

6. Statement by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the major structural damage to the sea wall:

The Bailiff:

I have received notice that the Minister for Transport and Technical Services wishes to make a statement. Minister, the floor is yours.

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

Members will be aware of the major structural damage that occurred to the sea wall between West Park and First Tower at last night's high tide and severe storm, with the resultant flooding of Victoria Avenue and as far back as Gloucester Street. A section of the wall spanning some 400 metres has been damaged. Initial inspection indicates the damage is limited to the top coping stones and parapet wall, however a full survey of the main wall and its foundations will be carried out this morning on the low tide to ensure there is no major structural damage. I am pleased to advise Members that this morning's high tide has not resulted in the same level of flooding as we experienced last night. The tide did flow through the damaged sections of the wall, which resulted in localised flooding on the promenade in Victoria Avenue, but no further. The roads are being cleaned of debris and should be open about now. To minimise the impact of any further over-topping of the sea, my department is today constructing a large temporary wall in front of the damaged area, using big bags filled with sand and aggregate of the type used by the construction industry to transport material around the Island. By the end of today we aim to have several hundred of these in place to provide temporary protection. The department will immediately deploy resources to commence repairs to the damaged section so that essential repairs can be completed before the next set of spring tides, due later this month. However, the full renovation of this wall is likely to take months rather than weeks to complete. I would like to assure Members that this particular stretch of sea wall has been maintained as part of the ongoing sea defence capital maintenance programme and had major works carried out to the foundations in 2004/5 and regular checks and maintenance are carried out on the above-ground structure. The issue of sea water flooding back along Victoria Avenue and up to Gloucester Street is one that I will be reviewing to see if any alternative measures can be implemented to prevent or at least reduce the impact on this busy junction and surrounding properties. Finally, may I say thank you to all of the Transport and Technical Services staff, Parish staff, emergency service personnel and the Honorary Police for their tremendous efforts over the past 24 hours. They have all had to endure some of the worst weather conditions we have seen for many years and, as usual, have provided the Island with a tremendous service. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

If there are there no matters arising from that statement by the Minister, we come now to Public Business.