

2016.04.12

4.10 Deputy R. Labey of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Island's legal limit of 250 watts power output for electric bikes:

Does the Minister consider that the ... I am so sorry, that is not my question. [Laughter] I am sorry, I will read that again. Is the Minister satisfied that the Island's legal limit of 250 watts power output is keeping pace with developments in the manufacture of electric bikes?

Deputy E.J. Noel (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I and my department are fully supportive of electric bikes, so much so that we are working with local suppliers to launch a scheme in the coming months to support and promote their usage as an attractive alternative to using the car. There continues to be rapid change in technology and it is important that appropriate regulation governing the use of these vehicles is kept under constant review and remains fit for purpose, something in fact that we are already doing. However, we also need to act responsibly. With regard to speed class machines, which have a continuous power output of over 250 watts and a top speed of up to 28 miles per hour, we believe that, at this time, it is appropriate to continue to categorise them as low-performance mopeds, or, depending on the motor rating, as conventional mopeds, which require type approval. This classification requires the compulsory wearing of a helmet, insurance, driving licence, and age limit, as well as, in some cases, number plates. This is entirely consistent with both the U.K. and the E.U. (European Union) position and will, of course, remain under review. When our electric bike scheme is in fact introduced, hopefully prior to the summer recess, I would like to invite the Deputy to take part in our pilot testing and our promotional events.

4.10.1 Deputy R. Labey:

I thank the Minister for that. So, if my 350 watt electric bike goes no faster than the Minister's 250 watt bike, but gets me up South Hill with greater ease, and I might even be able to overtake him on Mont Félard, is it not ridiculous that I cannot legally take my 350 watt bike on the road?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

You can legally take your 350 watt bike on the road, providing it is type approved and providing you have the appropriate insurance, helmets, *et cetera*, you are entitled to do so. What you are not allowed to do is to take it on a cycle path or a shared-use path, because these machines do travel at speeds greater than a normal electrically-assisted cycle, and experience elsewhere in the world, China, for example, is the largest market by an enormous amount for the electric cycles, and they are experiencing difficulties with increased injuries by the mixing of these 2 different types of vehicles.

[11:00]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Final supplementary. Very well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think there is a problem with you seeing my light today. I did have it on.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. I apologise for that, Deputy. If you shined your light, for some reason I do not appear to ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

That is all right.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Sorry, did you have a question then?

4.10.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, sorry, I hope it is not too far away from the original, but it relates specifically to the matter of Segways. Could the Minister confirm whether, under Jersey Law, it is possible to have Segways on the road and, if not, does he agree that we could be missing a trick because these seem to be ideally suited for some of the transport needs and indeed some of the tourist needs that could potentially arise in our Island?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

It is my understanding that such machines are not allowed on our roads or indeed our cycle tracks and shared spaces with pedestrians. I am open minded, we can look at that again, but I do not believe that in other jurisdictions they are welcomed either.

4.10.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I was not specifically talking about roads, but I have certainly been on holiday and seen Segways being used perhaps in parks or in open areas where bicycles and pedestrians are. Could the Minister clarify that or confirm that he would give that some consideration?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

As I have already said, I do not believe it is currently allowable under our legislation but, as I said, I am open-minded, I am willing to look at it, and if it is deemed safe to do so then we may progress the matter further.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Did you then have a final supplementary, Deputy?

Deputy R. Labey:

No, Sir, no need to labour the point on this one, I think.