

3.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding road safety around parks and schools:

Following the recent fatal accident near Millennium Park, what measures will the Minister take across the Island to improve road safety for children and other pedestrians, particularly around parks and schools?

[15:00]

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

Improving road safety for our children and other pedestrians, particularly around parks and schools, has been and will continue to be one of my key priorities. For example, during the past 2 years my Assistant Minister and I have delivered significant road safety improvements around many of the Island's schools such as St. Mary, St. Lawrence, St. Martin, Bel Royal and Grouville Primary Schools as well as outside De La Salle and Beaulieu. Over the remaining life of this M.T.F.P., naturally subject to Members supporting the funding as proposed later this week, I will continue to prioritise road safety for other children and for other pedestrians as this is some of our most important work. A full list of the schemes delivered during my term in office as the Minister for Infrastructure to date and those actively being developed for implementation during the remainder of this M.T.F.P. - again subject to funding - will be distributed to Members later this afternoon.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Senator, I think we had the benefit of hearing from your iPad once again and I wonder if it could be switched off. If you cannot control it, if you could switch off. Thank you very much, and thank you for your further contribution to the fund.

3.3.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

A supplementary? I thank the Minister for his response and I ask because this area is of increased public concern at the moment. It is always a concern in our Parish of St. Saviour, and I seem to have had had an increase of constituents requesting that changes happen immediately. I think people understand that there are things planned but is there any way the Minister can bring forward some of these planned changes so that we can avoid any further fatalities. Also regarding the list of planned improvements, it would be lovely to have for Members but could the public see that list as well so that they can perhaps be reassured about some of the things that are being planned?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

If I can take the last bit first; absolutely, I intend to publish that list. Only earlier this morning, I signed off the Ministerial Decision to build a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Chasse Brunet and Deloraine Road, which will enable the children at Grainville and at FCJ to safely cross St. Saviour's main road.

3.3.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

The Minister very kindly met with myself and the Head of Haute Vallée School earlier this year to discuss road safety improvements. I am a little bit disappointed to see that the only road safety improvement that has taken place at the particular crossing opposite the Pet Cabin is a flashing school children sign, which from the west side at New St. John's Road ... if you come from the Queen's Road end there is no indication whatsoever that children cross there. So I would like to ask the Minister if he could go back to his department and relook at what they have put in place and improvement on it, please. Thank you.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Deputy Hilton is referring to signage that has been there for a considerable amount of time. It has been there for several years. I have been advised by my officers that the new signage creating a temporary 20 mile an hour limit for that stretch of road while the schools are arriving in the morning and leaving in the afternoon, is now in Island and waiting to be put into place in the coming weeks.

3.3.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

A supplementary. When I have driven past the school at 8.00 a.m. that sign does not work or maybe it does not start working until much later. It needs to be working much earlier - if it does - than it is currently.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Hilton, was there a question there?

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Could the Minister please go back to the department and ask them to look at that?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I will pass that information on. It is to the school because it is the school that controls the timings of the warning lights. Again, I repeat, new signage will be going in place there and that will become a new 20 mile an hour zone during school pick up and drop off times.

3.3.4 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:

When I was Minister for Transport and Technical Services I made the order to put the 20 mile an hour signs with flashing lights outside of the Island's primary schools. Given the level of accidents that we are having in St. Saviour and St. Helier, Mont Millais, Vic College, J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) and the surrounding area, does the Minister think there is a case for extending this to secondary schools. There are flashing lights outside of Vic College but that is just to warn that schools are coming out. There is not a 20 mile an hour zone.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I am surprised by Deputy Lewis that he does not know that exactly is one of the measures that we are going to be bringing in in the road safety plan for all of the schools around St. Saviour. We have had several meeting with the Parish and Parish officials over that and that is one of the phases that we are going to be delivering in the next 2 or 3 years. Yes, that area, all around the colleges will be, during school pick up and drop off time, a 20 mile an hour zone.

3.3.5 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The example that is referred to by Deputy Doublet in this original question is in my constituency and I know that the campaigners have been frustrated at how long they feel that it has taken to find a solution to this. Broadly speaking, does the Minister agree that it would be a good idea to devolve more powers to the Parishes so that they can take on issues like this when people come to them and express their concerns, because they are closest to the local communities, know the views of the people there who see these problems day-to-day and anticipate where there might be a dangerous circumstance? Would he support devolving more authority to the Parishes so they can deal with that and do things a bit more quickly?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

While the police investigation is ongoing I will not make any type of statement on the Tunnel Street incident other than to express my deepest condolences to the family of Clinton Pringle. I would remind Members that, in fact, Tunnel Street is already a Parish by-road.

3.3.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Minister state whether or not there is an ongoing review into Island-wide speed limits and, if not, is that something that the Minister may be putting on the table shortly?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

It has been discussed over the last year or so. We have had 2 workshops with the 13 road authorities and the 13 police forces in this Island because the public infrastructure only makes up one of those authorities. Yes, it has been discussed and there has been general agreement to implement 20 mile an hour speed limits within the centres and for the benefit of those in St. Helier No. 1 District, that will include the Havre des Pas area. So, yes, we have been discussing that with the Constables, with their road committees and with their Chefs de Police, along with the States police.

3.3.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

Just to clarify, it can be confusing for your average member of the public if they want to make an enquiry or suggestion when it comes to road safety and speed limits, given the fact that there are, as the Minister says, 13 road committees effectively, if you like, in the Island, not to mention the increasing number of quangos that have land in Jersey as well. If a member of the public does have a concern or a suggestion about a particular speed limit or road safety concern on a road, whom should they contact in the first instance? Can the Minister ensure that he will pass on those concerns?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

That is a very good question from Deputy Tadier and I would encourage Islanders to download the Love Jersey app, to take their phone and to take an image of the area that they are concerned about because that will automatically be directed to the appropriate roads authority.

3.3.8 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Minister for his answers. Just to further press him on the planned improvements in St. Saviour and other improvements, is there any scope for the Minister to bring those forward at all so that we can avoid further accidents and also could we have a timescale on when the 20 mile an hour limit outside the secondary schools will be in place, please?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The department is spending just short of £900,000 for the previous year, this year and for 2017 and 2018, particularly in St. Saviour. The 20 mile speed limits are designed to be coming into place hopefully next year. By that I mean 2017. So we will hopefully see significant improvement in the pick up and drop off times and road safety around all of St. Saviour's secondary schools.