

2.11 The Deputy of St. Mary of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding domestic households connected to tight tank drainage systems:

May I just acknowledge, please, that I do understand that part of my question has already been admirably tackled by the Minister for Planning, but of course I will ask it in the form submitted. Would the Minister advise Members how many domestic households are currently connected to tight tanks; how many of these are subject to the concessionary tanker rate; and, for those households not on the concessionary tanker rate, what the average annual tanker charge for emptying the tight tanks is?

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

In 2005 the tanker service visited 1,200 properties of which 77 were connected to tight tanks. The properties connected to tight tanks fall into 2 categories. Firstly, there are 33 properties receiving the concessionary rate of £11.50 per load. These were originally connected to a septic tank and soakaway system and over time either the tank or soakaway has failed. Following inspection of the system, if it is found that there is no land available for a new tank or the ground conditions are unsuitable, the owner is granted a concessionary rate. The second category of tight tank is where a new drainage system has been installed as part of a new development and there are no mains drains, or where there has been an extension to an existing property with additional habitable rooms. There are 44 properties in this category. Within this category there are 2 charging mechanisms. For properties installing a tight tank before 2003, the charges are in line with the septic tank emptying rate: first 2 loads free; 3 to 12 loads at £20.50 per load; 13 loads and over £33.50. In 2003 the Environment and Public Services Committee introduced a new tight tank rate which now applies to all loads, this rate being £45.50. This new rate applied to all developments from that date, and when making a planning application the applicant is made aware of the rates at the time of the application. Taking the 2 rates into account, the average charge for emptying a domestic tight tank in 2005 over the year was £1,546, but this figure does not take into account the size of the property or the number of occupants and a number of other factors.

2.11.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I am not sure where the 50p comes from, but apropos of the general charging schedules, could the Minister, Sir, indicate whether it is his intention, given the sense of injustice felt by a lot of people, to ultimately remove these charges?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

In many ways the situation we now find ourselves in is one over which the States has presided for a considerable amount of time. I can assure the Deputy that I am preparing to carry out at some stage a review of liquid waste and there is no question that the way we deal with tanker operations will form part of that review. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that any decisions ultimately will be constrained by budgetary approach to this matter.