

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON TUESDAY 27th MAY 2025
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 3rd JUNE 2025**

Question

“Will the Minister advise what action his department is taking to ensure Jersey’s infrastructure is suitable for the increasing ageing population; and will he provide details of any existing current strategies, policies, and guidelines that are supporting this work?”

Answer

A range of targeted actions, guided by established policies and ongoing consultation, are being taken to ensure that the Island’s infrastructure is increasingly inclusive, accessible, and age friendly.

Strategic Framework

A number of key strategies and policies guide this work, including:

- **The Sustainable Transport Policy (STP)**, which underpins the long-term development of accessible and inclusive transport infrastructure, particularly vulnerable road users such as elderly users.
- **Casualty and Collision Reduction Plan**, which seeks to improve road safety for all users, including older drivers and road users, and will include evidence led targeted interventions to reduce risk factors, recognising the unique challenges this group faces.
- **Planning and Building Policies**, which require that accessibility, including provision for disabled and elderly users, is considered when commenting upon development applications.
- **Public Realm Guidelines (under development)**, which ensure new public spaces meet modern accessibility standards and reflect best practice as set out in the national Manual for Streets.
- **Disability Strategy for Jersey**, this addresses transport and infrastructure as key components in enhancing accessibility for Islanders with a disability.
- **Inspiring an Active Jersey Strategy**, which acknowledges the importance of creating “lifelong opportunities to be active,” with a specific focus on older age groups. The strategy aims to ensure that everyone, regardless of age or ability, can access opportunities to move more often and live healthier lives. This initiative is facilitated through the sports infrastructure maintained and operated by the Department.

Infrastructure and Accessibility Improvements

In terms of tangible action, the department is actively working across several areas:

1. Safe and Accessible Transport

- **Taxi Service Improvements:** The department has undertaken a programme of reform and modernisation of the taxi service, which includes efforts to increase the number of accessible vehicles and equipment available and the introduction of updated licensing requirements to ensure broader service coverage and consistency. DVS has issued 64 new badges to applicants over the past 12 months to combat ageing drivers slowly exiting the industry.
- **Bus Service Enhancements:** Jersey's bus fleet is now fully modern and compliant with the UK's Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), featuring kneeling buses, low floors, and priority seating. Raised kerbs at many bus stops have been installed to improve boarding, particularly for those with mobility difficulties. An extensive programme of bus shelter provision has been rolled out over the last fifteen years to provide both shelter and a place to rest for bus users. Pensioners also benefit from concessionary bus passes, and a plus one concession for carers, making the service more affordable and accessible.
- **Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Driver Training:** Disability awareness training is a requirement of all PSV taxi drivers, LibertyBus mandate the same training for their PSV bus drivers and station staff.
- **Road Safety and Driver Licencing:** To ensure the safety of drivers and other road users, more stringent eyesight requirements have recently been introduced for drivers of both group 1 (light vehicles) and group 2 (medium to heavy vehicles) licence categories. Moving forward to ensure reciprocity of driving licences, the Department will continue to review mutual legislative standards established in the UK and forthcoming in the EU requiring medicals for drivers over a set age when renewing licences.
- **Road Safety Improvement Programme:** Improvements to infrastructure to reduce the risk of road traffic collisions and the provision of crossings and footways to reduce community severance to support the movement of vulnerable road users.

2. Public Realm and Streetscape

- **Pedestrian Improvements:** Through the STP and public realm projects, significant investment has been made in upgrading pedestrian crossings, installing dropped kerbs, tactile paving, smooth granite paving and improved lighting. These upgrades are designed specifically to assist those with mobility and visual impairments. Walkable parish village schemes support the movement of vulnerable road users, particularly the young and elderly, a particular focus of these schemes has been to improve connections between sheltered housing and key village amenities.
- **Consultation with Visual Impairment and other Groups:** The department works closely with EyeCan and other relevant organisations to ensure projects are informed by lived experience, incorporating features like colour contrast surfacing, tactile paving and appropriate street furniture placement.
- **Benches and Resting Points:** In accordance with national best practice guidance in the Manual for Streets, seating is provided across town and routes elsewhere, providing regular resting opportunities for older Islanders and those with limited mobility.
- **Streetworks:** Policies and training for all statutory undertakers working on the Island's roads and footways recognise the need to maintain accessibility for all user types – these are enforced by the Department through its streetworks inspection processes. Scaffolding likewise, though in St Helier

inspections are by the Parish, by agreement. The streetworks route hierarchy, which sets the conditions placed upon statutory undertakers and prioritises reactive maintenance, recognises the location of care homes and other important community facilities.

- **Cycle routes and e-bike grants:** The Minister for Environment launched an e-bike grant scheme, and many of the people who benefited were the elderly, who reported an increase in activity and freedom as the Island opened up for them, no-longer constrained by hills. All improvements to cycle routes by their nature also benefit users of electric mobility vehicles.
- **Parks, gardens and coastal promenades:** The ongoing provision of multi-generational accessible outdoor green spaces, with sensory spaces and areas to meet, rest and relax, some of which provide for refreshments and programmes of entertainment.

3. Parking and Development Planning

- **Disability Parking:** The number of disabled parking spaces across the Island has been increased, and their quality improved, including better signage and surface condition. New guidance is under development, reflecting the STP's parking priorities, to ensure spaces are well-positioned and safely accessible. Also, working with the disability inclusion unit, additional mapping location data is being prepared. The Blue Badge scheme parking regulation remains under ongoing review.
- **Shopmobility:** The Department supports shopmobility providing space and storage within its infrastructure.
- **Beachability:** The Department supports beach access providing space for the storage of beach access wheelchairs.
- **Planning Requirements:** All significant planning applications are now required to demonstrate how they provide for accessibility, including designated disabled parking spaces, level access to buildings, and appropriate circulation space. The Department's comments on new developments provide guidance to developers on these matters as part of the planning process.

4. Sports facilities and Playing Field Infrastructure

Physical activity and community wellbeing also form a key part of Jersey's infrastructure response to an ageing population. Under the Government's Inspiring an Active Jersey strategy, there is a strong focus on promoting lifelong activity to support physical and mental health, reduce isolation, and maintain independence.

Sports centres such as Les Quennevais offer a range of low-impact classes suitable for older adults, including aquafit and mobility sessions. Many of these services come with reduced rates for pensioners, supporting affordability. The Island's playing fields and open spaces also provide valuable free opportunities for informal exercise and social activity, such as walking or other exercise, which are important for health and wellbeing in later life.

Facilities are increasingly being upgraded to modern accessibility standards, and many programmes are delivered in partnership with health services to support rehabilitation, falls prevention, and encourage social inclusion.

Working in partnership with Jersey Sport makes use of this infrastructure to support older adults in leading more active lives through a variety of initiatives. These include the Move More Referral programme, as well as walking and swimming sessions, many of which are integrated with community-based activities such as walking football.

Ongoing Commitment

The Department maintains an ongoing review of infrastructure through the lens of inclusivity and ageing, coordinating with parish authorities, specialist government departments and third sector organisations as required. As part of wider efforts to promote wellbeing and independence in older age, the department is committed to:

- Embedding age-friendly design principles in all capital and maintenance projects.
- Continuing cross-departmental collaboration
- Involving community representatives and user groups in the design process wherever possible.

In summary, while much has been achieved, the department recognises that the work to create an accessible Island for all ages is continuous. The Department is committed and focused upon adapting Jersey's infrastructure to meet the needs of its ageing population, both now and in the future.