

2018.10.09

4 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding strategies to encourage travel by bicycle or on foot: [OQ.148/2018]

Further to the reply to my oral question on 18th July 2017, when the Minister's predecessor said that he would bring forward strategies to encourage travel by bicycle or on foot prior to the end of his term of office, will the Minister advise the Assembly when these strategies will be presented to the States?

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The Constable will have seen the recent publication of the proposed Common Strategic Policy which sets out in the Council of Minister's priority to develop a new sustainable transport plan within the States term. As part of this document, we will be bringing forward proposals for improving walking and cycling, which will formalise much of the progress we have already made in this area. This is anticipated to be published alongside the Government plan next year.

3.4.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Does the Minister feel this is adequate? The Assembly was promised specific strategies, long overdue strategies, before the end of the previous Minister's term. Does the Minister not think it would be more appropriate, apart from wrapping this up in the new policies, to bring forward those strategies that have been promised by his predecessor?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

My predecessor has already outlined, in his answer to the 2017 question, many of the projects we have delivered, which have had a positive effect of walking and cycling. It is also correctly stated that we have a sustainable transport policy and although the targets are out of date the aims of the policy are to deliver the right message.

3.4.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister outline how we measure whether more people are walking or cycling please?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The department takes regular stats and interview the public regularly coming in on the cycle track, *et cetera*. Some of the safe way paths to school we have in St. Mary, St. Lawrence, Bel Royal. We have pedestrian crossings: Janvrin Road, Chasse Brunet, St. Saviour and many other schemes. St. Peter's Valley Path is also complete now. Things are pretty much on line.

3.4.3 Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary:

With a view to discouraging the workforce from bringing their cars into town, has the Minister recently had discussions with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to ensure that provision of parking spaces to staff are taxed as a benefit in kind?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

No, I have not as a benefit in kind. But I have regular meetings with colleagues. I met yesterday with my colleague, the Minister behind me here, regarding better provision and walking in town. This is ongoing.

3.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

As part of his rehash of sustainable transport development, will the Minister reinforce his previously given commitment to engaging a low-cost hoppla bus in the town areas in order that we may get people around and about more easily?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

A hoppla bus has been tried before, as the Deputy is aware. I think it is a good idea. I would like to see it tried again, subject to funding. If not, sponsorship. I would like to see that come to fruition.

3.4.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In developing his sustainable transport plan, will he press for that funding to be made available because that is what happened last time. The Minister left the project at the starting blocks, as it were, because funding was not provided and the Minister then did not fight hard enough.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, I would like to pursue that. As I say, subject to funding, but if we could find a private sponsor for that, that would be excellent.

3.4.6 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier

Can I ask, as part of the sustainable transport policy, there is a consideration made for providing facilities to shower and change in the centre of St. Helier for cyclists who travel in? As this is something that I have been speaking to some of the people who travel into St. Helier about.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Anything we can do to encourage more people to walk and cycle is to be welcomed. Several private companies do provide such a facility. We even have one in our own States Building here. There is the new cycling company that has moved into the new finance centre, and I believe they offer such facilities. That is to be welcomed.

3.4.7 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

There is an enormous amount of work that has been done on improving cycling around St. Helier and walking routes. Does the Minister not consider that it would be better to bring forward some of those low-cost schemes and not wait for a new strategy next year?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Absolutely. We are still working on it. The final sections of the cycling route from Corbiere to Havre des Pas is nearly complete. There are still 2 small sections - one at French Harbour, one at English Harbour - to be completed. Work is starting on that in the very near future. So one will be able to cycling literally from Corbiere to Havre des Pas without leaving a cycle track. Obviously, the eastern cycle track is ongoing.

3.4.8 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

While the cycle network may be joined-up, the bus network certainly is not. It is not possible to get through fares on the buses when one changes to St. Helier, for example. Will the Minister raise this as an issue of urgency with the LibertyBus?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, that does not arise out of travel by bicycle or on foot.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is part of the sustainable transport plan and people do need to obviously get on and off the bus. I think LibertyBus provide cycles as well, which you can take on the bus. So I think it is a joined-up sustainable policy. **[Members: Oh!]**

The Bailiff:

Deputy, it is an extraordinarily good question but just not as a supplementary to this one.

3.4.9 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am, I must say, flabbergasted that a ministerial promise to the Assembly is simply being dropped by the new Minister who says: "Anything we can do to encourage more people to walk and cycle is to be welcomed." How about strategies connecting up walking and cycling routes? Certainly very little reference has been made to walking, which currently accounts, according to the Stats Unit, for 31 per cent of commuters. 31 per cent of people are walking into town with no proper facilities. Will the Minister agree to bring forward a walking strategy in short order?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As the Constable is well aware, we are working on walking and cycling strategies to make more cycle and pedestrian-friendly, working with the Parish of St. Helier and the Department for Infrastructure, to bring this forward. This is happening now. Talks are ongoing and I would be delighted to talk further with the Constable of St. Helier to bring that through. But we are 9 miles by 5 miles and everything we do is a retrofit. So we have to make swingeing cuts. We have to possibly remove parking spaces. There are lots of things we have to do to bring in bicycle lanes to make the town more accessible. I have spoken at length about the western cycle route and the eastern cycle route, which is ongoing. Obviously, we need to join up the dots and bring things through St. Helier itself so people can get to where they are going on their bike and on foot. That is ongoing.

The Bailiff:

We come to question 5 which Deputy Labey is to ask of the Chief Minister, not the Minister for Economic Development.

Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier:

Is that right, Sir?

The Bailiff:

It is addressed to the Chief Minister: "Will the Chief Minister provide ..."

Deputy R. Labey:

It is, but I think that was changed so that the Minister for Economic ...

The Bailiff:

It is the Chief Minister, so I am told.

Deputy R. Labey:

It is the Chief Minister? Sorry.