

## **5. Questions to Ministers Without Notice - The Minister for Transport and Technical Services**

### **5.1 The Deputy of St. John:**

Could the Minister please express a view about the 2011 Business Plan? Will his department look to adding within that Business Plan main drains extensions into the countryside given the liquid waste strategy seems to be on the backburner or stalling? Therefore, we have a lot of people out there seeing their taxes going up, *et cetera*, and still having to pay twice to have their effluent removed. Could he answer that please?

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

The planning vote for the development of the liquid waste strategy business case is to be prepared and a Green Paper - the Liquid Waste Document - will be completed once funding is forthcoming. The issue of connecting the main drains beyond the existing system is really down to a funding issue. Clearly where there are gains to be had by putting several houses on to a system as part of the development which can be funded by the development, we are keen to help that take place. At the moment that is the situation. If we had additional funding we would be pleased to accommodate more.

#### **5.1.1 The Deputy of St. John:**

Given the Minister's reply and given that I am aware of a situation in St. John where a number of units put in their own pumping station and picked up a number of homes along the way, did T.T.S. carry out a survey of the other neighbours within the area to see whether or not they would have liked to have joined because it is now hitting my table that they were not approached by T.T.S. to join to the main drains when a private developer was doing this?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I am not aware of the Deputy's particular situation, but I am happy to address it should he wish to give me the details.

### **5.2 The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

Would the Minister acknowledge that this weekend's heavy rain following on from the snow has again highlighted the issue of field entrances and property entrances being widened and the flow from them coming on to the road and causing severe danger to road users?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, the department has been well aware of this and is concerned that some of the land management in the Island by probably fewer people than in the past has caused a lot of detritus from the fields coming down on to the roads and choking up the gullies. I think in conjunction with the Economic Development Department we need to address those responsible to try and get this corrected.

#### **5.2.1 The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

A supplementary to that. Would the Minister not agree with me that much of this is a planning issue which was not properly addressed at the planning stage?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I am aware that the enlargement of field entrances has not been controlled by Planning and I certainly think it should be. I will ask that my department liaises strongly with the Planning Department to ensure that it does.

### **5.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Following the last lot of snow - and no doubt we will get some more sometime by the next year - has the Minister ever given consideration maybe to Connex having a supply of what I am told are snow tyres so they are able to put on the special tyres during inclement weather like snow? In other words, there is a supply in stock so should the snow come down they are able to change their tyres and able to get the buses, *et cetera*, back on the road.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I think it is a valid suggestion and I shall ask Connex for their views on that.

**5.4 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

Would the Minister share with us his feelings on seeing the Millennium Town Park at long last being developed, and could he update the Assembly on the progress of his negotiations with the Housing Department in securing the Ann Court site for public parking?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I am relieved and delighted to see the hoarding starting to go up around the Talman site and the onset of the commencement of the Town Park works. The parking issue and its moving on to Ann Court has been a difficult area. This will in fact be the crunch as regards moving the project on. I am in discussion with the Assistant Minister for Housing and in the past the Minister for Housing. I am confident we will be able to reach a satisfactory agreement which will not delay the Town Park in any shape or form.

**5.5 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Ever mindful of T.T.S.'s budget, what would happen if we did have, say, 2 or 3 further severe weather incidents like we have just had in the last week, assuming that the department budgets a certain amount for snow but not obviously a vast amount that would exceed the normal annual spend. Where does that money come from if we do get many, many more events of this kind this year?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In practice I am quite interested in the Deputy's question because this year the snow has come towards the end of the year, which is quite unusual. Generally it happens in January, February or even March and one has the rest of the year to recover. This year we have had a double whammy if you like. We have had some in January and some again this year. We have to take it out of departmental budgets. Effectively the cost is in overtime, and probably increased salt rather than any other materials. At the moment we manage but should the case arise where we have unprecedented calls on the departmental budget, I would have to go back probably and ask for an Article 11(8) request from the Minister for Treasury and Resources, which I am sure he would not be well-minded to accommodate but I do not think I would have much alternative.

**5.5.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

May I ask a supplementary on that? Would the Minister not consider that it might be better practice if he had a contingency within his department where we would know that that is where the money had gone - we would all know that - but at least you would not have to come running to the Assembly for £100,000 with an Article 11(8) request.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

We start off the year with about £250,000 as a contingency. That tends to get whittled-down towards the end of the year. Clearly at this moment in time there is not much. We have done what we can in the last few days from within departmental budgets. But in answer directly to the Deputy's question, yes, we have a contingency. We use it if we have to but we try and avoid it.

**5.6 Senator A. Breckon:**

Regarding the Waste for Energy plant, I wonder if the Minister could say if any commissioning is underway and when the plan will be on-load and if there is a timescale for the wind-down at Bellozanne.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

The E.f.W. (Energy from Waste) plant is under cold commissioning at present. We are proposing to start hot commissioning probably before the end of the year; maybe just at the start of January. In practice at the moment it is about 4 weeks behind but that could easily be caught up by the time it is due for handover in July. All is going well. We are eager to shut down the Bellozanne plant as soon as possible, but clearly that does rely on the satisfactory completion of the commissioning process.

**5.7 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Can the T.T.S. Minister confirm that there has been an additional C.C.T.V. (closed-circuit television) camera erected opposite the taxi rank at the Weighbridge and, if this is the case, was there any consultation done with the users, particularly taxi drivers, of that area?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, there has been a camera put up principally to try and monitor queue lengths to establish what changes we may need to do, if any. We have regular complaints about lack of taxis at the Weighbridge. Evidence tends to be anecdotal. It seemed to be the best idea to have some sort of recording equipment. This has been put in place and we will evaluate the responses from that in due course.

[16:45]

**5.7.1 Deputy M. Tadier:**

The second part of my question, was there any consultation taken with taxi drivers before that extra camera was put up? Sorry, Constable. The reason I ask is that I have had complaints that in fact taxi drivers were not informed of it and they feel it is an infringement of their privacy.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

No, I am responsible for managing the taxi ranks and will do so in the best effort appropriate. We have got no wish to spy on taxi drivers. We wish to encourage the business to provide a better service for the public. That is sometimes lacking and something I need to address.

**5.8 Senator T.J. Le Main:**

I have raised concerns in regard to D.V.S. (Driver and Vehicle Standards) in the way they administer Jersey current laws and policies which inhibit the introduction of small eco-friendly electric vehicles, *et cetera*. Would the Minister consider appointing a small independent working group to look at these issues, including commercial operator licences, and M.O.T.s which are being promoted by the motor trade to line their pockets? [**Members: Oh!**] Would the Minister consider appointing a small independent working party to look at all these issues please?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I think the answer in short is yes. I would just like to elaborate briefly to suggest that I did answer the Deputy last week with regard to the issue over small vehicles and the necessity to change the law should we so wish to accommodate them. In terms of commercial vehicle licensing, my department is keen to proceed on this basis; probably not on standard car testing at this stage. But certainly commercial vehicles are a concern and we expect to be following that up shortly. But I would be pleased to form a small working group from within States Members to follow this up.

### **5.9 Deputy A.E. Jeune:**

Could the Minister please tell us whether he is satisfied with the level of outsourcing that is done by his department where it is shown to be financially beneficial or does he consider there remains more scope for such outsourcing?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Generally I think my department - as will others - will outsource where appropriate. Clearly if we have got our own staff with the capability of undertaking projects they will be the first port of call. There are a lot of specialised areas that we do not have within the department and those will be the ones that we utilise. We will procure their services in the proper approved States manner.

### **5.10 The Deputy of St. John:**

Given the report of the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) on taxis and private hire, *et cetera*, will the department start actioning this work sooner rather than later or are we going to have to wait until 2015 as per the S.T.P. (Sustainable Transport Policy)?

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I think the Deputy is referring to the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority report rather than the C. and A.G. Yes, I think it is incumbent on me to respond sooner than later. I expect those involved in the industry would expect that to be done as well. The report was only produced I think on Friday so we will be looking into that in the next few weeks.

#### **The Bailiff:**

Any other questions? Very well then. We will call that to a close.