

2020.02.04

**13 The Deputy of St. Peter of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the credit card payment machines at Sand Street car park: (OQ.33/2020)**

Will the Minister explain why, after almost a month, the credit card payment machines at Sand Street Car Park have yet to be fixed?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Infrastructure):**

I am delighted to inform the Assembly that the machines have been fixed and are fully operational. Unfortunately, in January the credit-card provider terminated a number of accounts in Jersey unexpectedly. The result of reapplication process and integration with our terminal providers has taken far longer than we would have liked and has caused considerable customer inconvenience, for which I can only apologise. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the public for their patience and indeed all our staff in the car parks, who went the extra mile to ensure that customers were informed and who kept the office open, outside normal hours, to ensure that inconvenience was minimised whenever possible.

**4.13.1 The Deputy of St. Peter:**

That is a very good answer, because I can relate to a lot of that, however, can we be assured that this was not a technical error, which has been rumoured a technical error, whereby spare parts could not be found because of the dated system that is being operated?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

No, the Deputy is correct, it was not a technical error as such with machines; it was a credit-card error with our providers in Ireland.

**4.13.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:**

I would just like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure if he feels that he has been entirely responsible by speaking about Jersey's partly I.T. infrastructure in his answer there and whether he perhaps should have taken a more guarded approach to his answer? **[Laughter]**

**The Bailiff:**

There we are, as amusing as the question might be, I do not think that is strictly within the terms of the question.

**4.13.3 Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

What lessons can be learned from this episode and what has been put in place, so it does not happen again?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Indeed, our Technical Department is working on this resilience for any faults that could happen in the future. I doubt, though, if this particular thing will happen again, but we are looking at resilience and a fallback position where this would not occur, with a possibility of installing possibly additional hardware, or indeed new machinery, that would be more resilient to any failure of this nature.

**4.13.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Can the Minister elaborate on the error of the credit-card provider? Are they, for example, also using Windows 7? **[Laughter]**

**The Bailiff:**

I am not sure you need to respond to the last part of the question, but the first part, can you elaborate on the problem with the credit-card provider?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

As I have mentioned - I do not think we are getting rid of 7 at all - there was a problem in the Republic of Ireland, where the servers are based, inasmuch as we had a problem in Jersey and the legislation was changed, I believe, in the Republic of Ireland. The people this side had to answer certain questions, as it is "know your customer" or "know your client". Because there had been changes in the Departments, from the Department for Infrastructure to Growth, Housing and Environment, it took a completely new set up and everything had to be reapplied for in a certain timeframe. We were not able to do that in time, so the whole system had to be reset and reapplied for.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Except, Sir, I hope this is in order, it relates to why we need credit card machines there at all, so if they do not work. I think it is related, Sir.

**The Bailiff:**

It is tangentially related; I will allow questions to why there needs to be credit card machines.

**4.13.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Thank you, Sir. It seems to me that when you go to Sand Street Car Park there is always a queue and that is even when the credit card payment system is working well. What is the point in having a number-plate recognition system, which is supposed to make people's lives easier, if you do not have an automated payment system, where it automatically takes money off their card at the same time? Has the Minister thought about streamlining this and perhaps talking in a very secret room with the Minister for I.T. somewhere about how we might do this?

**The Bailiff:**

Yes, let us deal with the first part of that question, shall we?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Okay. Yes, the Deputy is absolutely correct and it is something that is being worked on. This was very much an experiment to start with. This is the only car park that we use this particular system on. But as the technology improves, we do have A.N.P.R. (Automatic Number-Plate Recognition) and you can buy a certain card, which eases payment, but we are working on it. In the not too distant future, everything will be fully automated, you will be able to open an account with the car park fund and the automatic number-plate recognition will automatically deduct from your account. It will see your car going in, your car going out, hello, goodbye and no queuing at all; that would be possibly in the not too distant future, I hope.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sir, I did just put my light on, am I too late?

**The Bailiff:**

No. I think it is a little unworkable for people to tell me that they have put their light on. I think the trick is to put the light on until I nod and then it will be clear that I have seen the light in those circumstances, in both senses, probably.

**Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade:**

Thank you for that advice. I did put my light on, but I did not get the nod, so it is my fault. The question was asked that I was going to ...

**The Bailiff:**

Right, thank you, well that, I think, is ...

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Sir, may I just point out that I am up for questions without notice later? If anybody wants to put the boot in I am ...

**The Bailiff:**

Nonetheless, I have already said we can have an opportunity for that for the Connétable of St. Saviour, so, Connétable.

**4.13.6 Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour:**

I would just like clarification on something the Minister said before. The Minister said before that the trouble down at the car park was not the States problem, it was a credit card problem, but he has just said - I might have misunderstood - that the system had not changed over from one Department to another and the credit card company did not recognise. In my words and in my little mind this would make it a States fault and not the credit card company's fault. The States had not verified themselves as to who they were when they changed Departments and the credit card did not recognise them. Am I wrong, or am I right?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Partially wrong and partially right. As I say, this was a "know your customer" thing, but now and again, I dare say, the Constable might get a phone call from her bank to check details, which may be several years down the road. This does sometimes ... **[Inaudible]**

**The Bailiff:**

No, this is not a conversation, Connétable, this is a question and then an answer.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

This does sometimes happen and, as I say, the details, the requirements from the company in Ireland had changed, the legislation there had changed. They needed more information; that is where the anomalies came to light.

**4.13.7 Deputy C.S. Alves:**

I am not sure whether this is going to be in order, or not, but relating back to what Deputy Tadier said about the Minister was looking at new systems, I was wondering if any consideration has been given to the way people are charged. My understanding, when Sand Street first came into play, was that it would be similar possibly to the airport one where you would be charged per 15 minutes, instead of a whole hour. Is this something that the Minister for Infrastructure has considered?

**The Bailiff:**

I think, Deputy, on reflection - and I have perhaps been far too permissive up to now - this is a question about the operating credit card payment systems, whether they are operating, or not and, as the Minister has rightly observed, that you can ask any questions that you want when he is answering questions without notice in a few minutes. Did you want to ask your question, Deputy Ward?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I think it is related, because the automated system is used for fining people if they do not pay, can that not be adapted to make people be able to pay?

**The Bailiff:**

I think I will draw a halt to general charging and it can be asked later on, Deputy.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, Sir, I withdraw the question.

**The Bailiff:**

No, not at all. The Deputy of St. Peter, you have the final supplementary, if ...

**4.13.8 The Deputy of St. Peter:**

The Minister used the word "experiment" in the answer to one of his questions. As Sand Street, I think, for about 5 years has been the only car park to use this technology, does he deem it to be a success and which to roll it out to all the other car parks in the ...

**The Bailiff:**

This is the credit card payments.

**The Deputy of St. Peter:**

The whole system is part of the payment, is it not? That is one way of using the system, paying for the system. Is it a success, yes, or no and will it be rolled out?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I think it has been a success. We have had a blip, of course, as previously mentioned. But people do like the convenience and people do like the fact that, unlike scratch cards, if they happen to be in Town to meet a friend and then go for a coffee, they do not have to rush back and worry about receiving a fine, because it would just clock up to the next particular unit, so I would say it was a success. Because it is automatic number plate recognition, it is only the sort of thing we could use in our multi-storey carparks and other general car parks would be a little more difficult, but not impossible.