

2.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the introduction of a zero tolerance approach to drink driving:

As many countries now have a zero tolerance approach to drink driving, does the Minister consider that this policy should be introduced in Jersey and, if not, why not?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):

I take it the question is to ask me whether I am in favour of a situation in which any alcohol found in a person's body would lead to a drink driving conviction. The answer to that question is no, I am not. The largest group of European countries currently has a figure of 50 milligrams in 100 millilitres of blood. I accept that there may be a case for reduction to that figure and I understand that that has been considered recently in the U.K. I am against a complete reduction, firstly, because of the difficulty of a person knowing the day after whether there is still some alcohol in their body. Obviously, if they have a hangover, they should not be driving because they are clearly still under the influence. Secondly, because 80 milligrams is the point scientifically at which it has been found that driver impairment becomes significant; thirdly, because it would put us out of line with the rest of the British Isles; fourthly, because we have lower travel speeds and I think we need to take that into account and, fifthly, because if we were to introduce this, I believe we would have to have a split in relation to sentencing because it would not be justifiable for very low figures to maintain the mandatory 12 months and 3 years disqualifications.

2.5.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I welcome the Minister's reply and the proposed reduction in the level. During his deliberations in the future, will the Minister agree to consult the police, the fire service and the ambulance service before making his deliberations.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I have the opinion of the police before me which is the figure of 50 could be an appropriate figure. I am not making a proposal on this. I am open to this if it seems appropriate at any given time to make a change.