

2016.06.28

6 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the value of the Eastern Cycle Track Fund: [9528]

What is the current value of the Eastern Cycle Network Fund and has a route been agreed and decided upon?

Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Infrastructure - rapporteur)

I hope Members will allow me to answer this on the Minister's behalf, as he has just had to leave to attend the Solo Ballet Point Competition, not for himself, but for his daughter. **[Approbation]** A very proud moment for him. I thank Deputy Labey, the very good-looking Deputy Labey as you intimated at the last Assembly, for his question. Approximately £170,000 was spent providing a cycle route from Gorey to Grouville Fuel Station and a further £200,000 on the section from the fuel station to the Pembroke Hotel. £130,000, therefore, remains of the original half a million. This sum has been allocated to deliver a section of shared cycle and footpath from Le Hocq to Le Rocquier School, subject to the appropriate approvals of the Parish and potential additional measures for the Grouville School link. Further options are currently being assessed and will be delivered on a prioritised basis, principally through planning obligations made through policy TT3 of the Island Plan. It should be recognised that although there are many opportunities to provide improved cycle facilities in the southeast of the Island, the outcome will be a network of routes rather than a single continuous route, as is in place from the west into St. Helier.

3.6.1 Deputy R. Labey:

Just last week the Planning Committee passed 2 applications, which, combined, gave the Eastern Cycle Network £71,000. How is that money collected?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

TT3 of the Island Plan requires all developments of 5 homes or more in the southeast of the Island to make a contribution to the Eastern Cycle Route Network, either directly or financially. Several planning obligation agreements have already been made under this policy, with £355,000 of signed financial contributions and other developments, such as Samarès Nursery site, are expected to deliver actual infrastructure rather than financial. As the Deputy has intimated last week, we approved a further 2 large housing schemes and that brought in an additional income. Some of these will be on first sale of homes. Some will be later on, once the development starts.

3.6.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can the Assistant Minister, at a time of constrained spending, say whether the money that has been spent on the cycle paths to date has been value for money, because most of the time that I go through Grouville most of the cyclists are on the road because they do not like the cinder part of the track? So, at a time when we are facing severe constraint, does the Assistant Minister think that we are getting value for money for what we are putting into the cycle track?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

Absolutely. I think, as I have just said, TT3 of the Island Plan requires and allows us to be able to claw back money from planning obligations to improve. Judging on the last couple of questions I think we are all going to have to end up on our bikes. So the cycle route will be imperative and we have been waiting many, many years for this. I think the cycle route strategy masterplan was first come up with in 2011 and it is only the last 18 months we have really been making fast forwards on delivering routes. So, I do believe it is.

3.6.3 Connétable C.H. Taylor of St. John:

Could the Assistant Minister confirm that he has personally cycled the Eastern Cycle Track and would he confirm that it is suitable for the new eBikes that we keep hearing about?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

Thank you for the question, Constable of St. John. I have not cycled it, because it is not in place yet but there are some of it that are there. What I have done, along with the Constable of Grouville, the Deputy of Grouville and Deputy Labey, we have walked the whole route from Grouville to Havre des Pas. Unfortunately Deputy Labey was a little bit behind the rest of us when we got to Havre des Pas, but we certainly have route and the idea is for us to work altogether to try and achieve through the Parishes and through the Constables and Deputies to be able to finalise the network.

3.6.4 Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

Could the Assistant Minister clarify just how much additional funding has come through planning obligations? I understand there was £400,000 initially voted; what additional sums are now available?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

I did mention we have got approximately £355,000 in the pipeline, which will be earmarked for this. As I have said, last week, another 2 larger housing schemes were passed. This money will be put into the pot for the Eastern Cycle scheme and there will be more coming forward. So we really want to work together with the Constable to achieve a cycle route and other routes as quickly as possible. Thank you.

3.6.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

On the little walk that they took with the Assistant Minister and his entourage, did they take any refreshments along the way and could he extend the invite to other Members in future, perhaps even on bicycles?

[10:30]

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

Wonderful idea, Deputy Tadier, and I will be delighted at some stage to be able to make that offer.

3.6.6 The Deputy of Grouville:

It was my successful amendment to the Island Plan that initially got the £500,000 from one pot to another and put in the mechanism for collecting money that makes up the TT3 policy. Would the Assistant Minister be prepared to comment that, in over 6 years, is £355,000 a realistic sum to have been collected for the properties or the developments that meet the criteria?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

I thank the Deputy for bringing the original proposal because this is the only way that the sum of money is increasing, so it was a good proposition and the right proposition. Sorry, what was the question? **[Laughter]** The £500,000, is it sufficient?

The Deputy of Grouville:

Does the Assistant Minister consider £355,000 is a realistic figure to have been collected over 6 years?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

Well, we would always like more and everybody would, but this figure has been increasing dramatically in the last 12 to 18 months and will further increase hopefully substantially enough to be able to complete the network.

3.6.7 The Deputy of Grouville:

Would he like to comment on the previous 3 to 4 years?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

I would have to get exact details of what did come in and when and I would be happy to pass that information on to the Deputy.

3.6.8 Deputy R. Labey:

This scheme seems to be mired in inertia. The Deputy of Grouville's proposition was successful in 2011 and we have gone from Gorey to the Pembroke pub. Glaciers move faster than this.

[Laughter] Would the Assistant Minister give us some assurance that he can somehow get the department to reinvigorate this scheme? I was not sure whether the route is agreed or not now officially, but would he publish to us and members of the public those bits of the route that are going to be worked on next and give us a timescale?

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

As I said, there is an Eastern Cycle Route strategy developed in 2011 and I am happy for all Members to share that with us. I presume it is publicly available now, but I would be more than happy to do that and the budget allocation and spend so far, absolutely.