



JERSEY Chamber of Commerce

Press Release: Liberation 75 plans

0900 Monday 18th March 2019

Jersey Chamber of Commerce wishes to strongly express its concerns over the consequences that may arise from the proposed Liberation 75 Plans for the new public space to be created to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Liberation Day in 2020.

Far from the assertions of the Minister for Infrastructure, Deputy Kevin Lewis, who claimed in a Government press release that major businesses in the area being “largely happy with what is proposed”, Chamber members who would be affected by closing the Esplanade link road are less than happy with the plans. Although having been quoted that he hadn’t heard of any one against the plans in the press release, during a radio interview this morning, it now appears that the Minister himself doesn’t support them.

Following a meeting with Infrastructure officers, Chairman of the Chamber Transport and Tourism Committee Andy Jehan commented, “There is a lot of concern about these proposals”. He went on to point out the traffic implications for business in St Helier. “Without taking into consideration the environmental impact if as few as 20% of the vehicles are commercial, I estimate five hours a day added to the cost of business going through St Helier. Taxi drivers are highlighting that there will be extra costs for fares that would either be going around the new route or using Pier Road. All of the calculations being used by those planning the removal of this road, are being made before the International Finance Centre is actually completed and an additional 2,000 to 3,000 people relocate to working on the Esplanade.”

Domino Cabs owner, Ian le Gallais, is a Member of the Jersey Chamber Transport & Tourism Committee and is very unhappy with the lack of consultation so far. “Before launching such plans, Taxi drivers and businesses that regularly have to deliver through St Helier should have been consulted. The impression we get is this is a foregone conclusion. It is also disappointing that there is a lack of any consideration to increasing the taxi spaces in the areas, despite rank drivers having asked for this for a long time.”

Chamber President Eliot Lincoln has pointed to the disruption and delays to businesses and commuters. “This plan would be significantly disruptive to the flow of traffic around Hill Street and the Pomme d’Or Hotel for what I can see is of little benefit. Sending doubledecker buses around the block will only increase the risk of accidents, on top of the additional time spent on the loop around Hill Street. Sending traffic up Pier Road, instead of having access to the tunnel, which was built and designed to ease traffic heading east, will cause more issues, just when Havre des Pas is looking to bring in a one-way system facing the other way. Personally, I just don’t see the benefit of the current plan when weighed against the disruption, delays and frustration it will cause. For the few events that we have during the year that would require the joined-up space, we can close the intervening road like we have been doing. With regard to the re-routing buses, changes to send these through the town centre to access to the bus station does concern me on safety issues. Here we have a project that is already scheduled to cost an additional £1m, that is being rushed through. The normal engagement process used for other traffic changes being cast aside on this occasion without and thoughts on the impacts to the retail heart of our island. Giving the impression in a Government press release that everyone is happy with these plans is, at best, disingenuous.”

Jersey Chamber of Commerce is calling for an urgent review on the plans with Chamber of Commerce Members and further thinking on this proposal, possibly as a shared space, by keeping these routes open during the heavy usage hours, such as the working week, but enabling it to become a larger community area and valuable event space when required.

End

All press enquiries should be made to the Jersey Chamber of Commerce. Tel 724536 or via email to murray.norton@jerseychamber.com