2.7   The Deputy of St. Martin of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the number of people waiting to attend compulsory basic training courses:

Would the Minister advise Members of how many people are waiting to attend compulsory basic training courses and whether any action could be taken to reduce the length of the waiting list?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

There are 135 people currently awaiting their allocated compulsory basic training courses. The courses are held on weekends and the next available course in which there are spaces is Saturday, 8th September, which is 7 weeks on Saturday. Most of the participants taking the course are new riders who plan the purchase of their machine, obtain the necessary equipment, provisional licence and insurance in advance of taking to the road. In planning to take to the road many book compulsory basic training seeking a date for the course that suits their plans. This being the case, only those few who have acted spontaneously and have not planned in advance will have an actual so-called wait of 6 or 7 weeks. The Jersey School of Motorcycling has confirmed to me that at no time in the past 6 months, or prior to this, has anyone, be that a member of the public, motorcycle dealer, Parish Hall, et cetera, raised any concern or complained about the Deputy of St Martin's so-called waiting list. Furthermore, in the 3 years that this service provider has been operating the compulsory basic training course not one single complaint has been received by the department about the waiting time to attend the course.

2.7.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Obviously they do not feel very comfortable making their complaints to anybody else other than the Deputy of St Martin. I understand that the compulsory basic training courses are not run by the Transport and Technical Services, as the Minister said, but under a licence-all agreement. Could I ask the Minister how that licence operates and how often is it monitored to ensure that the conditions of that licence are operating satisfactory?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

Firstly, in reference to the Deputy of St Martin's rather off-hand comment about people referring complaints to him, I have in fact the most recent correspondence from the only person I know who has referred a complaint to the Deputy, and in it he says in the fourth paragraph: "I did not take the letter to the Deputy of St Martin to further my complaint, and I would have been much happier never to have seen it again." In respect of the monitoring of the licence we monitor the licences as often as is necessary, and at this stage I am extremely happy with the way that compulsory basic training courses are concerned. There has been one marginal issue, which is that the cancellation costs have been the same as booking costs, and those booking costs have been repeated as course attendees have attended over time, and I have asked the gentlemen that conduct these courses to review that situation so that perhaps charges could be reduced over time on the basis that obviously people attending should be getting some level of training, and it would be unfair to continue to penalise them at the initial rate, and I think that realistically is the only single feature issue with our licensing.

2.7.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am delighted that my question has at least addressed an issue which had been a concern, but just in closing could I ask the Minister to confirm that the letter he draws reference to and understandably why the person gave up any hope of getting an answer was in actual fact addressed to his department on 20th September last year?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I can confirm that the original letter was addressed to Driver Vehicle Standards; I cannot confirm the precise date. However I would say to put things in context for Members, it is important to realise that when anyone takes a powered vehicle on to the roads it presents a potential hazard. It should be clearly understood by people --