

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY P.D. MCLINTON OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2016**

Question

What progress, if any, has been made towards the introduction of a scheme (whether in law or as a public awareness campaign) asking motorists to report to an authority if they are involved in a collision with a domestic cat; and will the Minister provide a timeline for this work and an expected completion date?

Answer

My officers have undertaken a significant amount of work looking into this matter and assessing how best cats might be protected and catered for within the available legislative instruments. This work has involved discussion and consultation with Law Drafting Officers, the States' Police, States' Vet and the Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as well as, reviews of the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956, Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 2004 and the Highway Code, and UK legislation. At present neither the Highway Code nor the Road Traffic Law provide for any action to be taken in the event of an accident to a cat. I believe for any meaningful action to be taken, the changes must put the welfare of cats and their owners at the centre and avoid unnecessary burdensome bureaucracy or liabilities over the control of cats.

The outcome I seek is that motorists be made aware of their responsibility to report an accident, so that veterinary care can be provided as soon as possible and records are made so that owners can be reunited with their pet. Unfortunately, achieving this is not as simple as adding cats to the list of animals in the existing law, because that would bring with it an unnecessary burden on owners (in terms of controlling animals) and on the States and honorary police who would be obliged to attend incidents. Such a change in legislation would neither respect the nature of cats to roam without liability, nor provide any additional welfare protection as the police are not in the position to offer veterinary care or track owners without a register of cats. It could also be counter productive should a motorist be reluctant to contact the police.

However, the relevant Articles of the Highway Code, which is referenced in Road Traffic Law, will be amended to include a provision that if a motorist is involved in an accident or incident causing harm, damage, injury or death to a cat that they should inform the Animal Shelter without delay. This would allow a pet ambulance to be dispatched to the scene as quickly as possible, to allow veterinary care to be provided and records to be made so that the owner can be reunited with their pet. This would support existing provisions of the Animal Welfare law, "to avoid cruelty and unnecessary suffering to animals" in which a definition of cats is included.

My officers have prepared a suitable amendment to the Highway Code, and are proceeding with ordering a stock of the amended code. Once the Code is distributed, this will be accompanied by an Island-wide publicity campaign. These actions will be completed before the end of this year.