

2015.10.05

3.6 Deputy R. Labey of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding progress made in the prevention of the widespread abuse by non-residents of parking spaces specifically allotted to tenants of housing association properties:

Will the Minister update the Assembly on any progress made with the initiative he announced in June for powers to be put in place to prevent the widespread abuse by non-residents of parking spaces specifically allotted to tenants of un-gated housing association properties, including those of Andium Homes?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I did advise Members in June that the Home Affairs Department was looking at this issue. As such, this question would really have been better addressed to my colleague, the Minister for Home Affairs. Having said that, I am informed that good progress has been made between Home Affairs and T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) and that law drafting instructions have been approved to make wheel clamping illegal and to introduce a form of civil penalty notice system where a car has been parked on private land without authorisation. Beyond that, I feel that any further detail or information should most appropriately be provided by the Minister for Home Affairs. Thank you.

3.6.1 Deputy R. Labey:

I am interested to know if the Minister for Treasury and Resources is in favour of a new civil penalty system with all that that would entail, new legislation, more expensive bureaucracy, potentially more civil servants to administer it, rather than another solution, quicker solution, which might be a tow truck or the installation of card or code barriers or sit-up, lie-down, bollards?

[15:15]

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

The Deputy will know that the Minister for Treasury and Resources is not keen on extra layers of bureaucracy or cost, of course, and the detail will need to be fully assessed. I am sure the Minister for Home Affairs and the department have been looking very closely at the proposals they are bringing forward. The Deputy raises the point about additional barriers. There are a significant number of premises, some of course do already have, as I understand it, roller shutter doors, some have barrier systems, but to introduce such systems across all premises would, in itself, be a significant cost as well. I am sure that Andium Homes raised that as a point. Certainly, it is nothing that they have raised with me in a recent meeting that I had with them as being of particular concern.

3.6.2 Deputy R. Labey:

When tenants have provision of a parking space in their tenancy agreement, should the landlord not be doing something to ensure that that space is kept for them? A civil penalty system is not going to help chasing down foreign vehicles, who are the main offenders here, and I would just like to point out to the Minister that the situation has got worse, I am told, since June when I first brought it up with him.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

On the final point the Deputy makes, that is of interest, because I did specifically ask officers whether indeed there had been any deterioration or whether there are any updated figures with

regard to offences, and I was told that there had not been an increase in numbers, although it was raised as a point with me that Andium felt in particular that it was not helpful this point had been raised in this forum, because now anybody thinking about abusing the system is now freely of the knowledge that there is no effective way of policing such matters. So that, in itself, is a point that they had been concerned about. With regard to civil penalties, yes, there are certain drawbacks but, as the Deputy has pointed out, under the tenancy arrangements, providing the vehicles are those belonging to tenants, there are certain provisions and powers that do exist in order to be able to remove the vehicles or certainly encourage their removal and ensure there is not a misuse of the spaces available and allocated.