

2.6 Senator B.E. Shenton of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding free parking for departmental staff:

Would the Minister advise Members whether he will be reviewing the free parking offer to staff within his department given his commitment to environmental taxes and user-pays policies?

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

Demonstrating a commitment to the environment is something that we should all be seeking to achieve, both States Members and across the States' Departments. I launched eco-active to begin the process of helping people to make environmentally conscious decisions and I am aware from the tremendous response it received that it has struck a cord with a great many Islanders. The provision of free parking is a complex subject that the States have visited on several occasions in recent years, both for States Members and for members of staff. I would not like to see it act as an obstacle to addressing the important changes to our environmental behaviour that we can and should be getting on with immediately. While there are a few sites within St. Helier where employees are able to park free of charge, the majority of St. Helier-based staff pay for parking in public car parks or use public transport or walk. Out of town the availability and timing of public transport means that it can be difficult to get to and from work using public transport. It would be impractical to levy a workplace parking charge on one group of employee and not others as this would cause inequality, but there are practical changes that we can make now. As a department we are committed to exploring and promoting the use of green forms of transport. For instance, we have an electric scooter at Howard Davies Farm, which can be used for making business trips to town, and like other departments we will need to introduce green travel plans to reduce the number of car journeys associated with travelling to and from work. I will, however, happily undertake to further reviewing the parking arrangements of all Planning and Environment staff to see if there are practical and realistic ways of reducing car journeys and promoting a more environmentally conscious example.

2.6.1 Senator B.E. Shenton:

The Minister, in the States, often seems to advocate "do not do as I do, do as I say" policies. Will the Minister give confirmation that he will lead by example before bringing in any environmental taxes?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am not quite sure what the Senator is getting at but I think I am already doing my best. I am using a smaller car, I have bought an electric bicycle, there is not much more I can do, thank you.