

STATES OF JERSEY



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT POLICY (P.104/2010): SECOND AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 4th November 2010
by the Connétable of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (b) –

In paragraph (b) delete the words “as set out in the Policy” and substitute the words “including those set out in the Policy”.

2 PAGE 2 –

After paragraph (a) insert new paragraphs as follows –

- “(b) to bring forward within one year of the adoption of the Policy comprehensive strategies designed to facilitate and encourage walking and cycling;
- (c) to carry out a review of the transport requirements of the mobility-impaired or ‘disabled drivers’, including the administration and operation of the ‘Blue Badge scheme’, and to report back to the States with recommendations for any changes or improvements;
- (d) to implement a scheme to enhance pedestrian safety in Midvale Road by the end of 2012;
- (e) to implement a scheme to create a time-limited pedestrian-priority zone in Halkett Place, south of Waterloo Street by the end of 2011;
- (f) to research and develop proposals by the end of 2011 to enhance pedestrian levels of service at the following locations –
 - (i) the junction of Wellington Hill and the Ring Road;
 - (ii) the junction of Bath Street, Peter Street and Beresford Street;
 - (iii) the junction of Gloucester Street and the Parade;
 - (iv) the pedestrian exit across Little Green Street from the Green Street car park;
 - (v) the Queen’s Road roundabout;
- (g) to bring forward, in conjunction with the Property Holdings Department, by the end of 2011, proposals to provide increased shopper parking at Snow Hill;
- (h) to work with States Departments, especially the Harbours Department, to achieve the release of at least 25% of the privately-leased parking spaces in States’ ownership for short-stay shopper parking, and to enable the provision of increased scooter or motorcycle parking;
- (i) to request the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to take the necessary steps to provide that the revenue in the Car Parking Trading Fund from any above-inflation increases in parking charges will be ring-fenced to fund improvements in the provision of alternatives to the private car, including improvements to encourage walking, cycling and bus travel;

- (j) to request the Minister of TTS to bring forward by July 2011 proposals to extend the opening hours of Liberation Station in conjunction with late bus services;”;
- (k) in paragraph (d), before the words “low emission” insert the word “smaller;”.

3 PAGE 2 –

After paragraph (d) insert a new paragraph as follows –

- “(e) to request the Chief Minister to make provision in future draft Annual Business Plans for at least £1,000,000 per annum to be made available to the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to fund the proposals set out in the Policy.”,

and renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

While there is little to disagree with in the high-level aims of the Sustainable Transport Policy ('the Policy') as set out in paragraphs (a) to (e) of P.104/2010, there is an absence of practical measures that could achieve these: in particular, the proposed 15% reduction in peak-hour traffic levels, given the competing States' policies which will lead to more vehicles on our roads, such as growing and diversifying the economy, population growth to maintain the proportion of economically-active residents, and focusing new development in St. Helier (although achieving the last item reduces the need to commute in and out of the town).

The policy will also fail because of the amount of funding it seeks – only a quarter of the estimated £2 million per annum to be raised from vehicle emissions duty – and because of the way it proposes to allocate it. The last of these amendments seeks to allocate half, rather than a quarter, of the estimated proceeds from the vehicle emissions duty to implementing the proposals set out in the Policy. This sum, if approved, will still be 'a drop in the ocean', but it would allow the Minister to have a realistic chance of making our roads and pavements safer, our pedestrian facilities much more comprehensive, and our cycling and motorcycling opportunities more attractive to those who are capable of making some of their journeys on 2 wheels. A further amendment seeks to allocate any revenue obtained from above-inflation rises in parking charges to the objectives of the Policy.

It is vital that we secure a level of funding that will give Jersey's Sustainable Transport Policy a greater chance of being implemented successfully. Indeed, for TTS to seek to persuade more people to adopt modes of travel which makes them more vulnerable to serious injury (walking up and down the narrow pavements of the Ring Road, for example, highly-congested pedestrian routes with inadequate pavement widths to avoid pedestrians being struck by passing vehicles) is irresponsible, and could lead to a rise in the number of serious injuries on our roads rather than a 'Vision Zero'. The funding for the eastern cycle route is unclear beyond the current agreed tranche of £500,000, besides which the £500,000 annual spending on the Policy "may be required to reduce in line with the comprehensive spending review (CSR)." However, if this should fail, and the States refuse to allocate more than the £500,000 requested in the proposition, I have included a number of low-cost practical measures which, if approved, will provide genuine incentives to those wishing to have less reliance on the private car. The proposal to restrict traffic using the southern part of Halkett Place to essential vehicles, taxis and buses, for example, has been an approved policy of successive Island Plans and would cost nothing but negotiation and political will to achieve.

A proper transport hierarchy and one that 'reflects best practice globally' places the transport needs of those least able to travel independently at the top of its list of priorities; however, while this hierarchy appears to be acknowledged in the design of the front cover of the policy document, it is ignored within. The needs of the mobility-impaired, which ought to come first, the challenges involved in making walking and cycling more attractive as alternatives to the private car, these must all play second fiddle to the improvements that are planned to the bus service. There is nothing wrong with seeking to enhance the bus service, and the prospect of a town hopper service from 2013 is particularly welcome, but to deal with bus travel before the travel needs of pedestrians and cyclists, is not best practice, plays havoc with the available budget, and is potentially dangerous, especially when insufficient investment in infrastructure

to protect the most vulnerable road-users is combined with financial penalties on those who travel by car.

The Policy appears to devote just one paragraph to 'disabled parking' (p.57). It is suggested that disabled parking should be charged for, and that there is some abuse of the current system, but consultation is all that is proposed. There is no recognition of the appreciable role played by the Shopmobility scheme, and the potential for increasing provision for it in other car parks than Sand Street, nor of the importance of safe pedestrian routes for those who find walking difficult. The whole system needs reviewing, especially to check that there is a sufficient number of parking spaces provided for disabled drivers, and that the procedure for the allocation of permits is sufficiently independent and transparent.

Pedestrians come next in the commonly accepted transport hierarchy, but the Policy also places their needs well down the priority list, below bus travel and parking (pp. 60/61). There is no identification of key walking routes contained in just over a page of the Policy, nor of the many junctions (the pedestrian route out of Green Street car park is just one glaring example) where there are no pedestrian facilities; there appears to have been no effort to list or prioritise the provision of the improved facilities even though the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) includes walking, with cycling, as "key to addressing the growing problem of obesity and other fitness-related diseases." Nor does the Policy appear to be influenced by the MOH's recommendation that "Jersey sets *ambitious* (my italics) targets for walking and cycling." These amendments propose that the Department brings forward a comprehensive walking strategy, including identification of the major walking routes used by hundreds of commuters each day who already walk to work, and the routes used by thousands of Islanders who seek to move around a congested town centre conveniently and safely. Specific schemes for a number of junctions, such as the bottom of Wellington Hill, used by hundreds of schoolchildren each day, and where there is inadequate provision for them to cross, need to be brought forward by the Department by the end of 2011 if walking is to be responsibly promoted by the States as an alternative to the private car.

The Policy is far from ambitious in its treatment of cycling. Given the very low take-up of commuter cycling quoted in the report (based on 2009 data) and the fact that much of the Island is particularly well-suited to cycling, and given its place in the transport hierarchy, one would have expected a much fuller and more comprehensive treatment of cycling. The St. Helier Roads Committee formulated its own draft cycling strategy for the Parish several years ago and submitted it to the previous Minister for consideration as part of his transport policy, but there is no evidence that it has influenced the current policy. The cycling strategy which the Minister is requested to bring forward should pay special attention to the current difficulties that exist for those wishing to cycle in safety, especially the need for cross-town routes, and the need to provide off-road cycle paths for schoolchildren wishing to make some or all of their school trips by bicycle.

There is a reluctance to 'bite the bullet' in respect of policy implementation such as greater pedestrian priority in the town centre ("TTS has studied the impact of (EDAW's) proposals and concluded that, with current volumes of traffic the disadvantages of pollution and congestion on the remaining network would be too great should all the proposals be adopted." (pp. 11 and 63). Thus, an extremely expensive but professional and 'world-class' review of the town centre which found ample evidence of the need for more pedestrian-priority areas is dismissed because there is 'too much traffic' (!), and the only section of new pedestrian-priority which the Policy might support is southwards along the section of Halkett Place from its

junction with Waterloo Street. But even this scheme, we are told on p. 64, might be replaced by 'shared space', which clearly could not work at the junction of Halkett Place and King Street, and which would not have worked as the Policy claims it does, at Charing Cross, had not the Parish of St. Helier insisted on the installation of the 2 'Jersey crossings' there. In any case, there is no timetable for the delivery of what has been adopted in successive Island Plans, and recommended by every significant traffic study in the past 30 years. The speed and volume of traffic along such town centre streets as Halkett Place, Mulcaster Street and Broad Street has been shown to make walking difficult for all, and especially dangerous for the mobility-impaired, the young and the elderly, but the Policy offers no radical solution to the problems. It is important to emphasize that a balanced approach to the current problems, as has recently been implemented in Hilgrove Street, or French Lane, provides access for delivery vehicles up to a time that can be agreed after negotiation with businesses and haulage companies. Public transport vehicles can use pedestrian-priority areas at all times of day, as can emergency vehicles.

The Policy is disappointing on the key issue of road safety – while the Minister aspires to 'Vision Zero', i.e. no serious road injuries, there is a lack of specific measures that have been shown to reduce speed-related collisions, or measures proven to remove defective vehicles from circulation (although an MOT for commercial vehicles is talked about). Instead, the Policy recommends the creation of (another) task-force (p. 31). The practical measures proposed in these amendments, especially in such areas as Midvale Road, which TTS highway engineers have agreed is too narrow to accommodate two-way traffic without compromising the safety of the large numbers of pedestrians who use its pavements, will, if approved, go some way to reducing pedestrian injuries on our busiest roads, while the encouragement of smaller cars will also play a part in reducing the impact of collisions.

A town hopper service from 2013 is to be welcomed, but the urgent need to provide transport out of town late at night is left as something to be investigated. Late-night services could and should be provided next year, in conjunction with keeping the bus station open much later to provide warm and secure shelter for waiting passengers.

Raising the cost of parking is wrongly seen as a panacea for our transport ills – on p. 11 it is shown as the only measure which is proposed as a mechanism to achieve all of the targets given – even though TTS has the data at its disposal which clearly shows that a significant proportion of motorists are accessing private non-residential (PNR) parking, and will, therefore, be untouched by raising parking charges above inflation. It is highly probable that the minority of drivers who are forced to use the public long-stay car parks, and who are not given privileged parking at work, are the less well-paid staff or the part-time workers, including single parents. However, tackling the attractiveness of PNR parking which might level the playing field, is placed in the 'too difficult box' as one of the 'radical solutions' dismissed in paragraph 4 of the Report and again on pp. 51/52.

The amendments also seek to transfer a proportion of States-controlled parking spaces currently on private leases to commuters for the use of shoppers and users of two-wheeled vehicles. It is a nonsensical situation that the northern section of the Albert Quay, to give just one example, has been rented out for private car use, when there is a lack of shopper- and visitor-parking in this part of St. Helier. The new Liberty Wharf development, the public space on the Weighbridge, as well as the cultural facilities in the area, would all benefit from the provision of 3-hour parking facilities. There is also an unfulfilled demand for extra parking spaces for motorcycle and scooter parking.

There are approximately 20 car-parking spaces currently on private leases in the area of the Steam Clock which could probably provide a new motorcycle parking site for up to 100 vehicles. While this would not generate any revenue for the Harbours Department, it would potentially take 100 private cars off the road.

The danger that raising parking charges above inflation will affect the retail sector is accepted (p. 48), but the only comfort the policy offers is that a reduction in traffic levels will free up some parking spaces in the short-stay car parks. Increasing the capacity of Snow Hill car park, which could not be better placed in terms of access to the road network and proximity to the Town Centre, remains, once again, just a possibility (pp. 54/55). While encouraging lower-emission vehicles is a worthy aim, the Island should also be taking steps to encourage the ownership of smaller vehicles; the purpose of one of these amendments is to ensure that the kind of incentives enjoyed by the owners of low-emission vehicles can be made available to owners of small cars; small cars can take up much less parking space and should pay reduced parking charges where this can be achieved. More importantly, they take up less road space, and cause less damage to persons and property in collisions.

Given the stated lack of ‘radical solutions’, the lack of detail, the absence of a CSR-proof timetable, the unwillingness to follow through policies adopted by successive Island Plans, the evidence that Jersey lags behind many comparable jurisdictions in its implementation of sustainable transport policies, it seems a vain boast for the Policy to state that “we have an opportunity not just to follow international best practice, but to lead it.” Jersey’s Green Lane Network probably was something to boast about when it was first introduced thanks to the foresight of the then Constable of St. Peter, but it was never completed – nor does the Policy provide a mechanism for its completion. In the area of transport planning we have a lot of catching-up to do before we can aspire to lead the world. I hope that the adoption of the suite of practical measures contained in these amendments will allow for the Policy to deliver the kind of transport system which will match such an aspiration.

Financial and manpower implications

Most of the proposals, if adopted, can be introduced without increasing the TTS budget. There is a long history of the Department collaborating with the Parish of St. Helier in the various improvement schemes which have taken place in the town, such as in Conway Street and Broad Street, and the Parish has also, on several occasions, agreed to provide financial contribution to such schemes.

The proposal in paragraph 2(d) has been estimated to cost in the region of £379,000 and is an agreed high-priority scheme for which some funding will be available if the proposals to increase funding for the Policy in amendments 2(i) and 3 are adopted. The £1,000,000 mentioned is approximately half of the revenue raised through the recently introduced Vehicle Emission Duty which I believe should be used for this purpose.

The proposal in paragraph 2(h), the release of 25% of the privately-leased parking spaces in States’ ownership for shopper- and scooter/motorcycle-parking, if implemented, will undoubtedly affect the revenue budgets of certain departments (given that shopper parking generates less income than privately-leased parking spaces, and there is no charge for motorcycle parking), but such losses can be recouped by increasing the cost of the privately-leased spaces in the departmental portfolios.