

3.14 Deputy N.B. Le Cornu of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the implementation of the strategies agreed as part of the Sustainable Transport Policy:

Given that when the States approved the Sustainable Transport Policy in December 2010, Members voted unanimously to request the publication within a year of a target for road accident reduction and the rationale behind it and also comprehensive strategies designed to facilitate and encourage walking and cycling, could the Minister explain the delay in carrying out the wishes of the States and update Members on progress?

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

The timescale of one year set by the States for the development of these important strategies was optimistic, given the limited officer resources available. I can confirm, however, that my department has more recently been able to allocate resources and made considerable progress in developing both a Road Safety Strategy and an Active Travel Strategy, the latter addressing walking and cycling together. The draft Road Safety Strategy White Paper is close to completion and I anticipate publishing it for public consultation before this summer. Work on the Active Travel Strategy is also well advanced and it should be published later this year as per my response to the Constable of St. Helier's question in January.

3.14.1 Deputy N.B. Le Cornu:

I am conscious that we are soon to debate legislation on the compulsory wearing of helmets by children when they are cycling. It could be said that we do not have the scientific basis for argument for or against the use of such helmets, given that the department has not given us more information which was requested by the States. Are we therefore in a position to think rationally about the decision we are soon to make?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I will provide as much information as I can get hold of for States Members regarding this but obviously this is the subject of a proposition which will be before the States shortly.

3.14.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is it the Minister's intention as part of his Sustainable Transport Policy going forward to include a 'Hoppa Bus' service to reduce the amount of traffic in the town and will he find funding this time round which failed to find funding in the last Medium-Term Financial Plan?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It is my intention to expand the bus service as much as possible which will include the suburbs and the periphery of town. Whether that would include an actual 'Hoppa Bus' I will take under advice but that would be nice to have.

3.14.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, can I remind the Minister that this House approved the progress on a 'Hoppa Bus' and then the Minister failed to come up with the funding to meet our requirement?

The Bailiff:

So what is the question, Deputy?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The question was: can I remind him does he recognise that we have passed this once, twice, 3 times I think?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, I would love to proceed with that if funding was made available. I was more querying the name “Hoppa Bus” as opposed to the actual service. But I wish to expand the service to cover all areas of town, rural areas and countryside.

3.14.4 Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary:

Does the Minister consider that the current projects to provide improvements in the village centres of the Parishes, which have been driven by the very communities that they affect, will play an important part in achieving some of the aims set by the Sustainable Transport Policy and of course increasing road safety? Does he consider that the work being undertaken to achieve these and to get them right is worth the effort and worth the wait?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Absolutely, I could not agree with the Constable of St. Mary more and T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) really appreciate the input of Parishes on the subject.

3.14.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

The Minister mentioned lack of resources was holding up aspects of the policy. Would he not agree that particularly the walking and cycling objectives may have been over-optimistic, in any event?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, indeed. The cycling was a difficult one because we are dealing with private land owners but we are trying to expand that as soon as we can. We have got sections of the eastern cycle track in place, we have got new sections of the harbour area in place now, and that is something we would wish to progress.

3.14.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister think that there is a democratic issue when the Assembly passes propositions, in this case the Sustainable Transport Policy, only to find out that it cannot be implemented in a holistic or timely way due to hold-ups at the funding stage?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think we are progressing in a timely way. Sections of the eastern cycle routes have been installed, we have the successful Cycle Challenge, we have installed over 100 parking spaces for bicycles in bicycle racks in town, we have 3 travel plans completed and there are further 3 under development with various States departments.

3.14.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

That is all very nice but will the Minister answer because he is the one who said that certain aspects of this have been held up due to a lack of funding? Is it a problem when the States Assembly asks for the Minister to go away and do something and when he does not do it, we would entirely be in our rights to have a vote of no confidence? Would he take the question more seriously and answer whether or not it is a democratic problem when the will of this Assembly is not enacted in a timely fashion?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

If the Deputy will recall this was the Strategic Transport Policy of 2010. I became the Minister for Transport and Technical Services towards the end of 2011 and I instructed my department to prioritise this, which they have done.

3.14.8 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Following on from these questions, and certainly from Deputy Southern's, will the Minister tell us what efforts he has made since he has been Minister to obtain funds from the Treasury for the 'Hoppa Bus' and for the other initiatives and if he has not done, will he be putting it into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as something to go forward?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

My department and I have regular discussions with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Treasurer of the States regarding T.T.S. projects. This has been discussed at length and I will be moving forward with this. As I mentioned previously, I wish to expand the bus service to cover the whole of the Island which includes St. Helier.

3.14.9 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Again, the Minister has not answered the question. The question is: has he made specific proposals to the Treasury for funding for a 'Hoppa Bus' and funding for the other initiatives: yes or no?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

That is a yes.

The Bailiff:

A final question, Deputy Le Cornu?

Deputy N.B. Le Cornu:

No, I do not.