

2.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the quality of road resurfacing and trench reinstatement by utility companies:

Given the tone of the last question, I wonder if the Minister for Treasury and Resources should, in fact, be answering this. Is the Minister satisfied with the quality of road resurfacing via his department and trench reinstatement via utility companies and if not, would he advise what action he intends to take?

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

In general I am satisfied with the quality of resurfacing and trench reinstatement on the Island's main roads. The department has practices and procedures which specify the quality required by the contractors undertaking the works, and the rectification process, that they should achieve the desired standard of finish. In the majority of instances, the contractors achieve the department's required standard but on a small number of occasions, they do not. Where this happens, there is a clear mechanism for ensuring that substandard work is rectified at the contractor's expense. The recently completed La Rue de la Hougue Bie resurfacing project had a number of snagging items which the contractor has been made aware of and will repair at his own cost. Repairs are due to be carried out in coming weeks.

2.6.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

As an example, the Rue des Prés road is a suspension-testing course but I do not see that his department is requiring that to be resurfaced. Would the Minister agree with me that the standard requirement has dropped and that the way roads are now resurfaced is a different way to the way it used to be and as a result, the quality is not what it used to be? Why is that happening and why is the department not addressing it?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, La Rue de la Hougue Bie has been made aware to me and officers are investigating this particular road.

2.6.2 The Connétable of St. John:

Given that a number of main arteries into St. Helier have been resurfaced over the last 5 to 7 years, will the Minister please explain how come Queens Road, for instance, has had its manholes lifted on several occasions because of failing asphalt and I note, even again this morning on my way in, that the manholes have been boxed again in yellow paint because a number of holes are appearing yet again. Can it be right and are the States picking up the bill for this maintenance work or is this being done under the original contractor's warranty?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Repairs of this kind are guaranteed for 12 months. With the new Street Works Law, which will be coming in the middle of next year, that will be extended to 3 years. If the roads are handed back to the States, they will be guaranteed for 3 years and any repairs will be taking place at the contractor's expense.

2.6.3 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour:

Could the Minister advise how he knows that it is the fault of the contractor, and not the officer's advice given from the department via the policy and procedures laid out?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The procedures are very clearly laid down. I would be more than happy to get a copy to the Deputy.

2.6.4 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

It is fine to have policy and procedures laid out, but it is how they are implemented. How would the Minister know whether it was the contractor's fault or the officer's way of implementing those policies and procedures?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It is all very closely monitored but there are occasions where trenching is done without the knowledge of the department, or should I say they are reinstated without an officer present. This will be covered in the new Street Works Law where it will be clearly laid down.

2.6.5 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Considering the roads on Victoria Avenue and so on, it is said that the guaranteed lifetime of the repairs on those was a number of years, I am told 20 years, rather than the normal 30. Would the Minister like to confirm this?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I believe that to be the case.

2.6.6 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Does this not mean then that the quality of the road covering is not up to standard?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I need to check up on that with the department but as far as I am concerned, the covering itself was up to standard but there was an awful lot of drainage work taking place besides the actual road covering, and there was also some lane reconfiguration.

2.6.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Could the Minister assure the Assembly that the process used in resurfacing roads will revert to the original more satisfactory process where it was laid in 2 layers instead of the one layer they are doing now? On trench reinstatement, can he assure this Assembly that his officers are monitoring trench reinstatement so that it is compacted and it is level as they go, because I do not believe there are any utility trench reinstatements being satisfactorily monitored by his department?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It is monitored by the department but, as I have stated, sometimes the trench is reinstated without an officer present. This will be covered by the new Street Works Law coming in the middle of next year where they will be legally obliged.