get in and out?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

There are plenty of buses coming around different routes. There is not an awful lot of traffic using those slip roads, but obviously the bus company is one of the stakeholders that will be consulted.

3.10.6 The Connétable of St. Helier:

As I said in my earlier question, I welcome the improvement of the public realm in St. Helier. My comment about consultation is that the Future St. Helier Group did discuss this but it was way down its priority list and many other projects have been mothballed. Will the Minister undertake to let the parish in which this improvement plan is happening ... will he undertake to consult the Parish in a meaningful way so that we know what is going on and we can answer any requests for information that we get?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Absolutely. I am not sure who will be on the board at the moment but I would hope the Constable of St. Helier will be at least one member.