

2024.05.21

3.2 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the pedestrianisation of Broad Street. (OQ.97/2024)

Will the Minister state what approach his department is taking to ensure the needs of the disabled and the elderly have been taken into account in any plans to pedestrianise Broad Street and in any other areas where future infrastructure improvements are planned and likely to affect these groups?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for her question. The 2023 Sustainable Transport Policy *Next Steps* document places disabled blue badge users at the top of the parking hierarchy. As set out in that document, the department will be starting a review of kerbside parking later this summer, which will consider how St. Helier's valuable kerbside parking is prioritised and distributed among its users; disabled parking, unloading bays, taxi and cabs, short stay pick and drop off and general usage. The purpose of the work is to support both Islanders' mobility needs and efficient commerce. As part of this work, the department will engage with key stakeholders within the disabled community and also work with the Minister for Social Security and her team. The output will inform how the town centre on-street is managed into the future in conjunction with public realm and movement strategy.

3.2.1 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

While it is welcoming to hear about the developments in St. Helier, can I ask the Minister to assure Islanders that this approach will be adopted to other parts of the Island where problems with access exist?

The Connétable of St. John:

I can give the Deputy that assurance where the land is in public ownership, but in many cases, sadly ... or not sadly, the land is not in public ownership so our ability to influence is less. I am actually due to meet with the blue badge holders at the end of June to discuss their views on current parking and their views on opportunities to improve the situation.

3.2.2 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North:

When would the Minister expect the funding to become available to pedestrianise Broad Street?

The Connétable of St. John:

I would expect the work to start in Broad Street within the next 12 months.

3.2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

What access will the Minister maintain to buses in Broad Street and, in particular, the hopper bus, which is, I believe, finally being quite successful at getting people in and out of town?

The Connétable of St. John:

I am pleased that the Deputy raises the hopper bus. It is a facility I used on Friday, and I am delighted with the service and also with the disabled access to that service. It serves doctors around town, it serves the hospital, the market and the library. We are liaising with the bus company about alternatives to Broad Street. It is worth noting that if you live in St. John you are able to access a bus in Broad Street but if you live in most Parishes on the Island, you are not.

3.2.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister may be aware that traffic was banned in King Street, finally, in 1974. I am sure there would be very few people in the Island and the Assembly who would go back to that. But rightly, I think, concerns around access are legitimate, including for disabled people. But I would specifically ask about the one working music pub that we have on Broad Street, which is called the Blue Note for

a good reason, which musicians, especially if they are carrying heavy drum kits, might need to pull up outside.

[10:00]

Does the Minister believe that there can be a balance struck here where pedestrianisation may, and I believe should, come but not at the expense of logical outcomes for those groups?

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes. In fact a fellow Deputy has made me well aware of the live music that takes place at the Blue Note, as if I had not been myself to enjoy some of that. On a serious note, unloading for all sorts of activities within the area will continue to be required, whether that is kegs to deliver the beer for those enjoying the music later in the evening or the musicians delivering their drum kits, so we will need to find a solution, as is the case around St. Helier.

3.2.5 Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Could I just ask the Minister if he would be minded to extend the approach that he is taking to parking and access to roads to other issues of access in relation to the infrastructure and the buildings provided by the States?

The Connétable of St. John:

I believe we have a legal duty to ensure that we provide access to our buildings. Some of them, such as this one, has restraints, but we need to do everything that we can to provide access to our public facilities.