

2024.04.16.

4.12 Deputy D.J. Warr of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding St. Helier Parking Needs Study report (OQ.58/2024)

Sorry, I managed to lose my question just as I ... sorry, Sir. Further to the 2013 report, *St. Helier Parking Needs Study*, will the Minister advise what consideration, if any, is being given to address the perception that there is insufficient shopper parking in town?

[11.15]

The Connétable of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

Providing parking for shoppers is, of course, important for the vitality and economic success of the town centre. Therefore, Infrastructure is currently developing policy that specifically considers the different user demands for parking in town, including shopper parking. The work, which began last year, is taking a comprehensive approach to ensure that we manage and develop the public parking estate effectively, both now and into the future. A key thread of this work is going to be how we manage the different demands for parking, for example, so that more long-stay worker parking is provided around the town while keeping sufficient capacity in the town centre to support the retail and leisure activity, et cetera. A specific case in point is the new Charles Street car park, which will provide a further 137 short-stay 3-hour spaces when opened in early May.

4.12.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am sure the Minister is aware this report cost the taxpayers £15,000, and I am sure he does not need to be reminded of his commentary about the indefensible use of taxpayers' money. When does he intend to bring his hopefully less costly strategy to the Assembly?

The Connétable of St. John:

No, I do not need to be reminded about use of taxpayers' money. It is something I continually remind the officers within the department about and the need to do things quickly and speedily, but also to good effect. What we need to do is look at what information is available to us and look at the changes. We have a hopper bus which nobody has been told about. In May we will be promoting that hopper bus. We currently have 24 per cent of St. Helier residents who work in town driving to work, so providing more spaces is not the answer by itself. It is about a combination of efforts that we need to work together on.

4.12.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister draw attention to those who would like to be able to park in town more easily to the great vacancy rate that there is at Pier Road, which is a car park that is very close to the town centre, albeit that the small hill in between the car park and town often seems to get exaggerated in terms of difficulty and distance. Would he take steps to remind people that there are lots of spaces on a day-to-day basis at Pier Road?

The Connétable of St. John:

I thank the Deputy for that prompt because he is absolutely correct in saying there are spaces regularly at Pier Road in good number. Parking in St. Helier has been impacted recently by the essential works that have been carried out at Patriotic Street over recent months. Those works were suspended during the Christmas period, but those works are hopefully going to be completed very shortly and will free up more spaces that are needed. Some 2 weeks ago, I wrote to the Bailiff about the possibility of using Vine Street for disabled drivers if we can find

a suitable alternative to jurats' parking. That was before a letter was published in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* but I fully support the letter that was written to the *Jersey Evening Post*.

4.12.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Minister in Jersey Property Holdings has a planning application from 2022 for a lift to Fort Regent that would result in the loss of 28 car and 78 motorcycle spaces. Without prejudice to the planning merits and determination of that application, is the Minister still pursuing the development and, if so, does he have plans to replace any potential loss of town shopper spaces that would arise?

The Connétable of St. John:

There is no current action being taken on that application. It is interesting that the Deputy mentions motorcycle parking, because one thing that I have noticed is the lack of covered motorcycle and cycle parking that is available to people in St. Helier, and that is one area that I have asked the team to look at to see if we can increase the amount of motorcycle parking rather than reduce it. \

4.12.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Has the Minister considered providing free shopper parking in St. Helier on Saturdays to encourage people to come into town?

The Connétable of St. John:

I have not. The only free parking that I have considered is that which could be attached to a park-and-ride scheme, which I am in discussions with an environmental group about trialling in St. Brelade. As part of my induction, I recently spent time with the parking control team, walking the streets with an officer. They pride themselves in helping the town function and I would like to pay tribute to those people who do their job. It is certainly not but they do their very best in ensuring that unloading bays, disabled discs, et cetera, are not abused. I pay tribute to those people.

4.12.5 Deputy T.A. Coles:

With the new Cyril Le Marquand flats that have just come online by Andium, there is a public car park provided within that complex. Would the Minister think it desirable that large scale developments like that include public parking in the future?

The Connétable of St. John:

There are 138 spaces that are going to be available to the public in that development, and I think we need to look at not necessarily new developments but existing developments that may have capacity in the first case. That is something that the Constable of St. Helier, myself and officers are working on to try to identify what existing capacity may become available to the public.

4.12.6 Deputy D.J. Warr:

I have just been reminded that in his answer to my written question about Kensington Place and the non-reopening of that site for parking, there just seems to be some inconsistency, and this comes back to my point about there being a plan for St. Helier, why is that not considered given the long-term nature of this hospital development? Why is that not being reconsidered for further shopper parking? Surely that has to be to the benefit of all businesses in that area.

The Connétable of St. John:

I think the answer to the written question was quite clear inasmuch as the site is that of a health site. What I do not want to do is to delay any works that may be required to take place there. My personal view is that while we did the work in Patriotic Street, it would be an ideal site to do that, to use that in the short term. I think once you get a car parking space in town, it is much harder to remove it. I stuck with the advice I was given and we did not do it.