

2019.11.25

6 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the safety of the Island's bus shelters: (OQ.288/2019)

What actions, if any, are being taken to improve the safety around bus shelters, particularly at night and for those in more remote locations; and if none, will the Minister commit to review the situation?

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

Most shelters are equipped with street lighting and, therefore, are illuminated by existing lamp columns, some also have internal illumination. The main reason for lighting bus shelters would be to enhance passenger amenity, for example, by making it easier to read the timetable display. Where an issue is raised, I am more than happy to look at installing lighting.

3.6.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

We are in this situation again where I feel I should ask the same question again. Are there any actions to review other areas of safety around late night bus shelters, for example some form of accessibility, or C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television), around certain areas, in order to reassure people that they are safe in getting late night buses?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Quite a complex question in a way. There are C.C.T.V.s that cover many of the town bus stops, but of the shelters administered by Infrastructure - which are 77 - there are 5 that are internally illuminated, 53 that are covered by street lamp columns and unlit 19. However, I do not administer all of the shelters, there are other bodies, such as Ports of Jersey and, indeed, many Parishes have their own, in which case there are 19 additional shelters, of which internally illuminated 2, nearby street lamp 12 and unlit 5. So, the total of bus stops in use comes to 811.

3.6.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am worried about the lack of empathy that might have been shown by the Minister. Clearly, the context of this question is one about a recent occasion where a young woman got raped in Grouville at a dark bus stop and the question of lighting is not there to talk about whether, or not, bus travellers can read a bus timetable, it is about safety. Will he address the issue? It is clearly easy to be wise in hindsight, but it is also clear that outside of St. Helier C.C.T.V. is not widely used and would having better lighting combined, perhaps, with C.C.T.V. either prevent this kind of recurrence happening, or at least facilitate the capture of a rapist, who is still out there at large?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Pretty appalling assertion, if I may say so. I have complete empathy with the victim of the recent crime. I deliberately avoided talking about it, because it is a live investigation, so we must allow the police to do their work. Already I have been in communication - or the Constable of Grouville has been in communication - with me, so should it be desirable, lighting can be installed at that particular stop. We have ascertained that there are cables running very nearby and should it be found desirable we would indeed put it in. But that there is no empathy is completely out of order.

3.6.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Looking at the original question, it is about safety overall and, of course, safety at bus shelters is not just about safety from the actions of humans, it is also about safety with regard to the traffic and

accessing that bus stop. With this in mind, would the Minister - and this is a very specific question ... the Minister's officers have already agreed with me that there is a bus shelter at the top of La Ville Emphrie in St. Lawrence where access is via a bank, because there is no pavement and children and adults are both in danger of slipping, particularly in the very wet weather we have at the moment, into the traffic when it is icy and wet. Will the Minister commit to reviewing the access to that particular bus stop in the next prioritisation round, ensuring that Islanders and parishioners of St. Lawrence are able to access that particular bus stop safely?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

We will use our best endeavours to make sure all bus stops are in a safe location. There may need to be a certain amount of land acquisition, but we are more than happy to do that, so I will put that in the programme. Also, we have 7 proposed new bus shelters going up shortly, Bagatelle Road, southwest bound near the Bagatelle junction, the La Rue le Masurier, La Grande Route des Sablons, Grouville, Le Route de St. Aubin westbound and Clarke Avenue eastbound is the next *tranche*. But, as I say, we have many stops there and we are trying to put up as many shelters as we can and we will do our best endeavours to keep the public safety with lighting, or whatever measures are needed to keep the public safe.

3.6.4 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Just purely confirmation: I understood the Minister to say that he would put that particular bus stop into the programme in the next round of prioritisation; would he confirm that is the case?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I will put that forward to the prioritisation with our road safety panel, which is an internal panel within Infrastructure, for prioritisation.

3.6.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can we just expand the question a little and ask the Minister what plans he has in hand to improve safety at bus shelters?

[15:45]

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I thought we had just covered that. I am not sure what more I can add. We work under advice, we have not had anything from the police yet. As I say, it is a live investigation, so I do not want to go over that ground again, but we want to make sure the public are safe and we will do whatever is necessary to keep the public safe.

Deputy M. Tadier:

May I apologise to the Minister for implying, or suggesting, that he is not empathetic. I know that is not the case, he is and I just clearly wanted an answer to the underlying question. So, I apologise to the Minister for that.

3.6.6 The Connétable of Grouville:

As the Minister mentioned, I have been in discussions with him about providing lighting at that particular bus stop. I think lighting will make people feel safe, but had lighting been present before that terrible incident, how likely does he think the crime would have stopped, or not happened at all?

The Bailiff:

I am not sure the Minister can answer that question.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Sorry, that is impossible to answer but, as I say, whatever makes the public safe and feel safe. I would be more than happy to put on that lighting.

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

Will the Minister ensure that when and if lights are put up, or shelters, or where the bus stops are ...

The Bailiff:

Deputy, I had overlooked that you are, of course, a Minister and normally Ministers would not ask questions of other Ministers, so I am afraid I have to not call upon you on this occasion. Thank you very much indeed.

The Deputy of Grouville:

OK, thank you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Am I allowed to ask another question? I could probably ask the question that the Deputy was just about to ask.

The Bailiff:

The answer is, no, I am afraid not, Connétable. You did not signal for a supplemental when the time came. I called upon another Member, so I am afraid that time has passed. A final supplemental, Deputy Ward.

3.6.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would just say that the question really is about anything that we can do to ensure safety, not just in the horrendous worst-case scenarios - and we all have empathy for that; I am sure the Minister does and that was not implied and I am glad my colleague apologised - but just safety in general, if we are going to encourage people to use buses and if we improve our bus service so they are later on in the evenings, which I know that everybody wants, I was pleased to hear him say that he will be looking at general safety, as well.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, is there a question there?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do not think there is, I apologise.

The Bailiff:

The trick is in the word "supplementary" question, a final supplementary question but ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I can add: "would the Minister agree?"

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do, indeed.