

#### **4.17 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding reductions in rush-hour traffic by 15 per cent:**

Does the Minister accept that he needs to do more if he is to meet the target to reduce rush-hour traffic by 15 per cent? If so, what steps, if any, is he taking to coax people out of their cars and to use alternative methods of transport?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

Yes, I do accept that more needs to be done; one only has to look at the congestion caused by the closure of Mount Bingham recently to know that we have too much traffic and there is little or no spare capacity to enable the road system to cope when problems occur. We need to encourage more people to choose to use public transport, to walk and to cycle. The frequency, coverage and capacity of the bus service is improving and I will continue to work in partnership with the new bus company to provide further improvements. My department has also been making good progress in providing improved walking and cycling infrastructure as well as a programme of promotions and awareness campaigns to encourage less car use. I will shortly be issuing a full progress report providing all our relevant monitoring statistics but, in summary, although the trends are encouraging, we have a lot more to do to reach that 15 per cent target. In developing the Strategic Transport Policy, research concluded that a combination of incentives would be needed to achieve the targets, the most obvious disincentive being the cost of car use. However, when the S.T.P. (Strategic Transport Policy) was debated by the States, an amendment was unanimously approved that required the Minister for Transport and Technical Services not to increase the cost of motoring disproportionately until an alternative method of transport is available to all.

#### **4.17.1 Deputy M. Tadier:**

The Minister said more needs to be done; the question was: "Does more need to be done by him?" so I am hoping that will also be a yes. Can the Minister confirm that, if the reports are true, we have not even really made a dent in achieving the 15 per cent reduction in that I think the levels of traffic have stayed the same. Can the Minister confirm that?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

The S.T.P. set a specific target of reducing peak-hour traffic levels to and from St. Helier by 15 per cent, so 12,000 people come into St. Helier by car or van in the morning rush-hour, so we need to get 1,800 people to change mode. 50 per cent of the 1,800 are expected to become bus users, roughly a doubling of the current peak-hour bus use. Use of public transport has increased by 9 per cent since 2007. Bus use is 1 per cent higher than 2012 and the morning hour bus use is up about 10 per cent in the last 3 years. Use of road fuel is down 10 per cent and the air quality monitoring shows reductions of pollutants at the roadside and a small reduction in peak traffic levels at 1.7 per cent in the last 4 years.

#### **The Bailiff:**

A concise answer, if you would, Minister.

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

It is very difficult to monitor the service as it is. We are at saturation point.

#### **The Bailiff:**

I think we have got other Members wanting to ask questions and we have one more question still to do. The Constable of St. Mary?

#### **4.17.2 The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Would the Minister agree that, as well as reducing the rush-hour traffic, keeping what traffic there is moving is important, and will he do more to ensure that inconsiderate and often illegal

parking at the side of the road during the rush-hour is stamped out by whatever means is necessary?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I would agree with that 100 per cent, last week being a case in point when we had that torrential downpour of rain. I believe a lorry broke down in the tunnel, another one on the dual carriageway, there were 3 road traffic collisions in town, a lady hit by a car in Gloucester Street, I am glad to say not badly injured, and an oil spill on Trinity Hill. So, in effect, it was complete and utter gridlock. So keeping traffic moving is a number 1 priority.

**4.17.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

With hindsight, does the Minister regret that he did not prioritise the possibility of providing a hoppa bus for town transport, and does he not accept that his Sustainable Transport Policy is in tatters?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I would love to see a hoppa bus but unfortunately buses are caught in the same gridlock as cars. We do not have bus lanes. In fact, many people in the U.K. are abandoning bus lanes to keep the traffic moving, but I would support wholeheartedly what the Constable of St. Mary has said regarding keeping traffic moving and that is our priority. We do have a contraflow system operating on Mount Bingham at the moment to keep traffic going up and down.

**4.17.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

Will the Minister be adopting the Bermuda solution of only one car of modest dimensions per household and no hire cars and everyone else on scooters or buses?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I have no plans to do so. I would rather encourage people to use other forms of transport. I and many Members I know here walked to the States today and I would encourage more people to walk, if at all possible if they could arrange it, or push-bike or maybe 2 wheels, but we are at saturation point, I do concede.

**The Bailiff:**

I owe an apology to Deputy Maçon, I have had him on my list. Deputy Maçon?

**4.17.5 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:**

At the risk of saying: "I told you so", will the Minister, when reviewing this, dust off the very good Scrutiny Report which condemned this policy from the beginning in stating that it was £1 million under-funded and therefore was not going to meet its targets in the first place? Will the Minister dust off that report and will he go to the Council of Ministers asking for more funding in order to fund this policy in the first place?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I am more than happy to revisit any policy but, unfortunately, we cannot build any more roads. We are 9 by 5 and we are using roads built by General Don. We have nowhere else to go without knocking people's houses down, so the only thing we can do is to discourage personal transport and encourage greater use of public transport.

**4.17.6 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I came in this morning with a car-share, it was not my car, and it had nothing to do with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services or public transport. I used: "Jersey In Transition: I share my car, do you?" and it has the added advantage, if you excuse the brazen plug but it is not for a commercial benefit, of being kind, making friends and reducing CO2 and also saving

money, so it is a win-win situation. Does the Minister accept that in 4 years he has managed a reduction of 1.7 per cent at a target of 15 per cent which represents a 12 per cent towards his overall target, an 88 per cent failure rate, in other words? Does the Minister accept ...

**The Bailiff:**

You have asked the question, Deputy, thank you. Minister?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I applaud the car-sharing but, as I say, we are doing our best with what we have. If we could just encourage people not to use private vehicles and to car-share and use any other mode possible.

**4.17.7 Deputy M. Tadier:**

A supplementary, if I may. The point is we want people to use private car-shares if the public transport strategy is failing, as it clearly is. Will the Minister take it upon himself to do more work with these voluntary groups, non-profit groups, who are doing the job already where the Minister for Transport and Technical Services has failed and, by working more with them, admit that individuals have more responsibility for their own transport needs in the absence of large buses, which also clog up the road?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

As I pointed out, the buses share the same roads, so if there is gridlock, the buses are locked in that very same gridlock. Many companies in St. Helier are using a car-share system, many of the banks; I know H.S.B.C. do an excellent job with their car-sharing. It was always my intention when we brought in the double-deckers that they would be used, as I put it at the time, to bring "suits" into town so the buses had WiFi on and so it is just to encourage everyone to use the buses, hop-on and hop-off.

[11:45]

**The Bailiff:**

I am afraid, even allowing for injury time caused by the visiting delegation, that brings questions to an end.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Sir, could I ask the Minister, who was about to get the question, to circulate his answer to the question to Members?

**The Bailiff:**

Minister, will you be able to do that?

**Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:**

Well, I could save time by just saying: "No." That is the answer to the question.

**The Bailiff:**

Will you circulate that?

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is the wrong part of the speech, Sir.

**Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Sir, may I raise a point of order? Deputy Higgins in answer to a question during question time, said that he had not been contacted by Internal Audit and the Independent Auditor, in relation to the Danwood contract. I have been sent an email that he was indeed contacted on 22nd November 2012, and I would ask him, to withdraw the comment that he was not contacted, as I

clearly have at least one example of evidence that he was contacted. There have been a number of “yaboo” statements made in question time today, and this is one example which I think is unfair and I would ask the Deputy to withdraw the statement.

**Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

No, I will not withdraw it and the reason why is I checked back through all my emails to see if it was there. The one month I did not get was that one. I did ask the Assistant Minister to ask BDO. to contact me and they did not contact me and therefore I have not had the opportunity to give evidence to them, but I am giving it to the Comptroller and Auditor General's staff tomorrow.