

3. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Transport and Technical Services

3.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

With regard to Ann Street car park, the Minister will be aware that now on Saturdays it has been restricted to 4 hours parking in a day rather than a whole day. Has the Minister consulted with season ticket holders who may feel short-changed, especially those who have to work on Saturdays and would expect to be able leave their cars parked in Ann Street car park during the whole day?

Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

I believe the department has and arrangements are being made with them. There is also unlimited parking on Pier Road.

3.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:

In his written answer to question 11 from Deputy Baudains, the Minister refers to work being done by T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) in preparing new road-event legislation. Could I question the Minister on the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956 which is hugely outdated and is going to give us problems now and into the future with things like 3-wheeled electric cars, hybrids, quad bikes and certain classes of work vehicles? Can I ask the Minister when we are likely to see in this Assembly some new legislation to bring Jersey up to speed with the rest of the world?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think there are several facets to that question. We have the Street Works Law in the pipeline. That should be arriving soon regarding who digs up the road, when and where. As regards to suitability of vehicles, obviously that lies with D.V.S. and vehicles are examined if and when. As the Deputy has pointed out, there are new vehicles coming online now, some are 3-wheeled. Basically, if they are fit for purpose and they conform with lighting requirements... we did have problems a few years ago with the Smart car which did not fit into current legislation. Legislation was modified. We have had the Renault Twizy, which is an electrical small 4-wheeler, which has now been given permission. Other vehicles are coming on and we are reviewing that as and when. There is no blanket review going on but we have had obviously requests for quad bikes, *et cetera*, which are given permits in exceptional circumstances but that is ongoing.

3.3 The Deputy of Grouville:

The Minister said that £90,000 had been budgeted for a review of the taxi and cab industry. Would it not have been better to direct these monies to the very valued taxi marshals at the Weighbridge on Friday and Saturday evenings now facing the axe because their budget of £25,000 cannot be found, instead of launching a review on private companies and sole traders which cost the tax payer nothing?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I believe the instigation for the whole review came from the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority). The review is well in progress now but, as they say, you have to careful what you wish for because it is a double-edged sword. I say, the review was long overdue. It has been in people's in-tray for many years. I think it was initiated by my predecessor and I am determined to see it through but we have to be very careful and make sure that it is an equitable situation.

3.3.1 The Deputy of Grouville:

Concern has been expressed over the potential loss of 91 car parking spaces at Green Street Car Park if the relocation of the new police headquarters goes ahead. Can the Minister tell Members whether he has been involved in any discussions recently to increase the number of parking spaces available in nearby locations to allow for the loss of the 91 spaces?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. There is not a parking shortage as such but the parking that we do have is not in locations that people require. There will be a loss of spaces at Green Street. Yesterday we had a meeting at the Société for stakeholders with a view to possibly expanding Snow Hill car park. That work is indeed ongoing.

3.3.2 The Deputy of Grouville:

Is the Minister confident that those spaces, if they are replaced at Snow Hill, can be done at the same time while the police station is being built?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

At the same time, hopefully before but obviously that depends on planning and design, *et cetera*.

[11:45]

3.4 Connétable M.P.S. Le Troquer of St. Martin:

Does the Minister have concerns regarding the budget available for the Road Safety Strategy for the States of Jersey following the workshop recently attended and how much is the TMS Consultancy review costing?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think it is satisfactory. I need to get back to the Constable regarding the cost.

3.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Minister give an update on where he is with the U.K. D.V.L.A. (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) in order for local Romanian drivers to have their driving licences recognised in Jersey and for a mutual exchange to be set up?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I believe the Deputy did contact me a few weeks ago regarding this and the message was put through to D.V.S. I have not heard back as yet. Obviously licensing also involves the various Connétables of the Parishes but I will chase that up.

3.5.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister confirm that it is a very simple Ministerial decision that he can make, to take effect very quickly, to recognise the thousands of Romanians potentially in Jersey who want to be able to drive on our roads and who could do this very safely as they are already accepted in the U.K.?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Not quite as simple as that. There is a reciprocal arrangement with the U.K. and Romania. There is not a reciprocal arrangement with Jersey and Romania. In order to accept it here, the Romanian authorities would also have to accept Jersey licences, which they do not at present. I will chase it up with D.V.S.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Point of order, I suspect the Minister is inadvertently misleading the House because there is no need for a reciprocal agreement at all. The Minister is quite within his capability to make a Ministerial decision which would accept and recognise Romanian driving licences for exchange in Jersey. I think he is being misleading.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Not necessarily a need but it would be a policy just to have reciprocal agreement and not just a one-way agreement with Romania.

3.6 The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Could the Minister inform this Assembly of when he will be bringing a liquid waste strategy to the States?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have an actual date for the liquid waste strategy at the moment. It is being worked on and as soon as I get that date I would be more than happy to inform the Assembly.

3.6.1 The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Is the Minister aware that we were promised a liquid waste strategy some 4 years ago and that it was going to be imminent? Would the Minister please ensure that this Assembly is informed as immediately as possible as to exactly when we are likely to be considering that particular strategy?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

More than happy to do that.

3.7 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

The Minister may be aware that a new housing estate was built at the top of St. John's Road and was completed, I believe, in around 2004-05. On completion of that estate it was proposed that the drains would be adopted by the Transport and Technical Services Department. I am aware that a letter has been sent to the previous Minister about the department adopting those drains. Can the Minister tell me whether the department has changed their policy with regard to adopting drains which were originally on a private estate?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

No, the Deputy contacted me some time ago regarding this and the drainage on the estate is not to the same specification as would be required by T.T.S. Plus, it would be a huge liability for T.T.S. to take over and we do not get any money whatsoever for this.

3.7.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

What I am finding difficult to understand is that the Minister has just told Members that the specification of the drains does not meet the standard of T.T.S. Is he in fact saying that the standard adopted by T.T.S. is different to the standard adopted by Building Control when they signed the drains off?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I have been informed by my engineers it is not to the same specification. Plus, there would be no benefit whatsoever in T.T.S. taking over a huge liability to the benefit of the builders and residents.

3.8 The Connétable of St. John:

Can the Minister confirm that some £70 million is still required to connect the last 2,330 homes across the Island to main drains and that being the case, how is he going to find it and when will this work be done?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have the figure but I would not argue with the Constable with his determination of £70 million. The answer is we do what we can when we can, with what we have. We have

money to maintain. We do not have money to put in major infrastructure at present. If stimulus funds became available, I would be more than happy to oblige.

3.8.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Can I follow that up, please? Given the Minister's curt reply, the poor public who are taxpayers and paying twice to have their sewerage removed, once by tanker and once with their taxes to have mine and everyone else's removed, when are they really going to be dealt a proper service put in these outlying areas? Not only outlying areas but some parts of St. Helier do not even have main drains.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

When the Constable says "curt" I think he means short, not as in a rude reply. As I say, when we get funds available I would be more than happy to oblige. If there are small conurbations it is obviously easier to link up but with outlying houses in far reaching rural areas it is not that easy but we do what we can.

3.9 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Would the Minister indicate as to what progress has been made with regard to pedestrian safety proposals for La Rue Des Buttes and adjoining roads in St. Mary, given the fact that a report highlighted this fact 20 years ago as urgent?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, I attended a meeting with the Deputy and indeed the Constable of St. Mary with some of my officers just a short time ago and this should be ready within the next few weeks, I am informed.

3.10 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can the Minister advise the Assembly exactly what the requirements are for coming to a decision to resurface any of Jersey's roads?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Like Parishes, T.T.S. has its own roads inspectors and they do it on a priority basis. We have done quite a few recently, obviously a major one going from St. Peter to the airport, which is a major thoroughfare but it is as and when required, as instructed by the road engineers.

3.11 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

The former Minister lodged and then withdrew a proposition to debate and agree a policy on an Island-wide speed limit. Will the Minister advise whether he has any intention of bringing such a proposal back to the Assembly?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I did not have plans to. The last reduction in speeds which were issued around the Island were at the request of Constables and that was very controversial, some Constables did not agree with that but I am more than happy to have a meeting with the Constables and discuss it further.

3.11.1 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am happy to formally invite the Minister to the Comité des Connétables. I am sure the Chairman will have no problem with that. I wonder whether the Minister would consider including it as part of the review his department is undertaking on road safety strategy.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I would be more than happy to bring that up with the officers for a possible inclusion and many thanks for the invitation.

3.12 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I know there was a written question this morning from Deputy Higgins regarding the waste recycling plant. I also asked questions back in June. Will the Minister tell us when the recycling plant will be finally fit for purpose? We still have concerns. Although, the answer in today's written question says "confidentiality".

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I will check it out, I stand to be corrected, all parts and labour are guaranteed for 2 years, I think.

The Bailiff:

That brings the first question period to an end. We now have the second question period. The Minister for Home Affairs.