

STATES OF JERSEY



LA ROUTE DE ST. AUBIN: INSTALLATION OF PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS AND REDUCTION OF SPEED LIMIT (P.68/2018) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 6th April 2018
by the Minister for Infrastructure**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Proposition [\(P.68/2018\)](#)

“THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister for Infrastructure –

- (a) to install 4 Pedestrian Crossings along La Route de St. Aubin between the King George V. Homes and the St. Helier Parish boundary with St. Lawrence near Millbrook;
- (b) to reduce the speed limit along La Route de St. Aubin from 30 m.p.h. to 20 m.p.h. between the King George V. Homes and the St. Helier Parish boundary with St. Lawrence near Millbrook; and
- (c) to agree to implement the aforementioned changes by the end of 2018.

DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER”

Ministerial response

I must challenge many of the assumptions made in the report accompanying the proposition lodged by Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier, as it contains several factually incorrect statements and statistics. These are detailed at length below.

It is a shame the Deputy has neither been in touch with the Department regarding these crossings, nor attended our States Members’ briefing on Road Safety. If he had, he would have found out that there was a mechanism agreed with the parishes for these types of request, and that we are managing them accordingly in a fair and reasonable way.

If the Deputy is bringing a proposition in this manner, deliberately trying to circumvent the agreed process, then I hope that fellow Members will vote against it on principle.

It appears from his report that he feels that this is a longstanding need, that he has observed over a period of years. If, indeed, he wanted the items implemented this year, then it would have seemed sensible that, as he knew about the need for a long time, he should have raised it last year so that the crossings could have been considered for inclusion in planning for this year’s programme. The 2018 programme has now been set. Had Deputy Higgins made an effort to attend the Department for Infrastructure workshops or briefings to which he was invited, where this process was set out, he would have been aware of how best to pursue his request, and not waited until the end of his term of office. Particularly, as at this time before the election there is such pressure on the States’ time, and the Bailiff has urged Members to withdraw propositions, to allow for strategic legislation to be considered by the States prior to the election.

Deputy Higgins seems reticent in engaging with my Department in general. He did not attend our meetings regarding the Sewage Treatments works either.

I am happy to arrange for the requests to be entered into the proper process and properly considered in the normal way by our qualified officers at the Department for Infrastructure, as adhered to by other Parish officials. However, this Proposition should be summarily dismissed, because it is not only disrespecting the agreed process, but also it is not properly researched.

Unfortunately, Deputy Higgins has got his facts wrong in his report. He makes reference to the number of registered vehicles in Jersey. Whilst the number may be growing, the Department for Infrastructure's annual survey of traffic-flows into St. Helier during the morning peak travel time does not support there being increases in traffic on La Route de St. Aubin; indeed, data from 2017 recorded the lowest traffic-flow since the surveys started 10 years ago.

Also, La Route de St. Aubin may be one of the busiest roads on the Island; however, any suggestion that it is one of the most dangerous lacks clarity. From the Deputy's report, it seems that this statement is based on all road traffic incidents reported to the Police, regardless of how much damage was caused. Regrettably, it is well-known that these statistics are unreliable as a measure of road safety, because a great many minor collisions will not be reported to the Police.

Had he been interested in seeking advice, he would have understood the accepted measure for road safety risk, or 'danger' is to look at collisions which resulted in somebody being injured; whilst not perfect, the reporting rate for these incidents is much better than for damage-only collisions, making the data much more reliable.

The Deputy has, in fact, previously requested and received data from the Department regarding the number of recorded injury collisions in this area; however, he has chosen not to include this in his report. The Deputy's report also seems to suggest that the collision figures quoted are for a 2.5 mile stretch of road, rather than the roughly ¾ mile he refers to in his Proposition; clearly the longer a length of road that you look at, the more collisions are likely to take place. This effectively distorts the facts to suit the Proposition's purpose.

Whilst the number of people injured on this road in the last 5 years is too high, regrettably, when considered as a number of recorded injury collisions per kilometre, there are many other roads, such as Longueville Road, with a worse record, which must surely be considered first.

The Department for Infrastructure has processes in place to review the collision records and investigate the causes of those collisions on a prioritised basis. By looking at the greatest concentrations of recorded injury collisions first, the limited resources available can be put to best effect for the whole of the Island. This year we intend to investigate between 30 and 40 sites, which will include a cluster near the Hansford Lane junction.

Looking at the 3 parts of the proposition separately –

- (a) It is unfortunate that the Deputy was unable to attend the Road Safety Seminar held by the Minister on 6th February, where officers explained the assessment process followed by the Department to deal with the many road safety requests received. In the last year, the Department has received over 120 requests for road safety improvements, of which a third have been requests for improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities. Within the budget allocations for 2018, the Department for Infrastructure will be able to make crossing improvements in 8 locations, the others are waiting to be prioritised in future years as funding becomes available.

It is noted that there already 6 crossings on the Inner Road in St. Helier (*see* attached **Appendix**), including a range of types, from pedestrian refuges to signal-controlled crossings. The Deputy's Proposition does not make it clear where these 4 additional crossings should be, or what form they should take (e.g. upgrading a refuge to a zebra-crossing or a new signalised crossing). Receiving generic requests for more crossings is not very constructive. If the Deputy has any additional information on either the location or type of crossing being requested, the Department would be pleased to receive this before the request is considered in detail.

- (b) In late 2016, we published the [Jersey Road Safety Action Plan 2017–2019 \(R.132/2016\)](#). This plan set out a series of actions to address a range of road safety concerns, including a comprehensive review of speed limits to be completed by the end of 2019. In March 2017, the Minister agreed with the Comité des Connétables that this review would be carried out on a parish-by-parish basis, working with each parish in turn.

Simply reducing a speed limit on one road may not have the desired effect, e.g. if adjacent, less suitable, roads remain at a higher limit and seem more attractive to motorists. For this reason, it is appropriate to continue with the comprehensive review which is already underway and will review the whole area rather than any single road in isolation.

Many Parishes have already done a lot of work to carry out their Reviews, with St. Brelade, the first Parish, having revised speed limits taking effect in early April. The Parish of St. Helier has reviewed the speed limits in the central area, and those changes will be taking effect in the second round of changes later this year; the review of the remainder of the Parish, including La Route de St. Aubin, can then start when the Parish is ready. Whilst the end of 2019 is the timetable for completion of the whole programme, individual parishes will be completed at different times, and it is likely the St. Helier review could be completed ahead of this time.

Deputy Higgins has a history of attempting to meddle with speed limits in St. Helier without taking into account the advice of qualified professionals. He previously lodged a Proposition in January 2011, requesting that this same stretch of road be given a 25 m.p.h. limit. This whimsical approach to speed limits indicates a lack of research when attempting to change Island road safety policy, without considering the views of the wider community.

- (c) The normal process for the new crossings would be to carry out a review of the proposal, and then any recommended engineering interventions would be included in the Autumn 2018 budget prioritisation process, to potentially be included in the 2019 programme. This ensures that both staff resources and funding are available at the right time to deliver schemes, which can often take more than a year to develop, consult, review and implement.

Members should be aware that if the proposition were to be adopted, without new money or safety review process as the Deputy intends, it would merely displace other road safety priorities. The Deputy's attempt to fast-track his favoured interventions would result in other high-priority work being deferred to later years. Is it reasonable or ethical for the Deputy to ask the States on the basis of flawed information, without consultation, to cancel the planned 2018 crossing outside Janvrin Nursery School, or the pedestrian island on Route du Fort (where a lady had her arm broken in an accident), or the long-awaited crossings on Longueville Road, for example?

As explained, the Department for Infrastructure will carry out the speed limit review by the end of 2019 at the latest, and the review of schemes the Deputy has put forward, for potential inclusion in the programme for future years. However, we cannot agree to the displacement of already prioritised schemes with wide public benefit, as it would not be fair or respectful to those who do follow the agreed procedure.

I hope the Deputy will reconsider his proposition in the light of these comments and withdraw it.

Ministerial recommendation

States Members are recommended to reject this proposition.

Financial and manpower implications

There is currently no staff resource or funding available to implement the 4 new crossings. Staff resource is available to review the request and include any engineering interventions in the Autumn prioritisation; this prioritisation process will then allocate appropriate funding and staff resources for implementation in a future year. As stated above, any decision to fast-track these crossings and construct them in 2018 could impact on current schemes to a greater value than the cost of the 4 new crossings.

Funding and staff resources are available to work with the Parish of St. Helier to review speed limits in the remainder of the Parish, including La Route de St. Aubin, and implement any changes by the end of 2019 at the latest.

APPENDIX

Existing crossing locations on La Route de St. Aubin in the Parish of St. Helier

