

STATES OF JERSEY



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT POLICY (P.128/2019): AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 27th February 2020
by the Connétable of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT POLICY (P.128/2019): AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2 –

Delete the words “to receive the Sustainable Transport Policy for Jersey, as contained in Appendices 1 and 2 to the Report, and, specifically,”.

2 PAGE 2 –

After the words “to approve”, insert the words “the Sustainable Transport Vision, as set out in Chapter 6 of Appendix 1 to the Report, ‘A Framework for a Sustainable Transport System 2020-2030’, and”.

3 PAGE 2 –

Delete the words “for Jersey”.

4 PAGE 2 –

For the words “ ‘A Framework for a Sustainable Transport System 2020-2030’ ” substitute the words “and the decision-making principles, as set out in the table on page 26 of Appendix 1 to the Report”.

5 PAGE 2 –

At the end, insert the words –

“, with the following changes to those principles –

- (a) replace the words “We agree that fewer vehicle journeys will be good for Jersey. To make this possible we will.” with the words, “The Government of Jersey will.”;
- (b) insert a new principle as follows: “1. Conform with the Jersey mobility hierarchy.”;
- (c) insert a new principle as follows: “2. Improve transport options, including parking, for people with mobility impairments.”;
- (d) replace principle 3 with the following principle: “Make walking and cycling more attractive, especially for traveling to school and commuting, by providing safe routes”;
- (e) renumber principle 2 as principle 4, and at the end of the principle add the words “and present a Bus Service Development Plan to the States for debate during the autumn session, 2020”;
- (f) renumber principle 1 as principle 5, and replace the word “accordingly” with the word “fairly”; and at the end of the principle add the words “and present a Parking Plan to the States for debate during the autumn session, 2020”;
- (g) renumber principles 4 and 5 as principles 6 and 7;

- (h) renumber principle 6 as principle 8 and replace the word “cars” with “vehicles”, delete the words, “electric and other”, and after the word “low”, add “or zero”;
- (i) renumber principle 7 as principle 9; after the word “network” add the words, “, their delivery and servicing needs”.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

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

to approve the Sustainable Transport Vision, as set out in Chapter 6 of Appendix 1 to the Report, ‘A Framework for a Sustainable Transport System 2020-2030’, and the supporting principles of the Sustainable Transport Policy, as set out in Chapter 8 of Appendix 1 to the Report, and the decision-making principles, as set out in the table on page 26 of Appendix 1 to the Report, with the following changes to those principles –

- (a) replace the words “We agree that fewer vehicle journeys will be good for Jersey. To make this possible we will.” with the words, “The Government of Jersey will.”;
- (b) insert a new principle as follows: “1. Conform with the Jersey mobility hierarchy.”;
- (c) insert a new principle as follows: “2. Improve transport options, including parking, for people with mobility impairments.”;
- (d) replace principle 3 with the following principle: “Make walking and cycling more attractive, especially for traveling to school and commuting, by providing safe routes”;
- (e) renumber principle 2 as principle 4, and at the end of the principle add the words “and present a Bus Service Development Plan to the States for debate during the autumn session, 2020”;
- (f) renumber principle 1 as principle 5, and replace the word “accordingly” with the word “fairly”; and at the end of the principle add the words “and present a Parking Plan to the States for debate during the autumn session, 2020”;
- (g) renumber principles 4 and 5 as principles 6 and 7;

- (h) renumber principle 6 as principle 8 and replace the word “cars” with “vehicles”, delete the words, “electric and other”, and after the word “low”, add “or zero”;
- (i) renumber principle 7 as principle 9; after the word “network” add the words, “, their delivery and servicing needs”.

REPORT

Introduction

At first glance, the new Sustainable Transport Policy for Jersey ([P.128/2019](#)) appears to fulfil the requirements of the States Assembly following my [amendment](#) of [P.52/2019](#): skimming through the well-illustrated Appendices, with their tables, case studies and mission statements, there is not a great deal to disagree with if you believe, as I do, that we should be reducing traffic congestion and pollution and making walking and cycling safer and more attractive modes of travel for at least some journeys, for those who can make such choices.

But dig a little deeper into the document, and one finds that there is very little policy-making going on in P.128/2019. Strictly speaking, the Minister has failed to deliver a Sustainable Transport Policy at all; by his own admission, on page 3, under 'Background', he is presenting, 'a Framework for a Sustainable Transport System' for the next decade, and a 'Sustainable Transport Strong Start Delivery Plan' for the current year. Given that there has been a decade or more of Ministerial stasis in terms of sustainable transport policy-making and implementation, a 'strong start' would be welcome if the States was being asked to approve or adopt a series of specific policies, all the more so if at least the most important and overdue of these were underpinned by targeted, costed and timetabled implementation plans; but the States is not being asked to do this and there are no such detailed plans here.

Supporters of P.128/2019 might argue that in the time available since the debate on P.52/2019 last year it is unreasonable to expect anything more than a framework, but I would refer them to the numerous occasions on which successive Ministers for Infrastructure have promised to deliver on the sustainable transport goals which the States of Jersey has already adopted many times over in the past 2 decades in both Strategic Plans and Island Plans. Indeed, what makes the short Report within P.128/2019 particularly discouraging to Islanders who have been waiting for years for States' policies to make walking and cycling safer and attractive alternatives to the private car, is the contention that we need 'a rapid analysis of several big strategic transport planning questions that we do not currently have the answers to'. It makes one wonder whether the authors of this document have actually read any of the previous reports on Sustainable Transport Policy, or whether they have taken into consideration decisions that have already been taken in this regard by the States Assembly.

Recent changes in the structure of the States of Jersey, now known as the Government of Jersey, mean that States Assembly propositions have also changed, and not only in their presentation: following the lead set by the Government Plan, the language of the new transport policy is rich in hyperbole. 'Previous sustainable transport policies addressed a small set of issues in a wider transport system', we are told; thus, any shortcomings in P.128/2019 are swept away at the outset because this new 'framework' offers 'a fundamental re-think ... sets the vision for our future transport system, lays out the big questions ...', etc. A similarly bullish tone is struck in Appendix 1: 'This framework sets a bold ambition ...'.

The Minister makes a similar assertion in his foreword, stating, '*For the first time*, [my italics] Government is making clear that fewer vehicle journeys will be a good thing for Jersey.' This is nonsense: the previous Minister admitted in the States Assembly that the road traffic reduction target of 15% set by a previous transport policy had not been achieved, and that he had no plans to address the problem. The States of Jersey has, in

fact, long recognised that vehicular traffic levels, especially at peak times, are problematic for social, environmental and economic reasons. The foreword concludes with a series of bullet points that show precisely why P.128/2019 needs to be amended before it is approved; instead of providing us with the key aspects of the new Sustainable Transport Policy, the Minister's own priority list goes like this –

- ‘develop our bus service, ...’ – but the document elsewhere places ‘active travel’, i.e. walking and cycling, at the top of the priority list;
- ‘start a programme of traffic-free days on key routes in town’ – surely this is mere tokenism; reducing through traffic through St. Helier was adopted as a policy proposal in the Island Plan before last;
- tackle the school traffic problem (‘find new ways for children to travel safely to school, ...’) – worthwhile, but spending nearly half a million pounds on cycling proficiency and ‘school travel initiatives’ does not address the problem of there being no network of walking routes, nor a safe, segregated cycle network for everyone to use;
- ‘work with Digital Jersey on a programme to embrace new transport technology’ – I would argue that this is happening anyway;
- ‘pilot the safe use of personal light electric vehicles and encourage car and bike sharing schemes ...’ – again, the private sector is leading on this;
- ‘accelerate work on an Eastern Cycle Route’ – like his predecessor, the Minister seems content to approach a cycling network in a piecemeal way.

Why does it matter that these priorities, and others listed later in the Appendices are inconsistent? The answer is clear from the opening section of the framework, in part 2 of Appendix 1 (page 13, 6th paragraph) –

“The strategic framework is supported by an agreed delivery plan for 2020, which identifies over £1.5 million of funded improvements that will be implemented in the next 12 months.”

This should, perhaps, read, ‘only £1.5 million’, for while it is not clear from the document where the money will go in the first year, this is a miniscule amount to spend; even if it is to be topped up from the Climate Emergency Fund and other fiscal measures yet to be developed, the lack of a coherent policy means that there is nothing to prevent the Minister, should he see fit, from spending a significant proportion of the available funding on electric vehicle subsidies, or on other ‘nice to have’ initiatives, rather than on the top priorities of the ‘Jersey Mobility Hierarchy’ as laid out on page 61.

I requested the Minister to withdraw P.128/2019 and to work in a spirit of partnership with backbenchers such as myself, on a proper sustainable transport policy which could be brought back to the States for debate before the summer recess, but at the time of writing these amendments I have yet to receive a reply to my suggestion; I should add that the Parish of St. Helier has been waiting for some 15 years for a reply from his Department to the draft cycling strategy sent to the Minister of the day. It therefore falls on me to seek to amend a poorly-worded proposition and a muddled report (I refer, for example, to the fact that the document contains 2 sets of similarly numbered

Appendices, those beginning immediately after the Report, and a different set beginning on page 52) in the hope that something useful can be salvaged from P.128/2019, and that as a result, all transport users will see practical and equitable improvements in the months and years ahead.

Amendment 1

The purpose of this amendment is to remove the first action required of the States, as it involves very little action at all: what is the point of a policy being merely ‘received’ by a legislature? I have already argued that P.128/2019, or the Appendices which account for most of the document, is not a policy in any case. The States Assembly should focus on what it is being asked to approve, and accordingly the proposition, if this amendment is adopted, will start with this consideration.

Amendment 2

Strictly speaking, P.128/2019 asks the States to approve a number of ‘supporting principles of the Sustainable Transport Policy, as set out in Chapter 8 of Appendix 1’ (pages 25 and 26), although in the section of the report entitled ‘Background’, these principles are but the means to an end, a ‘vision’, which is described in Chapter 6 (page 23) in the following terms –

“By 2030, our transport system will make our everyday lives better, support businesses, encourage us and our children to be healthier and make our Island greener.”

There is not much to object to here, though much depends on what one means by ‘better’; for example, elsewhere in the document there is reference to ‘lower levels of parking ... restrictive standards’ (page 19), which do not necessarily mean better quality of life for town residents who wish to enjoy the pleasures of vehicle ownership, nor will the vision support town businesses if it becomes more difficult to drive into town to take advantage of St. Helier’s rich variety of retail, cultural and hospitality offers. The vision statement also omits any reference to meeting the transport needs and expectations of tourists, some of whom will travel to the Island by car.

In any case, the vision of what we want from our transport system in 10 years’ time should surely be the subject of debate, and also, perhaps, of amendment further down the line, given that it is underpinned by the supporting principles which we are being asked to adopt, and the purpose of this amendment is to allow that debate to happen.

Amendment 3

It is a minor objection, almost a quibble, but I would argue that the Minister is stating the obvious in describing this document as a policy ‘for Jersey’ and the phrase should be deleted.

Amendment 4

The short report within P.128/2019 (‘Background, line 9) introduces an important term which is not in the proposition, which the States is asked to approve in relation to the supporting principles: ‘decision-making’. The purpose of this amendment is to allow the States to give the Minister ‘decision-making’ powers, so long as he or she sticks to

the ‘supporting principles’ as set out in Chapter 8. And, in view of the opaque and vague writing of the first part of this section, this amendment specifically asks the States to endorse the table setting out those principles on page 26, albeit to be reordered, revised and amplified (or not, depending on the outcome of debate) by subsequent amendments.

Amendment 5

- (a) We come then to what is or should be the kernel of the proposition, the supporting, decision-making principles which will achieve the vision of sustainable transport as set out in Chapter 8 of Appendix 1. However, before we reach them, there is what reads like a mission statement provided at the head of the list of supporting principles on page 26, ‘We agree that fewer vehicle journeys will be good for Jersey’. It is unclear what this statement is doing here: is it one of the principles? in which case there are 8 rather than 7; a restatement of the vision would have been more appropriate, given that we are told that the vision depends on the principles listed. I don’t think the Minister means ‘fewer vehicle journeys’ at all, given that bicycles are vehicles, as are buses; reducing congestion is something I believe we could all subscribe to. I would have preferred an altogether more positive mission statement, such as, ‘more active travel would be good ...’, but rather than seeking to amend this line and risk duplicating the vision, I propose that we replace it with a statement of intent on the part of the Government of Jersey.
- (b) I believe that it is necessary for the ‘Jersey mobility hierarchy’ referred to in Chapter 8 of Appendix 1 (page 25) to be included as the first principle of sustainable transport policy-making. This is what is implied by the statement that ‘(the principles) will be implemented with consideration to the Jersey mobility hierarchy (see Appendix 3), which informs priorities for infrastructure investment’, although the word ‘consideration’ is weak. The Appendix referred to is on page 61; if the transport hierarchy is to inform the spending of limited funds, its provisions must be placed at the head of the list of guiding principles to be followed by Ministers, and it must be given more weight than is provided by the word ‘consideration’; part (a) of this amendment requires the Government of Jersey to ‘conform with’ the mobility hierarchy.
- (c) I believe that it is vital that meeting the transport needs of the most vulnerable road users, i.e., the first priority of the mobility hierarchy, is set out as a supporting principle of the sustainable transport policy, with particular attention to the need for parking. This is likely to include increasing the overall number of on-street disabled parking spaces within the town centre, as well as the number of parking spaces available within off-street car parks, with the potential for extending the excellent Shopmobility scheme to additional car parks.
- (d) In P.128/2019 cycling and walking are placed, in that order, below public transport in the list of supporting principles, which is clearly a mistake, and this amendment seeks to correct this, as well as placing walking before cycling, as the implementation of safe and convenient walking routes is of higher priority than improved cycling. The amendment also deletes the words ‘for more people of all abilities’, as it is not possible for everyone to use a bicycle (though everyone will benefit from improved walking routes). The additional principle of focussing, in particular, on the school-run and the commute, is considered

vital, given that rush-hour congestion is particularly damaging to people's health as well as to the economy.

As referred to in the Introduction to these amendments, successive Ministers have dragged their heels over the development of walking and cycling strategies for Jersey, and the present Minister for Infrastructure did not present 'a sustainable transport strategy, including safe routes for walking and cycling ... by the end of 2019' as he was required to do by the States in P.52/2019, as amended. This is now overdue and, therefore, does not require a further deadline to be set in this amendment.

- (e) Improvements to the bus service are placed next to be consistent with the mobility hierarchy. The bus service is one of Jersey's success stories, though there are still improvements to be made as mentioned in P.128/2019. However, given the limited funds available to the Minister, it is important that the 'Bus Service Development Plan' referred to in the 'Background' to the Report is presented to the States for debate this year.
- (f) It is generally accepted that a sustainable transport policy will include 'sticks' as well as 'carrots', but Ministers have tended to resort to raising charges in public car parks to fund transport-related initiatives. Parking policy needs to be fairly applied so that it does not discriminate against those who have no realistic alternative to using public car parks; it also needs to allow for incentivised parking rates that will support the vibrancy of St. Helier, especially its hospitality, retail and cultural offering, and help the town meet the challenges posed by internet shopping. Given the importance of parking policy to the achievement of the Island's sustainable development goals, I believe that it is essential that the 'Parking Plan' referred to in the 'Background' to the Report is presented to the States for debate this year.
- (g) This amendment renumbers the list.
- (h) This amendment proposes that we agree to pursue a reduction in the use of all vehicles powered by fossil fuels, not just cars, and that we keep our options open as to the best way to power a low or zero emission vehicle. Bicycles clearly fall into this last category. As an aside, I would point out that a key goal in sustainable transport policy is road traffic reduction, especially at peak times; vehicle ownership is not the same thing as vehicle use, and it is worth mentioning that the Island has a long history of motorsports, while thousands of Islanders enjoy the freedom and independence that comes from having a car or motorbike, not only for trips overseas, but for those journeys where there is no realistic alternative to the private car, van or motorbike. It is also worth challenging the view that the purchase of an electric vehicle is a panacea for our transport ills, whereas there are unanswered questions about both the carbon footprint of electric vehicles, especially the batteries, and it is well known that electric vehicles will not help us tackle all air quality issues, given the particulates created by brake linings, nor the problems of vehicle congestion and the safety of the most vulnerable road users.

- (i) Having met with the Transport Sub-Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, I agreed that the particular needs of businesses with regard to deliveries and servicing should be referred to in the debate on P.128/2019. Providing solutions for local businesses in this way does not mean that no change should be expected in how road space is allocated in the Island; however, especially in the town centre where, as is acknowledged in the supporting principle (renumbered 5), there is a pressing need to ‘create more space for people’ wishing to move easily and safely between car parks, the bus station, shops, restaurants, cafés and offices, enjoying the experience of our attractive and vibrant capital.

Financial and manpower implications

In my view, there are no direct financial or manpower implications arising from these changes to the framework for sustainable transport.