



HOUSE OF KEYS OFFICIAL REPORT

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PROCEEDINGS

DAALTYN

HANSARD

Douglas, Tuesday, 9th November 2021

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Present:

The Speaker (Hon. J P Watterson) (Rushen);
The Chief Minister (Hon. A L Cannan) (Ayre and Michael);
Mr J R Moorhouse and Mr T S Glover (Arbory, Castletown and Malew);
Mr T D Johnston (Ayre and Michael);
Mrs C A Corlett and Mr C C Thomas (Douglas Central);
Ms J L Faragher and Hon. C L Barber (Douglas East);
Hon. D J Ashford MBE and Mr J C Wannenburg (Douglas North);
Mrs S L Maltby and Mrs C S B Christian (Douglas South);
Mrs D H P Caine and Mr A J Smith (Garff);
Hon. K A Lord-Brennan and Hon. T M Crookall (Glenfaba and Peel);
Hon. J P Poole-Wilson and Mr S G Peters (Middle);
Mr R E Callister and Hon. J M Edge (Onchan);
Hon. L L Hooper and Hon. A J Allinson (Ramsey);
Dr M E K Haywood (Rushen)
with Mr J D C King, Secretary of the House.

Business transacted

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House of Keys

The House met at 10 a.m.

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The Speaker: Moghrey mie, good morning, Hon. Members.

Members: Moghrey mie, good morning, Mr Speaker.

5

The Speaker: In the absence of a Chaplain I will lead us in prayer.

PRAYERS

Mr Speaker

1. Questions for Oral Answer

TREASURY

1.1. UK air passenger duty cut – Impact on flights and visitor numbers

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for the Treasury:

What assessment has been made of the effect on flights between the UK and the Island of the proposed changes to United Kingdom Air Passenger Duty; and what assessment has been made of the impact of these changes on visitor numbers?

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members.

We now turn to Oral Questions. Question 1, I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

10

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Treasury Minister what assessment has been made of the effect on flights between the UK and the Island of the proposed changes to the United Kingdom Air Passenger Duty; and what assessment has been made of the impact of these changes on visitor numbers?

15

The Speaker: I call on the Treasury Minister to reply.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Ashford): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

20 In the United Kingdom's Autumn Budget, it was announced that there would be a new domestic band for Air Passenger Duty to be introduced from 1st April 2023, which will apply to flights between airports in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Following the announcement, it is the Treasury's understanding that the rate of Air Passenger Duty on flights departing from a UK airport to the Isle of Man will *not* be included in the new domestic band.
25 Therefore, the duty on these flights will not change, staying at £13 per adult.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

30 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister.
What would the financial implications for the Treasury be of this change if it was introduced here? I recognise that recent data on departures is quite variable, but hopefully he would have an indication of what it would mean in the last 12 months, for example.

35 **The Speaker:** Minister.

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Using the pre-pandemic figures we have to remember, of course, that it would only apply one way if we made the change. It would only apply to those flights where we charge APD. The UK government APD would stay at £13, so the reduction from £13 to £6.50 from our side would cost
40 in the region of £2 million.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

45 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister. That is an interesting figure.
In an answer to the current Mr Speaker, the former Treasury Minister stated in 2008, 'Airlines do not have to cope with a different set of rules or duty rates on each leg of a return journey, thus easing their administrative burden'. Given the competitive nature of the airlines industry, can we ask for special treatment in areas such as this and not expect negative consequences?

50 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The announcement made by the Chancellor is quite clear that it applies to airports in relation
55 to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland so internally within the United Kingdom. It does not apply to us; it equally does not apply to the other Crown Dependencies either. So if any change was to be made, it would actually be us putting things out of kilter by charging £6.50 for our portion of the Air Passenger Duty, and the UK would still impose their £13. So at that point, if we went down that route, we would be the ones out of sync.

60 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mrs Christian.

Mrs Christian: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

65 Does the Minister agree with me that cutting Air Passenger Duty will have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions and the fact it will actually increase them? And actually investing in the green economy – and he mentioned a £2 million saving – would be the most fiscally responsible thing to do?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

70 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The £2 million is not a saving, it would actually be a cost. That would actually be the reduction from our side.

75 In relation to emissions, that is obviously something that feeds into the climate change agenda. But also, equally, we must not make the assumption that any reduction in APD, including what the Chancellor has announced in the UK, will necessarily feed down to the consumer. We are seeing basically a reduction of £6.50 and it is likely, if I was a betting man, I would say that will be absorbed into the airlines operating costs rather than passed on to the consumer.

80 **Three Members:** Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

85 Does the Department do any passenger analysis of the data with regard to measures such as elasticity? And, do these provide any indication of the impact on visitor numbers of actually reducing the price in such an area?

Thank you.

90 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

95 As per my previous answers, again that assumes that any reduction in costs will pass down to the consumer. Personally, I do not necessarily believe at the level that it is it actually will pass down to the consumer and any impact on ticket prices, in terms of the overall ticket price, would be marginal. So the Treasury does not believe it would be a particular boon to people deciding to come to the Island.

The Speaker: Final supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

100

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Was the Treasury or any other part of Isle of Man Government consulted or even informed about this pending change to APD? And, if it was not, does the Minister find that disappointing or regrettable in any way?

105

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

110 The officers of Treasury do have a very close relationship with the Treasury officers in the UK. I believe there were indications that there may be changes to APD, but I am not aware that the full details were shared prior to the Chancellor's Budget.

ENTERPRISE

**1.2. UK air passenger duty cut –
Benefiting Island tourism**

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Enterprise:

What his Department is doing to enable the Island's tourist sector to benefit from a reduction in Air Passenger Duty in the UK?

The Speaker: Question 2. I again call Mr Moorhouse.

115 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Enterprise what his Department is doing to enable the Island's tourist sector to benefit from a reduction in Air Passenger Duty in the UK?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Enterprise to reply.

120

The Minister for Enterprise (Dr Allinson): Thank you, Mr Speaker; and I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his Question.

The Department, through Visit Isle of Man, is fully committed to supporting and growing the tourist sector after the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The Department's understanding is that the announcement in the UK Autumn Budget relates to the introduction of a new domestic band for Air Passenger Duty, which will apply to flights between UK airports from April 2023. As such, flights to the Isle of Man from UK airports will *not* be included in the new domestic band and the rate for Air Passenger Duty will remain the same at £13 per adult. Although a reduction of 50% may sound beneficial in attracting tourists to the Island, in reality this is only £6.50 per passenger and is unlikely to make a material difference to travel decisions.

130

With regard to the Island's air links more generally, the Department is currently leading a strategic review of air services. The objectives of this review are to consider historical performance of air routes, to assess the current Open Skies policy and to present a range of alternative policy options for consideration which would support the securing of air links which meet the needs of the Island, including the visitor economy. The Department expects to complete this review imminently and report back to the Council of Ministers during November.

135

Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

140

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker; and thank you, Minister, for that detailed Answer.

Given the number of low-cost flights to the Island and the impact of the Air Passenger Duty being cut, have the Department and the Isle of Man Government made any links to the UK government and the tax authorities in terms of could we potentially be seen as being part of the British Isles for this measurement and this reduction?

145

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

150

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I think, as the Treasury Minister has already pointed out, this change by the *United Kingdom* government, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, does not affect the Isle of Man.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Mr Moorhouse.

155

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker; and thank you, Minister.

160

Given that we have now got, potentially, a greater disadvantage than many areas in the British Isles, is there anything we can do in terms of increasing the promotions, increasing the local providers' ability to look attractive and improve their offering to visitors in the next 12 or 18 months to actually benefit, potentially, from people in the UK looking at options on where they could go for holidays? We may not have the reduction in flight prices but we have a lot of advantages here which we can actually build on and attract people here with.

Thank you.

165

The Speaker: Straying a little beyond the Question, which relates specifically to Air Passenger Duty. Minister.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

170

The Hon. Member mentioned the price of flights. As the Treasury Minister has already said, the reduction in this duty will not necessarily translate to a reduction in the price of flights and the price of flights is only one determinant of attracting people to our Island. The others, obviously, are the routes available, the times available and also the offering available.

175

I can reassure the Hon. Member, and this Hon. House, that the Isle of Man Visit Agency has a very strong policy and strategy going forward, both to rebuild the reduction of numbers caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the shutdown of the aviation industry, and the travel industry as a whole, over the last 18 months; but also to grow the visitor economy and meet the aspiration of having 500,000 visitors coming to our Island by 2032.

Thank you.

1.3. Airport Technology Gateway project – Plans; statement

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Glover) to ask the Minister for Enterprise:

What plans he has for the Airport Technology Gateway project; and if he will make a statement?

180

The Speaker: Question 3, I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Enterprise what plans he has for the Airport Technology Gateway project; and if he will make a statement?

185

The Speaker: I again call on the Minister for Enterprise to reply.

The Minister for Enterprise (Dr Allinson): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I would like to thank the Hon. Member for this very pertinent Question.

190

The Airport Technology Gateway project continues to be an initiative for the Department, in conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure. The business need for a first-class technology and high-tech business park has continued in recent years, especially with the development of the medicinal cannabis sector. Having a landing pad for these tech-focused businesses will support

195 the Island's diversifying economy. There is also a continuing interest in the site for *inward* business
investors, which means that there is a catalyst to deliver the project and support those new
sectors for the Manx economy.

Currently, there is detailed permission for the enabling works, although it has taken longer
than expected to progress the plans. This is because of a range of issues which have affected
delivery, such as the number of other capital projects and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.
200 However, since the cross-departmental project team has been in place, delivery *has* been
accelerated.

The Department will continue to progress the plans and I am happy to keep the Hon. Member
updated on developments.

Thank you.

205

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for that comprehensive
statement.

210 It was the 2019 Budget, I think, where approval was given for £2.1 million of funding, and it
was said at that time that it really was the time for spades to be in the ground. What is the
timetable now, nearly three years on?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

215

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I can completely sympathise with the Hon. Member's frustration, because this project started
back in 2016; and, as he said, the project team was established in September 2019 and a budget
of £2.16 million then afforded this. That was very much in terms of enabling works originally, in
terms of looking at how we can make this more attractive.

220 I think Hon. Members need to bear in mind that in terms of this area the Government only
owns a relatively small proportion of the land, and so we are working with private owners to try
to see what we can do to incentivise these plots being both marketed and occupied. Certainly, in
terms of the timescale, we are now moving forward looking at the original business case for the
enabling works, trying to establish that those are provided despite the increased costs in
225 construction and delays in getting people to do the work.

But then we will be moving on through approval from the Strategic Asset and Capital
Investment Committee (SACIC) and working with the DoI to go forward into actually enabling the
groundworks to be done, but also providing incentives for the private providers to market their
230 plots to those firms that may wish to relocate to this area.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

235 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Given the incredibly slow nature of this development, is it time to provide additional resources
to the project? It has the potential to have a major impact on the Island over the next decade; and
I am concerned that, in the Minister's previous answers, he has repeatedly made reference to
'increasing costs'.

240 I am concerned in terms of we do not want to have a *basic* job done here. It needs to reflect
the true potential of the site and the Island. If additional resources are required above the
£2.1 million, would the Minister please say now that we will go and get more money and get it
done to the standard that we really do require?

Thank you.

245 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Hon. Member is obviously passionate about the development of this area, both for improving the income and job opportunities for his own constituents, but also those across the Island.

250 In terms of seeking extra financial support for continuing the development of this area, yes, the Department is working quite closely with other areas of Government to see *what* is required. But also it is very important because we are talking about rather large amounts of public money here – and taxpayers' money – that we actually provide what is needed by those people who want to move into the area, rather than having a top-down approach and doing what we think *should* be done to the area.

255 Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Ms Faragher.

260

Ms Faragher: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Given that the Airport Technology Gateway project has recently been trying to attract cannabis cultivation businesses, has an environmental impact assessment been conducted for this new industry; and, if not, will this be carried out prior to any cultivation licences being approved in order to ensure that we are able to meet our future climate change commitments?

265

The Speaker: To the extent that the climate change commitments fall within the Airport Technology Gateway, Minister.

270 **The Minister:** Absolutely, but I can reassure the Hon. Member that, in terms of the requirement for power and water, in particular, those needs will be assessed as this new sector develops. She makes a very good point about the impact of new industrial sectors on the demands on energy on our Island and these need to be developed.

275 Again, with the Airport Technology Gateway, one of the prime parts of this was sustainability and to make it as environmentally friendly as possible and as, hopefully, demand grows for these sites we can incorporate that into the overall infrastructure.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Glover.

280 **Mr Glover:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Can the Minister tell us if the Airport's gateway will be used to bolster the Island's green economy?

Thank you.

285 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

290 In terms of the green economy, certainly the construction costs in terms of phase one, the enabling works, included things like a solar array, included assessment of drainage also into the flood risks and also in terms of power. It is hoped that, as the various units in this area develop, we can look at sustainability in terms of having renewable resources there for power, such as solar panels on the roofs of buildings but also perhaps some wind turbines. But that would all be subject to planning.

Thank you.

295

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I recognise it is still early days, but has the Minister had the opportunity to visit the site? It really has the potential to change the Island over the next decade, and we would really be grateful if he would allocate the time to come and visit the site that has the potential to transform the Island.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister.

305

The Minister: I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his invitation. I have actually visited the site previously, particularly when the new combined ambulance and fire station was opened, which obviously uses a bit of the land in that area. But I would be more than happy to meet with him and share his aspirations for this exciting development for the Island.

310

The Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Minister has not mentioned planning as an impediment at all. Can the Minister confirm that there has been no planning issue since 2019, to avoid a popular misconception often about development in the Isle of Man?

Secondly, having said that, though, there is a potential for a Community Infrastructure Levy to be applied in the Isle of Man, and that is on hold pending some investigation. Will the Community Infrastructure Levy apply to this site if it is introduced?

Thirdly, does the Minister agree with me the zoning of substantial numbers of hectares of employment land in the Area Plan for the East, and the substantial availability of land in the north, might well now be affecting the prospects for the Airport Technology Gateway?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

325

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

In terms of planning, I am not aware of any impediments to planning so far in this area.

In terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy, as the Hon. Member says, that is still in its generation, and I see no obvious commitment that this will be brought into what is very much an industrial development for job creation and wealth creation.

In terms of his comments about land being made available in other parts of the nation, certainly there is a commitment with the Airport Technology Gateway to progress this as an independent scheme, particularly in terms of high-tech industries, attracting them to the Isle of Man, but also, importantly, looking at inward investment for those companies that are on the

Island who wish to expand.

335

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**1.4. Food and Drink Festival –
Success of; Marketing Partnership report**

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture:

How successful the 2021 Food and Drink Festival was; and if she will publish the report by the Marketing Partnership referred to in the statement issued to the media by her Department on 25th October 2021?

The Speaker: Question 4.

I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

340 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture how successful the 2021 Food and Drink Festival was; and if she will publish the report by the Marketing Partnership referred to in the statement issued to the media by her Department on 25th October 2021?

345 **The Speaker:** I call on the Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture to reply.

The Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture (Mrs Barber): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

My Department is very proud of the Isle of Man Food and Drink Festival and was pleased with the successes it achieved this year. The Department runs the event to benefit local food and drink producers and provides an important target event for the launch of new businesses, products and services in local food and drink.

350 The event has been proven to benefit the sector as a whole and boost the economy through direct spend at the Festival and also repeat business thereafter. The ethos of the event is about quality and not necessarily quantity so, whilst high numbers of visitors can be a great media statistic, the money spent with the producers, the overall experience and feedback directly to and from exhibitors are our key measures. Most of our producers are small artisan businesses, where quality is king and the food can take a little longer to prepare or be reproduced in small batches. We do strive to get the balance right for producer and customer.

355 This year the Festival had over 70 exhibitors, the highest number of exhibitors ever, and we received positive feedback from exhibitors with almost all respondents planning to exhibit at the Festival in the future and all respondents being satisfied with the outcome for their personal objectives. Each year, we measure satisfaction via feedback from the show from visitors and exhibitors using the independent report and our own discussions with the exhibitors. The information gathered through this process is reviewed with the aim of continuous improvement of the event. Our feedback continues to highlight that the Festival is a great day out with a relaxed atmosphere, and the main area for improvement this year regarded queueing times, which the team are looking to address for 2022.

360 DEFA are committed to the promotion of local food and drink producers and the Festival forms a large part of our strategy to grow the Island's food industry by £50 million. The Post-Festival Report was published in full on the isleofmanfoodanddrink.com website on October 25th 2021 with a press release sent to advise the public and a link included.

370 Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

375 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker; and thank you, Minister, for the detail there and the link detail.

How much did the survey actually cost? And, with reference to the specific data, an average spend of £41.36 looks impressive. I wonder if the Minister could provide us with a breakdown of how this figure was calculated? The number of stallholders and visitors questioned was referred to in the press release.

380 Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

385 **The Minister:** Thank you.

I can confirm the survey cost £800 to carry out on our behalf. In terms of how the figure is actually calculated, we calculate this by taking the number of adult entrants multiplied by the reported average spend, which is a sample. This time, that was £41.36. Once we had added up the respondents to the survey and averaged that out, we then calculated that by the total number of adults at the Festival. For the purposes of this, children were excluded and assumed that they did not come with pocketfuls of money. But we never know. *(Laughter)*

390 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

395 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker; and thank you, Minister, again for that Answer.

A quick Google check suggests this figure is especially impressive when compared with other days, for example, one from 2015. The average spend per adult per head then was £24.74 across six festivals research. Why is our figure so impressive in comparison?

400 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you.

Although the method that we use to calculate the economic value is crude – we have not surveyed 8,827 people – it does provide a consistent approach over the number of years to ensure that we can measure the increase in spend and understand if people’s spending habits have changed; and make sure that the Festival is achieving the outcomes which are showcasing those producers, and that the producers feel that they are getting a tangible benefit from the show.

So we are comfortable with maintaining figures that are consistent to ensure that we are able to actually assess that data against our previous years.

410 **The Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

415 Given the falling numbers recorded in 2021, is it possible that the Food and Drink Festival is now losing its broader appeal and starting to attract a more narrow demographic? Does the data suggest this could be happening?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

420 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

No, far from it. I think it is testament actually to the Food Matters Strategy. From my perspective the numbers still remain high, and that is despite a number of other festivals also being on the scene across the Island. We have retained those numbers. That shows confidence in our food and drink producers on the Island and an interest in understanding their new products that they are developing and wanting to market.

425

However, I am absolutely clear that we should always be looking at ways to improve and understand, and that is absolutely why we carry out that marketing survey to ensure that we can act on the feedback from people who have been at the Festival, and we can make sure that we look to improve every year.

INFRASTRUCTURE

1.5. Red line outside Arbory Parish Hall – Plan to review

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What plans he has to review the red line outside Arbory Parish Hall?

430 **The Speaker:** Question 5.

I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

435 I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure what plans he has to review the red line outside Arbory Parish Hall?

The Speaker: The Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

440 I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his question and for the time in discussion prior to today. Also to the others who have also passed comment on this.

The work that has been undertaken in Ballabeg has been through a post-implementation safety review. The review confirmed, I am told, that the scheme has been successful in reducing speeds on the main road. Mean vehicle speeds have dropped to below 25 miles an hour near the red line/uncontrolled crossing.

445 The speed reduction scheme included the widening of the footpaths, the introduction of 1,600 m² of coloured surfacing on the road and highlighted informal crossing points, junction realignment and a tabletop speed hump at Friary Park. The safety review also noted that some further mitigation measures could be considered. These included the introduction of the word 'SLOW' being painted on the road and the construction of a tabletop speed reduction feature being constructed at the uncontrolled crossing by the Parish Hall.

450 Mr Speaker, I still have reservations, not only about the red line – or the uncontrolled crossing, as it is properly called – but this one and others in the area and elsewhere. So in answer to the Hon. Member's Question, a review has started and is taking place of this, and other uncontrolled crossings, and any changes will be implemented as soon as reasonably practicable.

455 Again, I would like to thank those Members and others who have made their comments on this issue known. Their thoughts and comments are very much appreciated and will be taken into consideration.

460 **A Member:** Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

465 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker; and thank you, Minister, for listening. It is not just me who has raised this, it is several of us. (**The Minister:** Absolutely.) We really do appreciate it, and the site visit as well.

The uncontrolled crossing, which does not appear to be in the Highway Code, what legal basis does it have? What would happen there if there was an accident? What advice could the Minister give to people actually using the crossing today?

470 Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

475 An uncontrolled crossing, like any other point at which pedestrians choose to cross the road, the pedestrian does not have priority over vehicle traffic, and they must make their own decision about whether it is safe to cross. Any road colouring can be used on the highway, subject to meeting performance specifications and skid resistance, as an example. So basically what we are saying is if there is a dropped kerb, it is an uncontrolled crossing, and the fact that somebody has put a red line in there does not really affect that. It is a legal uncontrolled crossing.

480 Uncontrolled colour crossings are also used to assist pedestrians in identifying a good location to cross the road where the intervisibility between drivers and pedestrians waiting to cross the road is maximised. But it is a legal crossing.

The Speaker: Mr Moorhouse, supplementary question.

485

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Minister.

Just developing a little further in terms of the nature of an uncontrolled crossing and the way in which the pedestrian and the driver need to be seeing each other and relating to each other. I am rather concerned that on both sides of this crossing you have actually got the blister paving. That is actually suggesting to visually impaired people that this is a designated and recognised road crossing; and they will be struggling to deal with millimetres in front of them, as opposed to actually looking at the driver coming around the corner or coming in the other direction.

490 Given the *real* concern over this, could that blister paving please be looked at as a priority? Because that is something that someone new to the area, who is dropped off, could really be put in peril because of this current issue.

495 Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

500 **The Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am absolutely happy to sympathise with the comments of the Hon. Member. It is being looked at and reviewed as we speak. There is signage that probably needs to be going up on those, but before we put any signage up I just want to have a look at those crossings and see what we need to do with the whole situation there.

505 But I totally sympathise and I thank the Hon. Member for his comments again.

The Speaker: Final supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Whenever you are ready.

510 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker; and thank you, Minister, for actually listening and looking at the situation again.

I am rather concerned that both of your two predecessors have been equally proactive in the first instance. I am rather concerned about how long it is going to actually take to get a realistic response. We have currently got a situation where there is no actual signage there at all warning the pedestrians, the people parking, *or* the drivers.

515 How quickly can something be done, because it really is a dangerous site? And, as the Minister has recognised, something does need to be done.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

520

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

525

Yes, I have been down, as I have told the Hon. Member before, and had a look at this site. What he needs to appreciate, though, is if we do anything – and we do do markings on the road – there will be a loss of parking. There is a good chance there would be a loss of parking there. But the tactile paving has been put in because you have got the hall there, you have got the bus shelter on the other side of the road there. It has been assessed, as I say, as being the safest place to do it there, if I can put it like that, at the moment. I am not happy with it at the moment and hence the review of that one and the others, and others on the Island.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

530

The Speaker: Thank you.

That concludes Oral Questions this morning.

The House will stand adjourned until our next sitting, which is part of Tynwald Court next Tuesday at 10.30 a.m.

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Thank you, Hon. Members.

The House adjourned at 10.31 a.m.