

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

5.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Two weeks ago in this Assembly I questioned both the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and the Minister for Planning and Environment over the Pine Walk, the state of the road and the footpath underneath. Could I ask the Minister if he has made any progress in that department, please?

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

As I pointed out last time, this falls under the responsibility of the Environment Department. T.T.S. are assisting with this. We would like to expedite this as soon as possible because it needs to protect the road above and also we would like to get it fixed as soon as possible to assist tourism.

5.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Following on from my earlier question, will the Minister elaborate on all the meetings and discussions he has had with the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the 'Hoppa Bus' and also tell us what the reaction of the Minister for Treasury and Resources was? Is funding going to be forthcoming or not?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Hopefully in the future. T.T.S. did put in a bid, which was not supported. I had many meetings with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Treasurer of the States regarding various T.T.S. projects, of which this was one.

5.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister optimistic that this time he might be able to push through funding for a 'Hoppa' service in town and this environment to take in the essential places we need it to?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I am confident in the future that a 'Hoppa'-style service will be travelling through town, call it what you will: 'Hoppa Bus', 'Hop-on/hop-off.' As soon as we can get the funding together and expand the service we will do so.

5.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Would that hop-on/hop-off service be low-cost or no-cost?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

That is yet to be decided. It could be sponsored by many of the businesses in St. Helier.

[12:00]

5.4 Deputy J.H. Young:

The Minister, in his written answer 17 today, sets out a so-called basis for ignoring a States decision made in January 2011 and in September 2010 to provide a site for waste recycling operators. Is he really telling this Assembly that it is for him as a Minister just to ignore these policies, specific decisions that were made by the States, and ignore the policies of the Island Plan that make it quite clear that a waste recycling centre should provide such a facility?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I am all in favour of a waste recycling facility. As the Deputy is well aware, we are planning such a facility at La Collette, but it is not within the remit of Transport and Technical Services to provide skip services for all the private companies in Jersey.

5.4.1 Deputy J.H. Young:

He knows that what he is effectively saying is he wants to see the proliferation of waste-sorting activities going on in all sorts of unsuitable sites throughout the Island, causing problems for their neighbours and what have you, when he is the custodian of the largest area of waste facility in the Island where he is investing public money into a facility for this very thing. Why should he not make it available, by tender if necessary, for private operators?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Whether a site is suitable or not for a skip service, that is a matter for Planning not for me. As I said, we do not have the space to accommodate skip companies from all over the Island.

5.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Minister advise whether any research has been undertaken into whether or not Island-wide kerbside recycling would result in more recycling being done and thus the targets being met?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I would greatly encourage kerbside recycling throughout all the Parishes on the Island. Many Parishes do kerbside recycling to a greater extent than others. Some do good recycling and some are glass-only, but it is something that I would sincerely encourage.

5.5.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would he encourage it to the point of providing a service himself, albeit in conjunction with the Parishes, to make sure that all of the Island, no matter where one lives, can benefit from kerbside recycling rather than the current system of having a postcode lottery?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As I say, I would encourage it but I do not think there is any point in T.T.S. duplicating services we already have. The Parishes take care of their own refuse. If the recycling element could be included in that, that would have my full support.

5.6 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Will the Minister be bringing to the Assembly for debate or implementing any of the recommendations in the recent review of the taxicab service during the remainder of his term and if not, why not?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, in the not too distant future.

5.6.1 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can the Minister explain whether that will be via States debate or by Ministerial order through his department?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yet to be decided, but I think I would like to bring it to the States.

5.7 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Several months ago I asked the Minister for Transport and Technical Services whether he would carry out some work on the crossing at New Cut and King Street to make it a pedestrian crossing. Can he inform Members what progress he has made on this project, please?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I am not sure what progress has been made on that. I need to consult the Engineering Department.

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Can the Minister please come back to me in email just to confirm exactly what is happening, thank you?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Indeed.

5.8 Connétable M.J. Paddock of St. Ouen:

In light of the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources' statement this morning with regards departments seeking funding for projects, could the Minister tell the Assembly would he be seeking funding to extend the sewerage networks within the country Parishes and certainly in the Parish of St. Ouen where we have some definite problems?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. I would agree with the Constable 100 per cent. As Members are aware, we have put in a bid for £75 million for a new sewerage plant but, additional to that, my department is in talks with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and his department regarding expanding the foul sewer network into the rural areas. I do not think it is realistic to say that we can put every house on the Island on main sewers, but we will do the best we can to include all the conurbations both north-east, north-west and all points in between. Where we cannot put main sewers in for reasons of topography or distance and expense we will, working with the Minister for Planning and Environment, authorise small pocket plants that will do a similar job.

5.9 Senator L.J. Farnham:

Has the Minister's department had a chance to assess the damage to the Island's beaches following the harsh winter storms and, if so, decided if any action is necessary to restore the beaches, especially where the sand levels have decreased significantly?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. A lot of work was done on the sand levels, even during the recent storms we had, to alleviate as much flooding as we can. A considerable work was done down at Beaumont to reduce the level of beach there. Beaches were moving about 10 or 12 feet at a time, so that is definitely ongoing work; not to mention the damage that we had to infrastructure, which I believe at the moment is running to some £850,000.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Could I just briefly congratulate the T.T.S. Department for their excellent work in that area?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I thank the Senator for his comments.

5.10 Deputy S. Pinel of St. Clement:

Can the Minister give an estimated date for the completion of the works at Snow Hill car park? Thank you.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I believe the Deputy is referring to the Phillips Street shaft arrangements. That is ongoing, there have been some delays. The contractor has had a few problems with the strata. The main shaft is complete in Phillips Street and the tunnel boring has started, but there have been some delays with the rock strata, I believe. Work is definitely ongoing. I am not in a position to give a date at the moment.

5.11 Deputy R.G. Bryans of St. Helier:

Some time ago I raised with the Minister the concerns the parishioners have for a rather dangerous crossing at the bottom of Trinity Hill. I wonder if you could just tell me if there is any progress on that particular work

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes. I am familiar with the area the Deputy refers to. It is quite a dangerous corner and our senior engineer has been down to look at it several times to see what can be done. This work is ongoing, but it is a very difficult and dangerous corner, I would agree.

5.12 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Some time back I wrote to the Minister about car parks in St. Martin's. Specifically where in one car park a large number of vehicles under one single ownership are being kept on a permanent basis. These are public car parks funded by taxpayers and could I ask the Minister: has he made any progress and will he give a guarantee to resolve this issue before the summer senior starts?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. I believe it was somebody selling second-hand cars. This has been reported to the department and is ongoing and I believe the department is liaising with the Parish police regarding that.

5.13 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Again, following up on one of the other questions about the funding of extending the main drains... The Minister said that he had talked to the Treasury, can he tell us how that was received? Is he getting funding for extending the main drains and will that be in the Medium-Term Financial Plan?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, the talks with Treasury have been very fruitful regarding this and also we will fund out of own T.T.S. rolling programme.

5.14 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Surely the important thing about the safety involved at the crossing of the foot of Trinity Hill is not that his officers should have gone and taken a look, but that he should come up with some sort of solution, because this is a death trap at the bottom of Trinity Hill where there is a blind corner. However you do it, it is a very dangerous corner. When will the Minister come to the House with some solutions?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I would agree entirely. It is a very dangerous corner. As I said, I am very familiar with the area. But putting a zebra crossing on a corner is equally as dangerous because it gives people a false sense of security. We could put a zebra crossing further up the hill or down the hill, but people will take the shortest route across, which I believe is to the supermarket.

5.15 Deputy M. Tadier:

To follow on, is that like putting a zebra crossing in front of a yellow give-way line in several places in town, is that equally dangerous?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I would agree, but they are not ours.

5.16 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Will the Minister look into the question of lighting of zebra crossings? Particularly at night, well, obviously at night, sorry. The ones in St. Brelade Bay and St. Ouen are particularly dangerous and a lighting set up, such as you can get in America, where if somebody steps on to the crossing the lights come on. Something like that, why can we not have that?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As the Senator is well aware, we are doing a considerable amount of work in St. Ouen at the moment, and I will ask engineers to check that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I had not even put my light on then. [Laughter]

The Bailiff:

Oh, right. I must have failed to tick you off.

5.17 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think we have got a psychic link which has developed now, Sir. Will the Minister be conducting any type of general review of circulatory systems, given the fact that I suspect in many places around the Island where traffic lights are involved, systems are sub-optimal and could be enhanced by a simple rethink of layout?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, and in fact that work is ongoing. There are several computer programs which are department-run which deal with that very problem. In fact when we had the problem with the rock fall at Mount Bingham a lot of the lights were changed by a computer to prioritise east and west. So that is being done and is ongoing.

5.18 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Could the Minister advise what is happening with regards to a traffic network survey that the T.T.S. were carrying out in St. Saviour with regards to the school network?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, that is in its draft form at the moment. The White Paper should be available in the not too distant future.

5.18.1 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Sorry, could the Minister explain why it has taken 2 years?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It was very extensive and it had to involve consultation with the Parishes involved, both St. Saviour and St. Helier. There was a lot of work done with all the schools involved, and even the parents.

5.19 Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade:

Due to the lack of movement from the department the Parish of St. Brelade is carrying out its own speed reviews to speed limits in our Parish. Is the Minister going to be carrying out a review or pick up his review of Island speed limits generally?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes. That is work that is ongoing. If the Constable would like to provide me with any information he has with problem areas I am more than happy to look at it.

5.19.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It has been ongoing for an awfully long time. Is he working on the Island-wide speed limits at the present time or has the work been shelved?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

There have been several put through recently, various speed limit amendments have gone through in the last few weeks.

5.20 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Is it not true, Minister, that there will be a consultation on speed limits launched in the second quarter of this year? That is the information I have from the department and the information I have been giving to my parishioners.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. It is all part of the works going on with St. Ouen, St. Mary, St. Lawrence, St. John and various other Parishes.

5.21 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Supplementary, if I might? The Minister should be aware I am referring not to that work regarding the village centre improvements, but to an Island-wide consultation which I believe will be launched in second quarter.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, my team will be touring the Parishes.

The Bailiff:

Very well. That brings questions without notice to a close.