

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

6. The Minister for Transport and Technical Services will make a statement regarding a review of Speed Limits in the Island

6.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

On 2nd December 2008, the States approved P.166, lodged by Deputy Gorst, which tasked the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to establish a review working group to review the implementation, operation and suitability of the current speed limits policy, P.1/2004, as approved by the States on 15th March 2005. In accordance with part (b) of the proposition, I have appointed the Connétables of St. John and St. Saviour, together with Deputy Fox, to serve on the working group and my assistant, Deputy Lewis, will also assist in the process. The Connétable of St. John has agreed to chair this group. The group has met and agreed to seek the views of all Parishes through their Connétables and also members of the public. Although much work was undertaken when the original policy was drafted and approved, the group felt it appropriate that as the speed limits are an emotive subject, the public be allowed the opportunity to contribute their views. This being the case, a short consultation exercise will be undertaken in June with the resulting submissions being collated into a report for consideration by the Review Group by the end of August. My main reason for advising the States of this process is that I will not achieve the timescale approved in part (c) of P.166 for which I apologise and hope Members will understand that as a new Minister I had conflicting priorities in the first few months of office. I will give my commitment that a report which outlines the conclusions of this review will be laid before the States before the end of September 2009. I appreciate that there are requests for speed limit changes pending consideration of this working group's report but feel strongly that the views of as many people as possible should be sought in this process.

6.1.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Does the Minister not feel that once again matters relating to transport policy are being dealt with in an ad hoc way or is he proposing to delay the introduction and the bringing forward of the sustainable transport policy until after the work on speed limits has been completed?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, my department has no wish to delay the introduction of the transport policy any longer but we wish to get it right and will endeavour to do so.

6.1.2 The Deputy of Grouville:

Could the Minister please explain why it has taken over 3 years since the States decision on 15th March 2005 to bring this back to the States? It was only because of a proposition brought forward by Deputy Gorst that any action has been taken.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am not aware that the proposition of 2005 recommended change. However, I am aware that the Connétable who reviewed the situation during the early part of 2008 ... and consultation was undertaken with the various Parishes through their road committees and those findings went back to the Comité and action was taken where it was considered necessary. The review suggested by Deputy Gorst is really an update of the present situation. I agree that that is necessary. We have changed buildings. We have changes in construction, we have got added habitations on different roads and the time has come for a review and I am keen that it will take place.

6.1.3 Senator A. Breckon:

Does the Minister believe that the review should include the use of speed cameras in policing speed limits?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, I do not. I think the Parishes have use of laser guns which are distributed throughout the Island and I understand make good use of them. I think better use of them could be made and certain areas targeted. Speed cameras have had a particularly bad press in England and are seen as a way for local government just to bolster their coffers. I do not think that is a philosophy which I wish to agree with. So I think that proper policing is essential. I think it needs to be encouraged and developed. I think hopefully that will answer the Deputy's requirement.

6.1.4 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

In the words of the Minister himself, speed limits are an emotive subject and they are something on which I am regularly contracted by Parishioners. I would like to know in what format the short consultation exercise with the public will be carried out.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I thank the Connétable for her comments. I think the consultation will be taken by the group set up for the purpose and no doubt they will be placing advertisements to glean as much public knowledge as possible.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

A supplementary, may I extend an invitation to the group to hold a public meeting in St. Lawrence for this purpose? Does the Minister accept that?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I shall direct that request to the chairman of the committee set up to attend to that.

6.1.5 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can I ask the Minister about his consultation report? Will it state clearly how many of the respondents hold which views and will it also state what views are held by all the official bodies who respond to that consultation, body by body?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think once again this is a question which needs to be directed to the group set up for the purpose and I shall do exactly that.

6.1.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am sure that the Minister will agree that the speed limits are not always the problem; rather the observing of the speed limits. As a consequence, will the Minister also be looking to introduce traffic calming measures in the States like Les Quennevais Park and Clos des Sables which have long needed and long demanded traffic calming measures when speed limits are in place but simply not being observed?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Deputy is absolutely correct in saying that there is a large public perception issue when it comes to speeding. With regard to Les Quennevais Park, that is a matter for the Parish and the roads committee to discuss. No doubt they will happily receive any comments from him to address that matter.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask one more totally related to the previous question?

The Bailiff:

Yes.

6.1.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Minister confirm that the review will include enforcement measures and the sort of pattern of enforcement to ensure that speed limits are adhered to?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is not strictly within the remit but I take the Deputy's point, and I think it would be probably for the panel set up for the purpose to make recommendations for that to take place and perhaps make recommendations to the Minister for Home Affairs with regard to the policing issues.

6.1.8 The Deputy of St. John:

Will the speeding issue be part of the I.T.T.P. (Integrated Travel and Transport Policy) and, if so, could he tell us how that I.T.T.P. is progressing within his department?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is no doubt that speeding issues will have an influence on the policy or vice versa. The Deputy is well aware that the policy was referred to his panel some weeks ago. The panel came back last week to suggest that further research was necessary and, yes, the department is working on this at present and is keen that the policy comes back to the States as soon as possible.

6.1.9 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Could either the Minister or the Deputy of St. John define I.T.T.P. as acronyms mislead some of us? Secondly, could the Minister remind us whether the green lane policy will be reviewed as there are currently 2 perhaps understandable holdouts, one of whom does not appear at present on a map of Jersey?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Integrated Travel and Transport Policy. I have to say I am not terribly keen on the name for one and may consider changing that. In terms of the green lanes, certainly the group I am sure will be reviewing the 15 mile an hour limit on these lanes and the network and how they wish to deal with it.

6.1.10 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I would like to thank the Minister for his statement and to thank him that the review group has been set up and will start its work. Like the Connétable of St. Lawrence, I wonder if the Minister could just confirm whether individuals and Parishes will be able to make submissions in person, whether the group will be prepared ... I do not believe that a Parish meeting will necessarily be helpful but I believe that if the group were prepared to visit some of the areas and roads where Parishioners have got concerns that would be very useful. Finally, if submissions once made will be made public as part of the final report.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I can start at the end and suggest that I think, yes, submissions ought to form part of the report. For me the ideal channel of communication would be for Parishioners to address their roads committees who are well versed with the dangers on the roads in particular Parishes. But notwithstanding that, I am sure the panel would be quite happy to receive comment from any member of the public.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, Connétable, I think the Greffier has told me that time has expired for asking questions. So that concludes the matter of the statement.