

2.5 Senator L. Norman of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding account to be taken of public opinion in relation to proposed introduction of car park barriers, and on other decisions:

Would the Minister advise Members whether he will take account of the level of public opinion against his proposal to reintroduce barriers in public car parks and, if so, what influence is public opinion having, if any, on other decisions he is making?

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

I can assure the Senator that before any decision is made to change the charging system within the car parks the public will be formally consulted and their views taken on board. This has not yet been done. The media has carried out straw polls and some members of the public have made their views known. The department will be undertaking a far more rigorous analysis taking into account all aspects of such a change and only after that will a decision be made and the outcome of consultation made known in accordance with the agreed code of practice for written consultations. As far as the final part to the Senator's question is concerned, I can also assure the Senator that I will always listen to public opinion and take it into account so long as I am convinced that it is both balanced and representative, but I also accord weight to the public interest - a different and important concept. Sometimes there is a fine line between public opinion and public interest. On other occasions, there is a wider margin of disparity.

2.5.1 Deputy R.G. Le Herissier of St. Saviour:

Would the Minister outline, in reference to submissions from the public, what his policy is when he receives a submission? Does he reply to it, for example?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I receive personal submissions to me and I also receive submissions to the department. My normal practice is for either myself or my officers to respond to those submissions.

2.5.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Sir, you did not approve the Minister's request to read his statement earlier in the session but having read it through I am concerned to see that the Council of Ministers has approved the strategy - the Travel and Transport Plan - that was to be brought to the States for discussion and approval. It has just been approved, it would seem, by the Council of Ministers out of hand. How then is the parking strategy in it, and of course the reference to barriers, to be brought to the House for debate and to be consulted with the public if it is not to be brought to the States for debate?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Connétable, can I just say this? There will, of course, be the opportunity to ask questions for 10 minutes after the statement. Would you think it more suitable to ask that question at that time?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Thank you, Sir.