

2.13 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the proposed new charging system for Sand Street car park:

With regard to the proposed new charging system for Sand Street Car Park, will the Minister explain exactly how the charges are to be levied and the cost involved in so doing, the benefit of running 2 different parking schemes simultaneously, and whether he foresees any problems arising from the use of the facility for hire cars, non-local vehicles and those with trade plates?

Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

This is really a 4-part question and I will do my best to answer in the time allowed. The new trial payment system registers a number plate and time of entry to the car park. On your return to the car having done your shopping, or whatever, you will go to the pay station, enter your registration number and the machine tells you how much you owe. You pay, rejoin your vehicle and leave the car park. You do not have to predict how long you want to stay. At the beginning of the trial, we will be taking on Advance to Work trainees to help explain the system at the pay station. Sand Street is a shoppers' car park and it is important that spaces for short-stay parking are always available. However, you will now be able to park for longer than 3 hours but the charging rates have been set to dissuade commuter and long-stay parking. Charges for the first 3 hours of parking will be as they are now, at one unit per hour, which is currently 71p. But if you stay longer, it is more expensive. For example, if you stay for a fourth hour, that extra hour would cost you 2 units, so you would be charged 5 units for 4 hours. The purchase and installation cost of hardware and software is £101,000 but there is a buy-back clause for hardware if it proves necessary at the end of the trial. The benefit of the trial is for us to gauge public perception, collect and analyse the data and find out if this technology is a suitable replacement for the pay card system in all our multi-storey car parks. We do not foresee any problems with hire cars and non-local vehicles, *et cetera*; as long as they have a number plate, the system will register them, and all pay stations will be multi-lingual.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, do you wish to have a supplementary?

2.13.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I thank the Minister for his answer and, yes, I have read in the Consumer Council the way that it is supposed to work. It seems to me this new system may be appealing but there are a number of potential issues that have been overlooked. Is this not just swapping one problem for another: worrying about overstaying your pay card will be replaced by having to go to a machine each time in order to pay? I ask the Minister, has he considered the danger involved in drivers wandering around the car park in order to pay their fees, whereas previously they just go straight to their vehicle, especially if they are accompanied by children?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

No. When you drive into the car park, you leave your car there. The computer has registered your number plate and you would go off, do whatever you need to do in town, you will return and enter your number into the machine (which you will be doing at the entrance) and then you go and pick up your car. There are several ways of payment, of course: one can open an account or have cards that can be inserted into the machine. As I say, there will be people there to explain it for you. Obviously, at the start of any system there will be questions, but I do not foresee any problems.

2.13.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister acknowledge that demand and the dynamics of whether people want 3-hour parking for shopping or whether they want long-stay parking for work, *et cetera*, will depend on which day of the week it is? For example, one would expect fewer people to need to work at the

weekends. Does he also accept that Sand Street will be used by workers who simply currently go back and change their pay cards every 3 hours, perhaps 2 or 3 times a day while they are at work? What steps does he anticipate taking if the demand is shown to be otherwise than what the department currently estimate it to be?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As I pointed out previously, we are trying to dissuade any long-stay parking. As I have already pointed out, one hour will be one unit, 2 hours will be 2 units, 3 hours 3 units, 4 hours will be 5 units and up to 5 hours will be 8 units. So that will dissuade anybody trying to use it as a long-stay car park. It will be beneficial to the public, in my opinion, to use this particular system as opposed to the old pay card system, as there will be no risk of getting a parking ticket on returning to your car, it would just be an extra unit or so. I should say that T.T.S. will be losing money on this project because no one will be receiving parking fines but, in my opinion, it is for the public good.

2.13.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

A supplementary, Sir. They will not be getting parking fines but they may get a bill for parking which is the equivalent of what a parking fine would be if they forget or are unaware that they left their car there. But the question is that there are people who use Sand Street Car Park for going to work because there are not necessarily sufficient spaces close enough to where they work. I note that also States Members also use Sand Street Car Park and they can park there as long as they like for free. So there is an issue that needs to be addressed there. Does the Minister accept that, given this fact, there will be an issue when those workers (who are probably many) using Sand Street Car Park who are currently are not being charged at what one would consider a punitive rate, do start getting charged a very high rate for paying to work? Does he anticipate a contingency for that backlash?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I am not anticipating people using it as a long-stay car park and paying the excess as there is Pier Road nearby, which will be charged at a standard rate. As I say, this is experimental and we will be exploring and examining all the data after several months.

2.13.4 Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I applaud this initiative; the only criticism is it is long overdue. Would the Minister inform the Assembly whether there is a similar scheme to trial this with on-street parking and, if not, would he undertake to look into that?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

We have looked into this and at this moment in time it would not be cost effective as you would need to have cameras on every street registering the data from all the vehicles, so that really would not be possible. But we are looking to roll this out to all of our multi-storey car parks should it prove successful.

2.13.5 Senator L.J. Farnham:

A supplementary, if I may, Sir? Would he consider then a slightly different scheme as run in many cities in Europe where a metre is provided at roadsides so motorists could park and pay for 2, 3 or 4 hours? I know it is still predictive parking, but I think it is much more appropriate than the pay card system.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think we are just going to stick with this one for the time being. Obviously, we would like to keep to a cashless system for reasons of security but everything is on the table.

The Bailiff:

Do you wish to have a final question, Deputy Baudains?

2.13.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Thank you, Sir. I believe I heard the Minister correctly when he said it was £100,000 for the trial. It does seem to be an expensive trial. He also, if I heard him correctly, presumes that a motorist returning to the car park to collect his car will go to a machine and type in a number, or something, and pay. That obviously presumes the driver knows the registration number of his car. I do not think there are many that do, so there will be people wandering round the car park. Previously, ensuring charges were paid was done by traffic wardens inspecting pay cards on display. I want the Minister to explain how compliance will be achieved in future. What happens if the machine get a number wrong (I know they do, from my experience in France) or someone drives out without paying, perhaps with an English number plate? In other words, how will this be policed and how much more is the policing going to cost than the present system?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

When somebody buys a pre-payment card or pays, *et cetera*, the machine will show a picture, there is a montage there that will show a picture of your car, so you could recognise it. Alternatively, if you have a prepaid card, you can write your registration number on it and, if you have an account, then your registration will already be logged.

Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

And the extra costs of the administration?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It will be minimal because we will not have to have so many wardens wandering around.