

2019.05.21

7 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding improvements to St. John's Road: (OQ.125/2019)

Will the Minister advise whether the preparatory work on new improvements to St. John's Road will start in November this year?

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

In the summer of 2018, we identified the need to review St. Aubin's Inner Road and St. John's Road. The department does not have the resources to undertake both reviews simultaneously, so St. Aubin's Inner Road was prioritised, as the collision record was of greater concern. We plan to have proposals for St. Aubin's Inner Road ready by late summer and hope to hand over to the design and construction team. This will then free up time to start looking at St. John's Road. We hope that this will be able to start preparation works in September, so we can run the initial consultation in November 2019. However, we do not want to run it too close to Christmas, as people have other things on their mind, so if preparation work does not start in October/November, this could slip into January 2020.

4.7.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like to ask the Minister to reconsider and work with the team to ensure that consultation will start in November 2019, taking into account that the first request for improvement for St. John's Road was submitted to the Parish in 1994 and the Minister has this document, we are talking about 25 years. From September it is slipping to November and now to Christmas and I would like to check if it is possible to stick with November 2019 and not to slip to 2020.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, that is our intention. As I say, we do have limited resources, but to the best of my recollection there were 5 reported collisions on St. John's Road - reported collisions being reported to the police where someone is injured - and 24 on St. Aubin's Inner Road. So, St. Aubin's Inner Road has taken priority, but we would wish to move on to St. John's Road as soon as possible.

4.7.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

What does the Minister attribute the much higher rate of collisions on St. Aubin's Inner Road to?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

All that will come out in the review that the team is doing now. That is why it is being reviewed. We would like slower speeds, possibly more crossings, but the team will determine that.

4.7.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

May I ask, is it not obvious that the reason there are more collisions on St. Aubin's Inner Road is the fact that cars are allowed to park on what is, effectively, a main road, so that other cars have to overtake going on to the other side of the road where there is simply not enough space? Is that something that needs review or just ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I let the first supplementary go, but this one is all about work on improvements to St. John's Road and not the cause for accidents on St. Aubin's Road.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If I can rephrase, it seems to me that if the Minister and his department does not have a basic understanding of road collisions and if road collisions are the basis for prioritising one road over another, in this case St. John's Road, then it seems to me that these kind of issues will not be resolved until that basic understanding is grasped.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The question was?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister agree that there are obvious reasons why there is a higher rate of collisions on St. Aubin's Inner Road than on St. John's?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

That is something the team, who are experts in this field, will determine. We have people that have been doing this for many years, some have been with us for 25 years, some have been up to 40 years and they are experts in this field and they will determine what is safe and what is not.

4.7.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

In answer to Deputy Tadier, it is really the volume and the speed of vehicles on the Inner Road and I am saying that as the Deputy for the area.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Higgins, this is a question for the Minister for Infrastructure, not an answer to Deputy Tadier's question.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I accept that; I feel I must.

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, in accordance with Standing Orders, if you could just ask a question of the Minister that would be right.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I was just moving to do that. Would the Minister not agree?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I thank Deputy Higgins for his comments. He is, indeed, Deputy for the area and indeed a resident of the area, so he is fully conversant with the problems there.

4.7.5 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I know and nobody disputes that the Inner Road would take priority over St. John's Road and once the plans will be submitted in summer, I hope the 3 months will be sufficient to prepare consultation for St. John's Road.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The question was?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would it be sufficient, 3 months, to prepare consultation?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

All being well it will be sufficient. However, as the Minister for Infrastructure, I have to work closely with my team and we prioritise roads that need attention. But I work at the discretion of this Assembly; if someone should bring a proposition directing me otherwise, which is in the pipeline, then there is a possibility that this could be delayed. We do have propositions that would wish to direct me in other directions.