

## **2.7 Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the introduction of revised licensing legislation:**

Would the Minister advise Members when the revised licensing legislation will come before the Assembly?

### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Economic Development):**

Delivering a simplified modern and flexible Liquor Licensing Law is well overdue and remains a priority of my department. However, in order to ensure that the new law is part of the wider States strategy on alcohol, I am working with the Ministers for Home Affairs, Health and Social Services and Treasury and Resources to bring forward a joint strategy which not only deals with licensing but also public safety and public health. The timescale of work in this area is currently dependent therefore on a number of departments. That said, good progress is being made and I am confident that joint proposals for future alcohol and licensing policy will be published soon. This will include a Licensing Law White Paper and the new legislation should then be lodged for debate in early 2013.

### **2.7.1 Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Does the Minister agree that it should perhaps be given even more of a priority than its current position, given the increasing problems of alcohol due to the high costs of the Health Service and could he elaborate on when soon may well be?

### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

Yes, I would agree with the Deputy that this is a serious issue in terms of alcohol abuse. Certainly the Health Department feel very strongly. They have an alcohol strategy which they are bringing forward, which will assist with this issue. It is not just the licensing legislation. Clearly it is a number of areas that need to conspire in order to try and tackle alcohol abuse within the Island, particularly underage drinking which is a problem and does need to be addressed. As far as specifics, it is a matter of weeks in terms of publishing further details. The White Paper, for example, the legislation, as I have said needs to go to law drafting and that is why I have said the beginning of 2013 is when I hope we will be in a position to lodge for debate the new Licensing Law.

### **2.7.2 The Connétable of St. John:**

Given this new Licensing Law is in the process of being reviewed, will the Minister make sure that it is reviewed along with the Taxi Law? A lot of the problems that have arisen over recent years, since the law was last reviewed by the then Tourism Department - which comes under his remit - back in the 1990s, and a lot of problems at the Weighbridge and in outlying areas were caused because there was not the joined up thinking between the 2 departments. Would he give that some thought?

### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

One of the reasons for delay is that it has been so joined up across many departments, clearly it takes a little longer to get these matters progressed. That is regrettable and indeed, I might add, not an acceptable answer, but just a fact. With regard to the taxi issue, there was, of course, a Green Paper, which covered a number of areas. I will check on the results with regard to taxis. I do not know whether the now Connétable was involved in the Green Paper consultation, whether he fed into that, but I am happy to supply him with any results that came through as a result of the Green Paper that was consulted on last year.

### **2.7.3 The Connétable of St. John:**

Will the Minister please confirm that he will look at the Taxi Law in relation to this because they are very close together? A lot of the problems arise because there has been no joined up thinking between the 2 areas of pubs or discos that empty out at a certain time. You want to make sure

there are sufficient taxis on the rank to clear the people. This is where a lot of the problems have arisen, having been at both ends of the spectrum when we put the law in place and previous to that when I was in the Honorary Police.

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

The Connétable's point is well made. It is not directly involved within the Licensing Law but it is relevant and I will certainly ensure that it is taken into consideration.

**2.7.4 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour:**

The Green Paper was completed in 2009 and it has taken 3 years to get to this stage. Could the Minister confirm that this was due to departments not being able to agree and not being able to compromise on a way forward? If so, what is the Minister doing differently to bring this forward within the next 3 years?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

Yes, that is broadly correct. I would not disagree with that point. However, as I made the comment in my opening answer, there is now good progress being made and the fact that the departments are operating together whereas they were not before. There was more of a silo operation previously. That is not the case now. I am very encouraged by the very constructive way in which the departments that I have mentioned are working together to try and find a solution. I believe the timescales that I have outlined are realistic. I am certainly determined and I know the other Ministers are determined and the Chief Minister has been watching with a beady eye as well to ensure that we progress this matter.

**2.7.5 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:**

Could the Minister, if and when he does look into the taxi problem to do with the licensing, also look into the fees for the taxi marshals and so that every Parish contributes? As they leave St. Helier to go to every other Parish and it is St. Helier and the Minister for Home Affairs who pay for it at the moment.

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

I believe this is straying way out of the question and also my remit. I do not have my sticky fingers in so many pots but I will certainly pass it on to the relevant Minister.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Just to thank the Minister and assure him that we will all be watching him with our beady eyes.  
[Laughter]