

3.2 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding mitigation of the impact of traffic volume on certain roads arising from the completion developed sites:

What measures, if any, are being introduced to mitigate the impact of traffic volume in St. Peter's Valley, La Route de la Haule, Rue de Haut, Victoria Avenue and Mont Félard arising from the completion of developments approved in St. Peter, St. Mary, St. Ouen, St. Brelade and St. Lawrence since January 2005, and what effect will those measures have on traffic at both peak and off-peak times?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

Measures are under consideration and being developed through the Sustainable Travel and Transport Strategy. The essence of that plan will be to cause a reduction in the number of trips made by private car and a corresponding increase in the number of trips made by more sustainable modes of transport. Consistent with this is a development in St. Peter's Village which was required to contribute £30,000 towards a cycle route between Les Quennevais and St. Peter's Village, and the Transport and Technical Services Department has recommended that the developer at Bel Royal makes a significant contribution towards a public transport subsidy. Whilst I appreciate that many car users in the west would wish to see the capacity of the junction at Beaumont increased, this is difficult to achieve, because not only the junction but the road itself between Bel Royal and Beaumont is overloaded at peak times, so a new road system would be needed, not just an improved junction at Beaumont. My department will be studying the implications of this, but it is more likely that the answer lies with addressing the demand to use our roads rather than the possibilities of building more road capacity. I refer Members back to my previous comments about the missed opportunity in earlier Island Plans to solve this issue, and I would also point out that the original gyratory schemes that have been proposed for that particular area will simply not work because of the bottleneck that exists in the narrow road between Bel Royal and Beaumont.

3.2.1 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I am pleased to hear that in these particular developments at Beaumont there will be a planning gain regarding public transport. Does the Minister have any indication of how long he would expect this gain to last?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I would very much hope that all planning gains would last on a fairly permanent basis. Certainly I am aware the installation of bus stops is already existent in the plans that I have seen. It is worth pointing out, although this is probably more the area of the Minister for Environment and Planning, that in fact one of the benefits of the H2 site at Bel Royal is it is very proximate to an extremely well-serviced bus route on the southern road, and also a bus route to its northern extension. That is one of the reasons why it is considered to be a highly appropriate development site, because of the very proximate availability of public transport services.

3.2.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

Would the Minister outline what progress in initiatives, as we have seen recently by parents taking school children in minibuses to - I believe - Victoria College have been encouraged; and are there any more coming forward to help reduce the impact these new additions to our society are having?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I am not entirely directly aware of the circumstances to which the Deputy refers about transporting children to Victoria College, but I would have to make the comment that if any of these services were being charged for, it would be a requirement under the law for the driver to hold an appropriate Public Service Vehicle licence. However, I welcome any initiatives that encourage car sharing or perhaps slightly larger than car vehicle sharing, because it all helps to reduce traffic congestion.

3.2.3 The Deputy of St. Peter:

Would the Minister confirm that some time ago the Goose on the Green car park was used as a form of park and ride facility, where people parked their cars and took the buses, but once his department, not under his control but under a former Committee's control, charged for the facility at Goose on the Green car park, this facility is no longer available to them? Would he please look at these sorts of initiatives that used to exist and do something about it please?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I have already looked at this issue as part of our all-consuming remit under transport and I will certainly review the situation. My understanding is that that practice is still continuing despite the imposition of a parking fee. The advantage that exists, clearly, is that running along that particular section of the main southern route of the Island is one of the highest frequency levels of bus operation anywhere in the Island, and I am very happy to look again at that particular issue and see how it may be developed.

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

Would the Minister agree that as in other places around the world, people living out in the western Parishes simply just get up a bit earlier, will take the healthy option and get on their bike?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I have been very happy to issue instructions to people to get on their bikes in various circumstances. **[Laughter]** It is a thoroughly healthy and worthwhile mode of transport, and I do look forward and indeed have plans of projects in the pipeline to increase our bicycle network around the Island.

3.2.5 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren of St. Saviour:

Can the Minister say if there will be sufficient drivers available to be able to increase the number of buses in use at peak times, in line with the increasing numbers of residents, particularly in the western Parishes?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I think it is fair to respond to the Deputy by saying there is never really a shortage of drivers for buses. The question is the addition of extra rolling stock to a fleet and the complicated balance that has to be struck between the very heavy demand for capacity at peak time, which then falls off to virtually zero for most of the day. That is a difficult balance that has to be struck, because one might easily double the existing fleet size to, say, 100 vehicles, which would make a reasonable dent in the number of cars travelling into town, but I have to say not a particularly significant one. The question then becomes what exactly does the Transport Minister do with 100 buses and 100 drivers between 9.30 a.m. and 3.30 in the afternoon, when there is a very low level of demand for those services.

The Bailiff:

May I just say to all Members that if Members keep their red lights permanently illuminated, I assume that they have forgotten to turn them off and they do not get called. **[Laughter]**

3.2.6 Deputy S. Power:

I feel admonished. Can I ask the Minister if the statistic of 1,400 cars per hour travelling through the intersection of Victoria Avenue going east and First Tower is still an accurate statistic? Can he undertake to carry out accurate traffic counting exercises on St. Peter's Valley, La Route de la Haule, La Rue de Haut, Victoria Avenue and Mont Felard between 7.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m.?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I am not quite sure how a chamber courtesy breaks down here, Sir, but I feel that Deputy Power has rather jumped the gun, because that was a response I was about to give to a question put to me Deputy Le Fondré that will come up in a little while. If the Deputy forgives me, I will perhaps not respond to him and respond to Deputy Le Fondré, who to all intents and purposes got his question in first.