

5. Questions to Ministers without Notice - The Minister for Transport and Technical Services

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now come to questions to Ministers without notice. The first question period is for the Minister for Transport and Technical Services. I call on the Deputy of St. Mary.

5.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can the Minister give Members and the public a categorical assurance that fridges with the ozone-depleting substances which they contain are being processed in accordance with our international obligations?

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

Fridges are an expensive problem and at present, in order to satisfy international obligations, they are being exported. Prior to this, I have to say, they were dealt with in an unsatisfactory way down at Bellozanne. We are hoping to develop processes which will enable this to be done on-Island but at present there is a cost of some £10 a fridge to deal with them.

5.2 The Connétable of St. Mary:

In December 2008 the Minister briefly shared my enthusiasm for filter-in-turns. I wonder in the period since that time can he let me know how many new filter-in-turns he has authorised to be created? I mean particularly with reference to the Broad Street/Sand Street junction where there was previously apparently a free-for-all with only a merge it would have been an ideal situation, in my humble opinion for a filter-in-turn and now there is a yellow line and a stop.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No further filter-in-turn junctions have been put in place during my term of office but I am always prepared to consider suggestions that come forward.

5.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Could the Minister state before Members how his department will ensure there will be no waste electrical and electronic equipment in the waste stream entering the new incinerator as the bottom ash can only be reused as aggregate if it is relatively free from pollutants like heavy metals?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I can never be categorical with regard to what goes into the waste, but all we can do is educate and encourage the public to separate their waste at the kerbside to comply with the regulations with which we have to comply and I think by that education we can minimise the risk and thereby satisfy what the Deputy is asking. [Aside]

5.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I just clarify that there will be no additional checks made on site in the new incinerator?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, yes, in all practicalities the waste will be tipped straight from the kerbside collection vehicles into the pit so the sorting will need to be carried out at the kerbside, which is the responsibility of the household, but having said that maybe we should consider doing spot checks to ensure that the programmes we have put in place are complied with.

5.4 The Deputy of Grouville:

Could the Minister explain why there are bus shelters in storage around the Island and yet when I have asked continuously for my constituents to be furnished with bus shelters along Rue a Don, Grouville this has been denied?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The only bus shelters I am aware of around the Island are some ex-bus shelters from the old Weighbridge bus station which are significantly larger structures that are acquired on the roadside and obviously would not fit. To be more specific to the Deputy's request, the department is, I understand, putting in place the shelter which she requires and I would also add that there are shelters being required throughout the Island and we have to balance our budgets, but certainly I think hers is on the top of the list.

5.4.1 The Deputy of Grouville:

Could I press the Minister for some form of timeframe please, because I have been promised these shelters for years now, literally years?

[12:00]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I can say months. I will be more specific with the Deputy later once I confirm that, but certainly I am aware that it is very close to implementation.

5.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Back to the issue of waste electronic equipment, the Minister said that the way that it would be regulated would be through kerbside collection. Can the Minister confirm that first of all on an Island-wide basis not every Parish, in fact the minority of Parishes, have kerbside sorting and, secondly, can he confirm or otherwise that the incinerator will not be able to take these goods until an actual Island-wide kerbside collection is put in place first to ensure none of these nefarious products do end up in the waste cycle?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, I think that is an impractical suggestion. In truth I think, as I alluded to before, it is important that we work with householders to ensure that waste is separated and make it easy for them to do so by providing alternative places such as Bellozanne to deposit their waste which can easily be recycled. I take the Deputy's point, but we have extremely good filtering systems at the new plant which will prevent any pollution emanating from the chimney, but I am conscious that we do need to work on our new solid waste strategy towards the goals that I indicate.

5.6 Deputy J.B. Fox:

The Minister has indicated that his department will be holding a public meeting for the residents of Bellozanne and the surrounding area on proposed improvements that the department is planning to make within that area, and then recently they were also concerned as to what the timescale is for the removal of the existing Energy from Waste plant once the new one is... and what is going to be its replacement. Perhaps the Minister could indicate a timescale for the proposal. I would be grateful.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am expecting there to be changes at Bellozanne and the present digesters of green tanks situated to the west of the road will be moved to the middle of the site as a part of an eventual rearrangement down there to satisfy the odour control requirements which the Deputy knows much about. The job for this will be going out to tender probably next month and I expect to be holding a meeting with the local residents before the end of the year.

5.7 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Wearing his T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) hat, could the Minister comment on whether his department was fully consulted about the plans for St. Aubin's Bay which involves the creation of a remarkable number of new parking spaces?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, and my department does not support the proposals in any shape or form.

5.8 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

On 16th November this Chamber will be debating the sustainable transport policy. Will the Minister encourage all States Members to walk, cycle and bus in the week before this debate so that Members are fully aware of the implications that this will have on people's lives should the States choose to inflict this policy on Islanders?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I thank the Deputy for his suggestion and would encourage Members so to do.

5.9 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

I wonder if the Minister can explain why concessionaries and residents in the area of Havre des Pas were not consulted about the work carried out there recently in the area and the building of an emergency access road and why they were informed about this on B.B.C. Jersey radio and that T.T.S. were building a cycle track? Is it a cycle track, or is it an emergency road for the E.f.W. (Energy for Waste) plant and will it be sufficient, given its narrow width?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Like all these things, the story is slightly ahead of itself in that as soon as men with reflective coats were spotted it was assumed everything was happening, but in truth the engineers were there trying to design the emergency access road to the fuel farm area and to consider the presence of a cycle track. The situation is that the proposal is not yet finalised and not yet designed, but as soon as they are those concessionaires and those with an interest will be invited to comment and their comments will be considered, but the end goal is to achieve a cycle track around the back of Havre des Pas.

5.9.1 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

Can I just have a supplementary on that, Sir? Does the Minister not consider that in the planning of the E.f.W. plant it is a bit late in the day to start planning now an emergency road? Should it not have been considered much earlier?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It was, in fact, after the original planning briefs and approved by Planning at that time, but the access road is primarily for the fuel farm access, not the E.f.W. plant.

5.10 Connétable G.F. Butcher of St. John:

It seems to me an eternity ago that a panel that I chaired looking at the speed limits in the Island put some recommendations forward. I would like to ask the Minister if he could give an indication when this is likely to come before the Assembly. **[Laughter]**

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I thank the Connétable for that point. The draft proposition will be presented to me on Friday and I suspect I will approve it then and it should be lodged pretty well straight after, so I expect it will come for debate soon after the 6-week lodging period.

5.11 Senator P.F. Routier:

Following on from Deputy De Sousa's question about Havre des Pas, can the Minister reassure me and Members that the historical appearance of the promenade will be retained in the future, once the promenade is altered?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it is essential that the appearance of the promenade be enhanced. It is not pretty or tidy in certain areas and I would suggest that any work we do will be an improvement to the area.

5.12 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

A number of weeks ago I asked the Minister to let us know what the timescale was in relation to the demolition of Bellozanne incinerator and its removal and what would be being burnt in it until its demolition and the answers he gave us was up until 2012 it would continue to operate as normal. Therefore, I am going to ask him this morning, how can people who are operating that plant be trained up to operate the new plant, given that they are going to be continuing to work in the old plant? Does this mean that the new plant will be outsourced for its operation?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

To answer the first part of the Deputy's question the plant will run, as I suggested previously, as normal until it is decommissioned. In terms of the staffing there has been considerable negotiation with the staff presently working down at the E.f.W. plant and conclusions have been achieved, I think yesterday, to an agreement whereby certain staff working down there will retire and others will move on to the new plant. Training will take place. The operation will be carried out by T.T.S. staff.

5.13 The Deputy of St. John:

Is the Minister aware that the current bus routes, many people living in the country live at least one mile, and further, away from their closest bus stop? Will he give serious consideration to putting one or 2 bus shelters out into the country for those people who have very limited bus services?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, we continually answer requests for bus services and I think primarily one has to focus on areas of priority in numbers, but should the Deputy have any particular areas which he feels are worthy of consideration I would please ask him to submit them to me.

5.14 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

I was very pleased to receive the Connex timetable and to note that we now have a bus that will take people to the airport for the first plane out in the morning, but my question to the Minister is, was it his department who were involved in making that happen and, if so, will they continue to see that it comes in next summer as well?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It was me, and if I am still in office, yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There is just time perhaps for a double-dip from the Deputy of St. Mary.

5.15 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can the Minister explain how the incinerator will start operation without a constructed emergency access for emergency vehicles, which was part of the planning conditions, as I understand it?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I would expect the emergency access route to be completed by the time that the E.f.W. plant is ready to commission in the middle of next year.

5.16 The Connétable of St. Mary:

The Minister has answered about bus shelters, but does the Minister agree that while these are important, perhaps even of greater value from a safety point of view would be the provision of refuges, by which I mean somewhere safe away from the traffic that someone can stand? I make particular reference to St. Peter's Valley where a number of bus stops are against hard granite walls with no pavement, no lighting, and nowhere to go in the event that a car does not see you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You are using up the Minister's answer time.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Some bus shelters are easier to achieve than others where the States own the property. Where there are property acquisition issues involved it becomes more difficult; notwithstanding that we are always prepared to try.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That brings the questions for the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to an end.