

4. Questions to Ministers Without Notice - The Minister for Transport and Technical Services

4.1 Connétable K.P. Vibert of St. Ouen:

In view of the fact that I fell foul of the system for asking my question to the Minister for Economic Development, I will now head in the same direction with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services who I know has been involved, or his department has been involved, for some time with the issue of Grève de Lecq. I would ask the Minister to inform the Assembly what work has been undertaken since 2002 on the potential danger to the public from the rock face at Grève de Lecq and if the answer to that is: "Very little", what work is envisaged in the future?

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

As a result of a recent meeting of the Royal Court, the department has been stimulated by activities of late to move into action, shall we say, in conjunction with the Economic Development Department who have responsibility for the area. I am able to say that this morning the experts in this rock face work have been looking at the issue down there and agreement has been made on the level of risk which is at present there. It has been decided that the area ought to be closed off to the public but it is within the risk assessment to allow the passage of vehicles down there. So the effect of that will be that there will be signage put up to prevent the public access but allow those who sign a disclaimer to access the area through a gate, so that means that boat owners will be able to continue to park their vehicles there. I would say that the department is keen to get this matter closed off in conjunction with the Economic Development Department and I am sure that the present flurry of activity will ensure that takes place.

4.2 The Connétable of St. Mary:

In the spirit of trying to ensure that people are able to leave their cars at home wherever possible, will the Minister undertake to review whether there is adequate motorcycle parking provisions in St. Helier? Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The department are conscious of the fact that the motorcycle parking areas presently available to the public are rapidly taken up and I think as part of our transport strategy we will be indicating that there needs to be more provision for that. In saying that, we have already made provision for additional cycle spaces in the existing car parks and we continue to endeavour to identify spaces where additional motorcycle parking can be placed.

4.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister explain what tests his department applies to contractors who undertake work for the department to ensure that a large proportion of the workforce is as locally based as possible?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am sure the Deputy refers to the contract with the Energy from Waste Plant at La Collette. I took the opportunity of visiting the site only yesterday to establish the progress taking place down there and, in fact, the nature of the works so that I was in a position to report back to the Deputy. I am confident that the staff employed down there, when imported, shall we say, are imported only on the basis of absolute necessity. In fact, the concrete works that have been taking place down there are really of quite a high calibre and specialised formwork equipment is being used. It is a specialist French-type of equipment, the French are well used to using it, and it is producing an excellent result. I would add that the concrete used for the structure has been

supplied by a local company using their local transport, using their local staff and they have been very efficient in working as a team providing the structure which we have agreed to construct.

4.4 Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour:

It was reported in the Guernsey press last week that confirmation had been sought and gained from a senior Jersey politician that Jersey's new incinerator could accommodate the burning of Guernsey's waste in addition to its own. Was that politician the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and, if not, can the Minister inform the House which senior politician has been approached and whether that politician was given authority to act on behalf of Transport and Technical Services in respect of seeking to import rubbish from other jurisdictions?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Not me, however, the department responsible, the Public Works Department in Guernsey, have been liaising with our department, Transport and Technical Services, to establish whether we would be receptive to their rubbish, if you can call it that, or their excess waste, and have asked us to quote a gate fee for its reception and we will do that. I understand there is a debate to come in the States of Deliberation of Guernsey, I think at the end of this month, and the result of that debate will no doubt become known and whether they wish to use information from Jersey or not remains to be seen.

4.4.1 Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

A supplementary. Will the Minister nonetheless seek to inform the House which senior politician has been acting on behalf of the department?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am not aware of who has been speaking to Guernsey politicians but clearly we have connections with Guernsey politicians. I spent a week at the C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) meeting 2 weeks ago over there and was pleased to talk to several Guernsey politicians on the matter and it was discussed at length. I am keen, as I am sure as we all are, that the Channel Islanders work together. Likewise, if we can gain benefit from working with Guernsey, I think we ought to but, likewise, I do not think it needs to be to the detriment of Jersey itself. Thank you.

4.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister confirm whether he has received any representations from individual taxi drivers or taxi drivers representing the association with regard to allowing them to purchase the plates for taxis and, if so, can he issue his thoughts on this matter?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I have had representations from 2 taxi drivers on this matter. The department does not consider it is an ideal way to proceed at the moment but having said that, we are undertaking a review of the taxi service in the Island and the provision of a taxi service to the general public as part of our transport strategy. No doubt, that element of the review will become public once it has been fully considered.

4.6 The Deputy of St. John:

Given that Les Charrières de Bonne Nuit have had barriers on the hill for some 5 years, when will the rock face straight road be stabilised, and have the landowners been summoned to carry out the necessary works?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

This is another of the rock face situations which rumbles on, dare I say it? Clearly, it is down to a land-ownership issue and I understand that the Law Officers are in discussion with the

landowners with regard to this to get it concluded as soon as possible, as is the case with Rozel and Grève de Lecq.

4.7 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

Can the Minister please assure Members that all service providers i.e. taxi drivers, bus drivers and driving instructors have a level playing field when accommodated because some Members do feel that they are not accommodated in the same way as others?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I know the Deputy has approached me with regard to provision of specified spaces for driving instructors. This has been addressed within the department and it is felt that these days with communications being so much easier it is not necessary to give particular places for driving instructors and there are adequate areas where they can pick up their clients. But having said that, we will take a view that all public service suppliers will be accommodated as far as we possibly can within the resources we have available.

4.8 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Could the Minister please inform the Assembly that of the £150,000 that the department has recently publicised, how much has been allocated and how much is left to be allocated and how much is going to the parish of St. Saviour?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Sorry, I could not quite get that question, £150,000 of what? Sorry, if the Deputy could clarify.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I believe for road traffic improvements.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I do not have the list in front of me. It certainly was laid out in the press release as to which allocation was to which areas of the Parish. I know the Deputy has questioned me regarding a pedestrian crossing at Longueville and I think we have replied to him to suggest that there are land-ownership difficulties which make the cost of that particular crossing particularly unachievable at this point. Clearly, we continue to monitor the situation and if lands can be purchased at a reasonable cost, the department will facilitate the provision of the necessary crossing.

4.9 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In his answer 4617 given earlier today, will the Minister confirm that he is actively pursuing the privatisation or outsourcing of key infrastructure services such as a disposal of liquid and inner waste? Will he further confirm that any savings made in such an outsourcing or privatisation he will use to spend on capital to support ageing infrastructure, and is he setting a principle of using revenue to support capital spending?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, in practice, we have a situation whereby we have an evolving world and I think we have an ageing infrastructure which will need considerable expenditure on it in the next 20 years and we have to provide for that. How we do it is open to conjecture at present. Clearly, there is not the funding available from within existing resources and it is my task to work with the Treasury Department to identify how we can come up with sustainable funding solutions so this infrastructure can be maintained at a level that safeguards, not only the environment, but the people of Jersey.

4.9.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

A supplementary, if I may? In the transfer of any such services from the States to private sector involvement, will he assure the House that health and safety standards will be maintained at all costs and that any transfer of undertakings laws which are in place at the time will be fully observed?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The health and safety standards and well-being of the Jersey public are paramount in my view, and would be adhered to at all costs.

The Bailiff:

If the Deputy would just repeat the second part of his question.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Any T.U.P.E. (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) arrangements which are in place will be strictly observed.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I do not think the department would have any alternative but to observe present contractual arrangements with the staff.

4.10 Deputy C.H. Egré of St. Peter:

Sorry to return to matters domestic. The Minister will be aware of a problem that we have in St. Peter in Clos de Charmes and the road known as Rue du Pointe. There is an issue there with children being able at present to run directly on to a very busy road area. I know the Minister has visited the site and agrees that there is a major problem there of safety. Could I seek the Minister's reassurance that something will be done about this comparatively short job before the start of the summer holidays for the children?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I am aware of the area to which the Deputy refers and have been in consultation, not only with my department, but also with the Constable of St. Peter. It turns out to have been the responsibility of the developer of the site; however, given that time has moved on and a willingness to achieve this, the department will be, I think, sharing some very small costs to achieve this particular accident prevention mechanism in the near future.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Can I just add a supplementary? Could I get the assurance I asked for; that this will be done before the start of the summer holidays, please?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I think that is achievable.

4.11 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Is the Minister aware of the plans for the incinerator in Guernsey and seen the design? If he is, would he not agree that it is a far superior design to the one that has been adopted in Jersey? It is low profile, covered with grass, and is not an eyesore, which I am afraid the proposed Jersey incinerator is going to be.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am not a planner or in the Planning Department and I think planning matters are somewhat subjective. I am aware of where it is being proposed to be placed in Guernsey and the adjacent tower or fort, I believe, and I think the idea is that it is no higher than that particular fort. Our design has been approved by the Planning Department and is designed by Hopkins Architects,

and I think I will stand back and say that design is subjective and everyone has their own opinions.

4.12 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

Without going into a recent complaint, of which the Minister knows about, could he advise the House of whether his department in general has an appeals policy similar to that, or otherwise, of Education, Sport and Culture, where people can make a complaint for reviewing a decision that is made by officers within each department? If not, why not? Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think as is the case with most departments, the appeals procedure probably ends up in my lap. If I may refer to the question the Deputy asked, I know specifically ... I can assure him that that matter will be dealt with in the next few days. It is not as simple as he might have been told and the answer is complex, but it will be dealt with very shortly.

The Bailiff:

That concludes the period of time for the Minister for Transport and Technical Services.