

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2020**

Question

Will the Minister provide an update on progress made to implement the Sustainable Transport Policy since its instigation in December 2019; and will he state what further progress will be made by December 2021, identifying any further areas of the Policy which he expects to be in place by that time?

Answer

Progress made on implementing the Sustainable Transport Policy

The Sustainable Transport Policy (STP) was adopted on 11th March by the States Assembly. The adoption of this policy unlocked funding from the Climate Emergency Fund that was ring fenced for transport projects.

The transport projects we were intending on delivering with the first tranche of this funding were outlined in the accompanying document to the STP, *The Sustainable Transport Strong Start Delivery Plan* (Strong Start). The projects were quick-win type projects that were designed to be implemented during 2020 whilst Government undertook significant strategic policy development to identify a future programme of projects to assist with the delivery of the STP.

One of the issues with delivering transport projects in Jersey, is that often suggestions for projects come from the viewpoint of the individual or user, who solely has their own interests at heart. Rarely, does any consideration get given to what is best at an island-wide level and this strategic policy work was designed to do just that. The transport system is very nuanced and anything you do to improve things for one user group, often has knock on effects for another user group, e.g. removing parking to provide a cycle lane. This fact makes it even more important that we consult broadly and get things *right first time* for Jersey.

The Strong Start programme has been impacted by difficulties in delivery due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. During the pandemic, the STP's delivery teams were redeployed to more pressing matters, such as implementing emergency street closures to assist with physical distancing or creating an entirely new construction permit scheme to get a sector back to work and minimise the impact on the economy.

Prior to the pandemic, work was in full flight, whether this was engineering design teams identifying how to deliver bus improvements on the Esplanade or the sustainable transport team liaising with schools how to pilot school shuttle buses or implement walking buses in the Summer term. Much of this good work had to stop abruptly for good reasons, such as schools closing to contain the virus and is now being restarted.

As we move now into the *new normal*, we now have a fundamentally different set of transport issues that need identifying and addressing. This is the same for the Island Plan, which is now being delivered with a new timeframe in mind whilst we assess the true impact of the pandemic. One example of this was that reducing travel demand was at the centre of pre-pandemic thinking, now, with wholesale working from home common, we know that too much of this has a detrimental impact on our economy, particularly in St Helier's shops, cafes and restaurants.

There are challenges associated with rapidly scaling delivery teams. We are starting this journey with small team and as anyone in business will know, there are challenges associated with rapid scaling to increase

output. One only has to look at Tesla, the maker of electric cars, to know that you have to get the supply chain and all the underlying machinery working, to ramp up production of the end product.

The Government of Jersey are in the process of recruiting a Sustainable Transport Policy Officer and a Cycling Infrastructure Development Officer who will assist with unlocking the potential for delivering projects in this area.

The rollout of bus shelters has continued, we are on track to deliver nine shelters by the end of the year and seven have been installed already.

My officers have delivered the first of our covered cycle parking facilities in Sand Street car park, providing a space for people to park their bikes out of the elements, helping prolong their investment in their bicycle.

As a response to the pandemic, we have fast-tracked the roll out of bicycle parking stands in St Helier in areas where we know there is a cycle parking issue. Temporary stands are being located as part of a trial and these are being replaced with permanent stands following a settling in period.

It is worth noting the considerable impact that backbench propositions have on the delivery of the Sustainable Transport Policy. These propositions consume significant resources in preparing responses and they divert the delivery teams away from the day job. Much of this can be avoided by members consulting with me in advance of submitting propositions.

Further areas of policy under development:

As signposted in the STP, there are four major pieces of strategic transport policy that are currently under development and work has been commenced to scope the briefs for these projects. Key stakeholders have been engaged to contribute towards the development of these briefs and further consultation is planned before these are finalised.

A brief indicative synopsis of what these projects will include is provided below. However it should be emphasised that this is being revisited following feedback from stakeholders.

- Active Travel Strategy

The Active Travel Plan will set out how we will make active journeys safer and easier for Islanders of all abilities over the coming years. It will identify key cycle corridors in order that they can be preserved in the Island Plan, exploring improvements in modal interface at ports and airports and include medium-term investment plans for walking and cycling infrastructure.

- Bus Service Development Plan

The Bus Service Development Plan will undertake a systematic and whole-system analysis of the options, opportunities and challenges associated with making changes to:

- the optimum distribution, design and frequency of routes, including existing routes;
- infrastructure, including where improvements could make it quicker and more convenient to get the bus;
- the size and types of vehicle used eg smaller buses, wheeled trams etc;
- allocation of space, including for priority bus lanes, junctions and bus stops;
- the ticketing and fare structure, concessions and the government subsidy;
- the school bus network and service; and
- the long-term investment plan for the bus fleet, acknowledging the move to ultra-low emissions technologies.

The Plan will be based on detailed quantitative modelling, and qualitative analysis, of where, when and why people do (and don't) want to travel.

- Mobility as a Service Strategy

Our transport system needs to be able to adapt to take advantage of such opportunities and to learn about and plan for future technologies as they are developed, including a legislative framework that can support mobility innovation.

A strategic partnership with Digital Jersey will be established to make progress in this area, and to ensure the government can draw on the best available on-Island skills and talent. The joint workstream will involve a range of projects and research into what a future focused and responsive transport system looks, globally and in Jersey

- Parking Plan

The Parking Plan will provide a blueprint for the future, including:

- setting out the strategic requirements of the parking system;
- examining how provision can be maintained or improved for those with limited mobility;
- presenting a detailed survey of current parking provision (on street parking, multi-story, public and private, costs and occupancy, asset management);
- assessing how much parking should be provided and where it should be located;
- considering the role of government in providing parking as a service;
- considering alternative uses for land currently dedicated to parking; and
- reviewing the charging structure to recognise, and price accordingly, the social and environmental costs of vehicles that use parking space.

Progress identified for December 2021

The completion of the majority of the strategic studies is targeted for the end of 2021 and will form the basis of identifying where public money can best be spent to achieve the value for money for islanders. If the timescales are expedited, we run the risk of having to shorten consultation periods, which would lead to a much poorer standard of work. I think it is important that Government listens to islanders.

Developing the policy projects outlined above will realise several co-benefits. For example producing a bus service development plan, will have the added advantage of being able to take into account the States' declared climate emergency and identify how we are hoping decarbonise this mode of travel in the future. Never has Jersey attempted to map out a long-term strategic delivery plan for transport and it is vital that this work is allowed to progress without outside interference. Key stakeholders and effective communication will be integral to the programmes of work.

We are due to publish an update on our cycling projects by the end of September, which will outline where we are focussing our efforts on route to becoming a cycling island. This sets out our new short-term deliverables as an immediate response to the coronavirus pandemic. These are split into five main areas:

- Improvements to infrastructure
- Developing education, training and promotion
- Taking advantage of technology to increase the use of digital mobility
- Policy Initiatives
- Events

This update should put some flesh on the bones of what the public of Jersey can expect to see within the next 18 months.