

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. BRELADE
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 26th APRIL 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 4th MAY 2021**

Question

In light of the continuing concerns expressed by the taxi industry over the lack of police attention being given to the offering of 'Jersey Lifts' by unregulated individuals and vehicles, will the Minister advise Members of his strategy to manage this situation?

Answer

In response to correspondence from the Jersey Taxi Drivers Association, I wrote to the Association on 22nd February this year.

In my letter, I highlighted the work that the States of Jersey Police (SOJP) had previously undertaken to try and address 'Jersey Lifts' and explained why enforcement alone was not the way in which to solve this issue.

A number of years ago States of Jersey Police spent considerable time and effort in an attempt to tackle the situation in the Island. An Island-wide community awareness campaign was developed, co-ordinated and led by Prison Me No Way and the SOJP, with limited impact.

Whilst a few people were arrested and interviewed for a variety of reasons it was not possible to bring any relevant prosecutions before the criminal courts. Consequently, the overall impact on the unregulated, 'taxi community' was negligible. This highlighted it cannot be solved by enforcement alone and requires wider thought and consideration around why is it seemingly so popular in the island. (It is worth noting SOJP receive very few, if any, complaints about 'Jersey Lifts' which currently maintains a Facebook following of approximately 22K people, 20% of the Island's community.)

Since 'Jersey Lifts' and other unregulated drivers have operated in the island, SOJP have always responded to any serious criminal matters associated with this activity, for example allegations of physical or sexual assault or other predatory behaviour by such drivers. However, over the last two years no such associated serious crimes have been reported.

This said, I remain of the opinion that a wide collaborative approach by all key agencies may offer a potential way forward and that in this way, it should be possible to address the root causes rather than the symptoms. I am also strongly of the opinion however that, set against competing demands, the Police should not lead this work, as the enforcement element is but a small element of the potential overall solution.

In summary therefore, I have already set out my view of the current situation and of the way in which I believe this issue may be addressed. I have spoken to the police at length and they are keen to participate in finding a sustainable solution in the interests of all parties. It is clear however, and I reiterate this, enforcement action alone is not the solution to this problem.