

## **4. Oral Questions**

### **4.1 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the road resurfacing programme:**

Despite my having highlighted over the 18 years that many roads across Jersey need resurfacing, would the Minister explain why the work appears to be undertaken on a sporadic basis and what action, if any, has he taken in addition to the £3 million promised from the Stimulus Fund to meet the cost of the £6 to £8 million annual programme of resurfacing that is required?

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

On a sporadic basis is being asked of you. Yes, Minister.

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

While I thank the Constable for his continued interest and support regarding the road resurfacing, I would disagree that the works are sporadic. The planning and managing of the highway resurfacing programme is well-planned and often delivered in a very difficult highly-trafficked area. Survey works are carried out of the entire T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) road network every 3 years, but survey works of the highest priority are roads which require repair or resurfacing. This programme is not solely prepared on road conditions, but will be influenced by a combination of other road networks being carried out at the time, at stakeholders' requests where possible, ensuring that the competitive tendering is maintained, the available budget and our own summer and December embargoes on certain roads.

#### **4.1.1 The Connétable of St. John:**

I will stand by the word "sporadic" given that history will prove or it can be found in the records that some years we have spent below £1 million on repairing our roads, well below, and other years it is £1 million to £2 million. So it is sporadic. Over and above that, given much is said about roads from all corners of this House, Minister, how much pressure are you bringing to bear on the Minister for Treasury and Resources to get annual additional funding or are you a team player and allowing funding to go to areas like E.D.D. (Economic Development Department) to support professional clubs coming to the Island? Will you fight hard on behalf of the suffering public and road users, whether you are a cyclist trying to pedal down a road which is full of repairs - or non-repairs in some cases - or motorcyclists like myself this morning coming in when there was a certain amount of ice around on the road, which makes it rather difficult when you hit some of these uneven surfaces, or even the car driver. Will the Minister please fight the corner somewhat harder on behalf of the suffering travelling public?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Excellent speech. On the contrary: balancing all of these factors, the Medium-Term Financial Plan provides £10.7 million for resurfacing works from 2013 to 2015, which is an average of £3 million to £4 million per annum. My department has previously, and continues to, work with Treasury officers on identifying a further £3 million per annum, which would bring us up to the required spend on road resurfacing and maintain the roads to a satisfactory condition. My officers have been liaising with Treasury and I myself have spoken to the Minister for Treasury and Resources to bring this forward.

#### **4.1.2 Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade:**

Could the Minister give the Assembly an indication on the quality of the road resurfacing that is done as a result of trenching and digging and retrenching and resurfacing, whether his department exercises some degree of control over the quality of the resurfacing, because some streets like Gloucester Street are appalling?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I would agree, and all the trenching is guaranteed for a period of time. This will be tightened up in the not too distant future by the Street Works Law, which will make it mandatory to consult with Transport and Technical Services, acquire their permission, and we are going to raise the standards all the time for trenching works.

**4.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

The Minister said that the roads are guaranteed for a certain amount of time. What is that period of time for which they are guaranteed?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Trenching, I believe, is 6 months.

**4.1.4 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:**

The Minister mentioned the long-awaited Street Works Law. Can he advise us what draft we are in and when it is likely to be lodged at this Assembly for debate?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I believe it is with the Law Officers, but I need to get back to Members on that.

**4.1.5 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement:**

Most of the roads that require repair, it appears to be because of poor reinstatement from the utility companies. It is a number of years now - probably about 15 years - that I have been concerned about this, when I first joined the States. I believe it is a year that the utility company has to guarantee the surface. When will his department be bringing in a proper standard, an enforceable standard, so that the utility company has to guarantee the work for a longer period, because otherwise if the department does not, it is the taxpayer that keeps picking up the tab for repairing shoddy trench work.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Absolutely. The trench work is closely monitored now and this will be covered by the Street Works Law.

**4.1.6 The Connétable of St. John:**

Out of interest, I have just turned a pad over and I have got a 1998 cartoon of road improvements that were guaranteed by the president of the day that they would all be done by 2004. We are now nearly in 2014. The Street Works Law was being spoken about in my time on the committee of the day, back at the turn of the century, and the Minister is telling us that he cannot give us a real update of when it is coming to the House. He is blaming the Law Draftsmen's Office. Surely, Minister, you must be on top and be able to give us a date when the Street Works Law is coming to the House.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

I did not understand him to be blaming the Law Draftsmen's Office. I understood the Minister to say the draft law was with the Attorney General's Department, but Minister?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Absolutely, Sir, I am not blaming anybody. In fact, we are very grateful to the Law Draftsmen's Office for progressing this. It will be with us as soon as possible.