

2.10 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding canvassing of groups on plans for Conway Street:

With reference to the recently published plans for Conway Street, would the Minister advise whether any groups have been canvassed for their comments and, if so, which groups; and would he further explain whether he considers the limited public consultation period to be sufficient.

Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

There are essentially 2 parts to the Deputy's question and I will deal with them in turn. First, I can confirm that a number of groups or interested parties have been directly canvassed for their views on this matter including the following: all residential and business addresses in Conway Street, Bond Street and Wharf Street, together with those properties at either end of Conway Street with addresses in Broad Street and Esplanade respectively; a number of groups representing people with disabilities including the Jersey Access Group, the Jersey Blind Society and Shop Mobility, together with a number of individuals with disabilities who have been in discussion with the department about this issue in relation to an earlier street light scheme; the Women's Institute; the Société's Environment Section; the Jersey Chamber of Commerce; the Waterfront Enterprise Board; and, of course, the Environment Scrutiny Panel. The views of Islanders have been sought through the placement of an advertisement in the *Jersey Evening Post* outlining the proposed scheme; and a media release was also made available on the proposals and this was publicised in the press and on the radio, and they feature on the States' website. Details of the proposals are also on display on-site in Broad Street. Secondly, the consultation period for comments in relation to this proposal ends on 17th February. There are, however, a number of points to consider in relation to the length of time allowed for comments to be received. First, these proposals do not represent a new form of policy. The policy about improving the streets of St. Helier was consulted upon and debated in 2002 when the Island plan was approved and adopted. It has, therefore, been clear that for some time - from Island Plan Policy TT8 - that Conway Street was going to be the subject of some form of local improvement. Secondly, I think it is important that we consider the area that has been directly affected by these proposed changes and it is clear that they would be localised to the area of Conway Street. This is not the first time that residents and businesses have been consulted about changes in the street. In April 2003, preliminary plans for the area were distributed to all addresses in Conway Street for feedback and comment from residents and businesses and, more recently, discussions have been held with major businesses in the area before the formal consultation process had started. Thirdly, any substantive comment received after 17th February can still remain to be considered by me. I have, therefore, effectively extended the consultation period until 1st March. I fully accept that this is not an ideal period for consultation had this been a completely new proposal. However, it has been driven by the desire to deliver the improvements for the summer season.

2.10.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I thank the Minister for his comprehensive answer, Sir, and the impressive list of consultees but I do get the impression, Sir, that this is something of a *fait accompli* and more of a presentation than a consultation. We hear that the work is due to start

at the beginning of March. I would ask the Minister, apart from the impressive list of people that have been consulted, what about those people who would wish to use the services of those traders? I am particularly concerned that the disabled parking has been moved so that the disabled people, the elderly and infirm may find greater difficulty getting to the banks and the toilets. I would wish the Minister to comment on that. I would also like the Minister to comment on the proposed street lighting for the scene which looks like something out of *Star Wars*. Finally, Sir, I would like to know, if possible, who is driving this? Is it the traders in the area or those wishing to access their services?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think wrapped up in there are 3 questions.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

First, in relation to disabled bays, I can give an assurance that there will overall be no net loss of disabled bays. Where they are sited and how they are moved is part of the ongoing public consultation process. It is not a *fait accompli*. We are very open to suggestions during this consultation period and, as I have said, this effectively has been extended until the beginning of March. As far as the lights are concerned, that again is not a *fait accompli*. I did not give consent to order the lights and, therefore, we can still make changes if the public consultation process shows that there is any disagreement over the proposed lighting.

2.10.2 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John:

So this would appear to be a dramatic improvement in Conway Street. Could the Minister tell us if he has received any objections to this because I certainly have not heard of any and I wonder if perhaps Deputy Baudains has?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am aware that the majority of the submissions received so far have been positive.