

2.10 Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding road works on La Route de la Haule:

In view of assurances given by his predecessor that the new surface would not be disturbed for at least 3 years, except for emergencies, can the Minister outline the reasons why trenches have been dug on the recently resurfaced route to La Haule between Beaumont and Bel Royal Garages 4 times in as many recent months?

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

Although the department is committed to enforcing an embargo on works that involve the digging up of La Route de le Haule until 2010, the law clearly states that consent should not be unreasonably withheld and, despite the department's careful planning, there are situations which occur when the department cannot reasonably refuse consent. An example of this is where individual property connections that could not have been anticipated or completed before the original embargo commenced are required and where no technical or financially reasonable alternative means of connection is available. The 4 occasions to which the Deputy refers all fall into this category. In order to ensure the department's investment in resurfacing is protected, it applies a principle that any excavations in the newly resurfaced road are reinstated like for like so that maintenance issues are kept to a minimum and the visual amenity of the newly resurfaced road is maintained. To this end, the department has developed an enhanced reinstatement specification which must be followed when reinstating a road which remains under embargo. All of the instances to which the Deputy refers have been reinstated by the respective utility company with the enhanced specification. The department continues to progress the development of a new law which will update embargo rules and opening a minimum post resurfacing embargo of 3 years which it hopes to bring before the States during 2009 or 2010.

2.10.1 Deputy S. Power:

I thank the Minister for that reply. Does the Minister know that at least one trench was dug on a St. Lawrence property on the north side of La Route de la Haule and this property has had alternations and renovations commenced and being carried out before the instigation of road works in 2008, and can the Minister give an indication to the department as to how much liaison goes on between T.T.S. and the Planning Department?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

My understanding is that all planning applications are passed by the Transport and Technical Services Department for comment, particularly when it comes to new connections and the department responds appropriately depending on the needs or the requirements of the utility company. I would add that it is a pet concern of mine that roads are not dug up indiscriminately and, from Parish experience, I can suggest that many of my fellow Connétables are jealously protective of their road surfaces because they are fully aware of the costs of digging them up and the costs of resurfacing and the degradation of the surfaces which inevitably results in increased costs to the parishioners and/or taxpayers. I take onboard what the Deputy says. I am aware that there were gas connections to be redone on one of the connections and the department does not allow excavations indiscriminately.

2.10.2 Deputy C.H. Egré of St. Peter:

While the Minister is investigating this particular area, would he please investigate the concerns that the Parish have over repair work that is now going on on Rue de Beaumont which borders on to La Rue de la Haule which runs from the Canon to the filter in turn? The road was resurfaced much to the pleasure of the people who live on that road because it reduced the vibrations in their own household because of previous repairs. They are now faced with further repairs going on as we speak. There have been no utilities put in that road. This is an actual breakdown of the surface. As this was only carried out, I think, within the last 4 years, would he please investigate as to why we are having to carry out resurfacing or repairs yet again in such a short time?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Deputy mentioned this instance to me this morning and I am happy to carry out that investigation.

2.10.3 The Deputy of St. John:

Would the Minister inform the House of the 4 sets of road works that have been carried out? Were they carried out by a number of different utilities or the same utility? If it is the same utility, will he be talking to the management to try, in the future, to get them to work with his department instead of against his department?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I understand these were 4 separate occasions and the utilities communicate through my department and my department co-ordinates activity, so while the situation on La Rue de la Haule is regrettable, my department has a grip of what is going on and will continue to do so.

2.10.4 Deputy S. Power:

The resurfacing of La Rue de la Haule and, indeed, the resurfacing of a lot of the Island's primary routes was much lauded in 2008 by the previous Minister. Indeed, it is a very expensive exercise and I am just wondering how the Minister can tighten up within the department procedures so that the forward planning of these resurfacing exercises and resurfacing projects protect the fabric of the resurfaced road for at least 2 to 3 years.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The new Street Works Law, to which I alluded earlier on, is long overdue and I am very keen to have it on the statute books and this, as I suggested, will take place either during the course of this year or early 2010. It will imply a 3-year embargo on new road surfaces and I think this will be of benefit to the public in general.