

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ROAD TRAFFIC LEGISLATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

1.3. Road Traffic Legislation (Amendment) Bill – Expected date of the Committee's report

The Hon. Member of the Council, Mr Anderson, to ask the Chairman of the Select Committee on the Road Traffic Legislation (Amendment) Bill 20160

When the Committee expects to report?

The President: In the absence of Mr Corkish his two Questions will be answered in writing. So, we turn to Question 3, Hon. Member, Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Chairman of the Select Committee on the Road Traffic Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2016, Mr Turner, when the Committee expects to report?

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Mr Turner.

The Chairman of the Select Committee on the Road Traffic Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2016 (Mr Turner): Thank you, Mr President.

The Committee wrote to the Department on 20th October, following the change in administration, and asked the Department if they would give an indication, given the change in Minister, whether the Department was still intent on progressing the Bill. We are still waiting for a reply.

The President: Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: I thank the Hon. Member for his reply. There seems to be some crossed wires because I have made enquiries within the Department and the current Minister did not have any knowledge of this correspondence. I will bring it to the attention of the Minister.

Could I ask you on a point of order, Mr President, is there a procedure where committees that are formed by the Council report back at the end of a legislative session to the Council?

The President: My understanding is that the Committee may report whether its investigations are complete or not at any time. I do not believe there is a rule in force specifying when a report has to be made. It may well be that a report can be made as soonest with progress reported to date and then the matter is disposed of.

Mr Turner.

Mr Turner: Thank you, Mr President.

The view was that with the former administration coming to an end it is highly possible that a new administration will have new policies. They could be quite different policies; they could be almost the reverse as we have already seen complete changes in some of those policies at DOI, so it was only right that we should seek the new Department to find out what the new Minister's policies were.

We have already seen a complete change in a major scheme such as the Promenade. So it is important, I think, when ... if this had just been the end of a parliamentary session than obviously the work would have just continued on but because we have seen such a radical change in Ministers, policies and direction it is only right we ask the new Minister if he is still intent on progressing the Bill.

We intend to meet with the Department as well which we will most probably do in public session to discuss some of the issues that have come up with the Bill. As soon as we know their intentions on whether it is still a priority and the provisions in that Bill are still a priority for that new Department, then we can continue our work and shape the Bill. There are a number of issues they may wish to take back and have re-written.

So, I think, because we have, as I said before, Mr President, a new Minister in post, who has his own ideas, then it would be a waste of this Council's time to start going through and looking at that Bill if they were not intent on the provisions that are in it.

The President: Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Yes, thank you, Mr President.

Can I ask the Chairman – I am tempted to call this the long grass committee, but I will not – when the Committee last sat and can he confirm that there is just one letter that went on 16th October to the Department?

The President: Mr Turner.

Mr Turner: Yes, I do not have the date. We decided, obviously with the other place being dissolved and the Ministers going out of office that we would do a call for public evidence, which we did. We did that in July. At the same time we asked the Department for a response in July. We have had very limited responses in, but what we do have, nevertheless, they are quite important. There was not an influx of reaction but the responses we have are mainly from the professional transport industry bodies.

Then, of course, we had the General Election so there was little point in continuing with work until we knew what the intentions of the Ministers were. That is when we decided, as we said, once they were in post and settled in, our Committee Clerk wrote to Mr Black at the DOI. It is a very short email, so if I may, Mr President, I will just read out what it said –

Mr Anderson: Sorry, just for point of clarification, Mr President. It was an email rather than a letter?

Mr Turner: Yes, which is an acceptable – it was to the Chief Executive – form of communication saying, 'The Select Committee on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill would be grateful for an indication as to whether, given the change in Minister, the Department of Infrastructure is still intent on progressing the above Bill.' And that is what we are awaiting a response from and hopefully the Member, who I believe is the Member for Highways, will be able to usher the Department to respond to that email so we can be informed whether it is worth progressing or whether the Department has other ideas.

The President: Any further comment?

I just make a comment of my own that the work of the Council is most effective when it is seen to progress matters expeditiously and bring matters to a head. A report can be made simply on the progress to date and the matter can be then resumed afresh.

Thank you.