

Dear Members of the Scrutiny Panel,

I am responding to your press release of 4th January 2021 which invited responses in order to compile evidence.

I am going to begin by providing short answers to the 6 questions posed. I will then provide some personal opinions and observations.

1. Will you be affected by the proposed access route to Overdale? If so, how?

I live to the South of Overdale and to the West of Westmount Road where the proposed access route (PAR) will run. I will be affected to the extent of noise, disruption and inconvenience during the construction works of the PAR. After construction I will also be affected because of higher levels of traffic and noise. I will also be affected because the peaceful and visually attractive surroundings will be greatly diminished.

2. How do you think the access route will affect the homes, leisure facilities and surrounding areas and the overall impact on the landscape?

There is no doubt there will be a very large negative impact on these elements.

People's Park will be reduced in size considerably. It is noted the States voted against People's Park being the site for the new hospital and this, it is presumed, was at least partly because the States intended that People's Park be preserved and kept safe from development. The PAR will not only demolish significant greenery on People's Park but will also consume large amounts of the park. The main green area and its immediate surroundings will be changed beyond recognition. Further, the matter is compounded because what will be left (which will be massively reduced) will be surrounded by a large busy multi-lane roadway. Even though part (only) of the park will be untouched it is very questionable it will be wanted for use given its new surrounding environment. Furthermore, access to the park will be greatly reduced.

It is not just People's Park that will be degraded. The positive appearance, appeal and enjoyment of Victoria Park will be reduced because it will become further landlocked by the imposition of a bigger and busier roadway.

The surroundings as one travels further up Westmount road will also be negatively affected. Large areas of mature trees, greenery and landscape will be bulldozed. In its place will be a busy, large roadway.

It is obvious leisure facilities will be greatly affected. The bowls club will be demolished. While clearly this is an impact upon its members it also has an ancillary effect by further destroying the peaceful green environment of the area. Other impacts which may not be so immediately obvious is the destruction of an area used by runners and other people using the hill and the stairways for exercise areas. The area is used considerably by people enjoying a relatively quiet area to enjoy these facilities which will be destroyed by construction works and later, the roadway. In short, people will desert the area. People enjoy outside healthy activities and exercise will be evicted in favour of the motorcar.

Homes and the enjoyment of them by their owners will be affected. Starting at the lower part of Westmount Road: the apartments at the former Inn on the Park will be blighted by increased traffic; to a

lesser degree, the residents of homes along Pierson Road will also be affected by increased noise and activity; to a greater extent children and users of Westmount Nursery will be negatively impacted by being located immediately adjacent to a much larger road; bottlenecks and build up of traffic already experienced at the foot of Westmount Road will increase affecting all residents at that location; the residents of the newly built Dandara apartments in the old quarry will be massively affected. The current (relatively) peaceful surroundings will markedly change making it more likely the residents will be forced to close windows and balcony doors and use of balcony spaces will become much less desirable; finally residents of houses located at the top of Westmount Road (Hillcrest etc) will be immeasurably prejudiced. Some of these will be forced to relocate because their properties will be acquired in the process. Others, who remain, face worse consequences because their current peaceful small estate of homes will be utterly destroyed by the impact of a road of massively increased size as well as use.

Do you feel the plans offer easy access using bus, bicycle or walking and take into account appropriate sustainable methods of transport?

No. The plans simply make mention of doing so. There are no clear plans which show how this will be achieved. The physical location of the hospital at Overdale immediately poses difficulties to all these matters. The PAR does nothing to make access easier.

Do you feel the public were given adequate time to properly consider all the information provided by the States to engage properly in consultation?

This has to be answered not just in terms of time but also time in the current circumstances. The impact of Covid on the ability to meet and engage with one another impacts to a large extent on the ability to properly engage. As I develop below, the time period was not sufficient but was even further reduced in effectiveness because of the restrictions imposed by covid regulations.

Unfortunately, the public were misled. They were misled because they were first faced with the issue of the location of the hospital. When that was approved - and only when that was approved (or about to be) - did the issue of the access route arise prominently. The amount of time in respect of the PAR should have been at least commensurate with the period of time regarding hospital location consultation and importantly - should have run alongside it.

Do you feel that any views of the public (whether minority or majority views) were adequately addressed by the Government of Jersey?

I am unsure of the definition of 'Government of Jersey'.

I do not believe the States' Assembly was adequately informed of the potential large scale impact on homeowners at the top of Westmount Road and the possible need to consider issues such as financial compensation or purchase of properties even if not required immediately in the project.

I do not believe individual State's members responded to individual representations.

Was your voice heard?

I do not think the question has relevance to me.

Other Matters

I am opposed to Overdale being the site for the new hospital. I consider it to be a location which is laden with problems before any construction begins, I consider it to be an area which should have more sensitive development, and moreover, I consider it to be a site to which access is going to always be an issue. It is obvious that locating Jersey's only hospital on the top of a hill surrounded by narrow winding access routes is problematic. It necessarily calls for large scale demolition and construction roadworks. Despite the need for these changes, I do not consider the matters were brought to the forefront of people's attention. I consider the process whereby a site is first selected where important information is not properly disclosed at that time is misleading. Further, the fact that engineering examinations and explorations have not properly taken place is very worrying. If works commence on building a hospital and it is later discovered the PAR is not possible or has to be amended to enlarge it or acquire further land the public of the Island have no choice but to agree. The point of no return will have been passed.

The whole process was flawed and the current process concerning the PAR is equally flawed whereby the proponents wish to impose the PAR against the wishes of many and without proper consideration of alternatives supported by proper data and evidence.

Yours faithfully,

Olaf Blakeley