

19.9 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding project priorities during the term. (OQ.61/2026)

Further to the Minister's recent statement in the media that the Infrastructure and Environment Department's budget will not be sufficient to meet its objectives, will he outline which projects he will prioritise during this term?

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I think it is important to start by clarifying that the interview I gave to the BBC when I was opening a children's playground, which I presume is what the Deputy is referring to when he talks about my recent statement in the media, was no different in substance to the nomination statement I made in the Assembly 2 weeks ago. I said to the BBC: "I think infrastructure needs more money than it currently has" and I added an important qualification: "Whether we do that by reprioritisation, by raising more money, staggering and perhaps not being as ambitious, I do not yet know." So the media are entitled to take part of what I say and make a headline, but I was clear to the BBC, and to this Assembly, that there is a balance to be struck, that infrastructure budgets have to be considered in the light of other priorities, and I stick to that. In answer to the Deputy's question directly regarding which projects will be prioritised, I am still assessing the infrastructure priorities which will need to be viewed through the lens of public safety, economic significance, value for money, alignment with strategic goals and many other factors. As soon as I am able to bring forward a programme of infrastructure investment I will do so. I would say this, and slightly echoing the Chief Minister's comments, as much as possible the infrastructure investment plans that I bring forward will need to be co-produced, both with colleagues in Government, in Scrutiny and across the Assembly. We will need as much buy-in as possible because this needs to be a programme which caters for the long-term needs of the Island.

19.9.1 Deputy T.A. Coles:

I am glad that the Minister used such terms as he did in his answer because a lot of those I think personally, as representative of St. Helier South, point to the Shoreline Management Plan because of strategic goals about public safety, value for money and also good for our economy. Does the Minister strongly agree that that project should be one of the ones on his priority list?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Tempting but I am not going to **[Laughter]** leap in, having just said I would consider all the priorities. What I would say is that I would also see all the infrastructure investments we have to make through the lens of what I think will be one of the overriding objectives of this Government, which is to improve economic competitiveness. Basic infrastructure is of course a key part of that but the exact balance or its sequencing, the scale of each investment project and so on, is something that I am not prepared to opine on right now. I think we do have to consider more, but I am very pleased to note that the Deputy has been chosen to sit on the Scrutiny Panel and I look forward to sharing plans with him and discussing them with him as soon as I can.