

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**3.12 Deputy J.H. Young of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding applications for the development of the Esplanade car park site:**

Will the Minister confirm whether the 2 latest applications for the development of the Esplanade car park site by the States of Jersey Development Company are required to comply with every aspect of the Hopkins Masterplan, as amended by its predecessor, including lowering the road, public domains improvements, and elements other than offices and, if so, what measures will he be taking to ensure that such applications comply fully?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel (The Minister for Planning and Environment):**

The Deputy will be aware that the 2 applications to which he refers, P.2013/0993 and P.2013/1209, are both current proposals and, as live applications - which I have called in for my determination - I do not want to prejudice their proper determination in a formal forum in due course. However, within this context I can refer the Deputy to my answer to his question, 1240/5780 in October this year, when I confirmed that Policy BE2 of the Jersey Island Plan requires that the Esplanade Quarter Masterplan, the Waterfront S.P.G. (Supplementary Planning Guidance) will be the principal considerations in the determination of relevant planning applications. To demonstrate these considerations I can also refer the Deputy to my determination earlier this year of the first application for an office building on the Esplanade car park site, P.2012/1141. In that determination I carefully examined the relationship with the Hopkins Masterplan, including the amendment which dealt with the potential for the road to be in a later phase. In issuing my approval I required a full understanding of the commercial and practical realities of delivering the Masterplan. The early application contained a phasing plan for the Esplanade car park element of the project, and I applied specific conditions to consider if the timetable for the delivery of the wider Esplanade Quarter beyond the car park site. The Deputy will also be aware from my answer to his question 1240/5780 in October this year that permission already exists for residential development on some of the Masterplan site, P.2009/1462. I am also aware that one of the current applications does contain significant public ground works, creating a landscaped public park as part of the subterranean car park works. These applications do, therefore, show that the broader elements of the Masterplan, other than offices, are being brought forward.

**3.12.1 Deputy J.H. Young:**

I thank the Minister for reminding me of the written answer on 8th October. Would he not accept that, in effect, he is in a situation of having to rely on conditions in order to see the Masterplan completed? Would he not accept that there is the risk, since the States of Jersey Development Company is effectively ourselves, that if the profit from that development - if it goes ahead - is not made that we will never see the Masterplan implemented. Is that not the reality?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

I obviously will take into account Deputy Young's comments when I come to determine the applications. But I do not think I should prejudice the determination, as I mentioned earlier, with any comments to his questions at this stage.

**3.12.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:**

I would like to ask the Minister a question which is based on comments I made at a recent presentation by the States of Jersey Jersey Development Company about the scheme, so that they are on the record of the States. Would the Minister confirm that if the scheme proceeds that there should be no restaurants or significant retail space on the Esplanade Quarter as this would detract from such facilities elsewhere in town? That water features should not be compromised by spurious concerns over health and safety - and that does not mean that all health and safety is spurious but that the concerns about deep water probably are. Finally, that the underground parking on the site is fit for purpose.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Again, all I can do is to answer in the same way as I answered Deputy Young. All those points will be taken into account indeed when I come to determine the application, and comments in this forum should not be made to indicate which way I will be going. But all I can say is that the comments having been made will be listened to and weighed up.

**3.12.3 Deputy J.H. Young:**

I appreciate the Minister's difficult position since he has the decision to make. Would the Minister tell us, has he got a closed mind to ordering a planning inquiry in order to establish with certainty whether these matters that he has just referred can be assured? If he finds that there are conflicting views and all the information is not available when he comes to make that decision, is his mind closed to hold an inquiry to answer these questions definitively?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

The Deputy has already been in conversation with myself and the Planning and Environment Department requesting that such an inquiry be undertaken now. In that respect my mind has been made up somewhat; obviously in due consideration of the item when it lands on my desk all of these things will be weighed up in due course.