

22.02.08

8 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the U.K. Highway Code (OQ.22/2022):

Will the Minister confirm what consideration, if any, was given to the recent, long-planned changes to the U.K. Highway Code during preparation of the Island Road Safety Review (R.185/2021), given that references to the changes are not in that review, despite a recommendation to review the Island's existing legislation and Highway Code to identify the benefits and risks to road users of introducing a hierarchy of responsibility?

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

The Island Road Safety Review's purpose was to examine structural issues with the Island's current approach to road safety and to suggest a new way forward. It specifically states work on redoing the Island's existing legislation and Highway Code will be developed in conjunction with the planned update to road legislation. It must be remembered this is a first stage in process of improving road safety in Jersey. The next stage is the development of a 10-year road safety strategy, which will set out the new methods of working required to deliver safety objectives and address the challenging target of halving the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads by the end of 2032.

3.8.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I will start with an easy one. What was the cost of the Island Road Safety Review, which failed to address the issue central to the changes in the U.K.?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

There is no failure there, everything is ongoing. The 2 items were completely separate and if I may expand on what our colleague, the Minister for Home Affairs, stated, that the Highway Code is a very valuable tool and even though the Highway Code itself is not based in law, it does dovetail with the Jersey Road Traffic Law 1956 as amended, which is embedded in law. Parts of the Highway Code do have legal standing. For instance, one may read one should do this or one should do that, also in the Highway Code you must stop at a red light, you must not drive the wrong way on a street; that is embedded in law. The parts that are not embedded in law, if there is a road traffic collision and the Highway Code was ignored, a Centenier, Magistrate or a legal judge may - and I re-emphasise may - give weight to that should there be a serious road traffic collision.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Sir, if I may, the cost, please?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not have the cost, I will need to review that.

3.8.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Does the Minister accept that there are concerns that the lack of reference to the changes of hierarchy in the Highway Code in the report was a glaring error and does reflect of a concern over a lack of preparation for the changes to the hierarchy of road users?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As this is the U.K. Highway Code, which obviously was adopted, we have our own version of the Highway Code, such things as filter-in-turn roundabouts. I am sure that would scare a lot of U.K.

visitors. Also the yellow lines across the road and a few minor things that we have local peculiarities for, then there are differences there. Obviously we do not have motorways. But it was thought best to adopt the Highway Code many, many years ago, including the updates which come through from time to time.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The question was about the omissions, so I do not have a supplementary. I think they are way off target at the moment.

3.8.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In the light of the absence of the changes to the U.K. in the report so far done by his department, this is not surely akin to having a dog and barking yourself.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I am not sure if that is a question but what can I say to that? As I mentioned previously, it is part of a 10-year programme to improve road safety. If the Deputy has something he wishes to add to that, I would be more than happy to look at it.