

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

**3.15 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the future of the Central and Beresford markets:**

Would the Minister explain his strategy for the future of the Central and Beresford markets, including any proposals in relation to traders' leases?

**Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):**

The broad strategy for the markets is to work with the traders and other stakeholders to improve the facilities, develop opportunities to increase footfall, and maintain the markets as vibrant destinations. A programme of works is planned for both the fish market and the central market, which is being developed in consultation with the market tenants. The current 9-year lease has 4 tenants in the central and fish markets, it expires on 24th December of this year. New forms of leases for a further 9 years have been sent to all tenants. Rents based on primary, secondary storage, and external areas occupied have been calculated and tenants will receive the rent proposals for their individual units this week. Specific terms will be agreed with the individual tenants that recognise the nature of their businesses and the future investment that the tenants will be making.

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

I am very grateful to the Assistant Minister and to his department for the work they are doing on the markets, which are the jewel in the crown of our retail offer in St. Helier. But it sounds to me rather late to be talking about new leases when we are already halfway through November and the leases expire at the end of the year. Can he assure the Assembly that the traders' views about their leases will be fully taken on board and that no one will be forced out of business because of the changing leases?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

No one is going to be forced out of business by the changing leases. This has been an ongoing dialogue between the department and the traders for the best part of a year now. The Constable may recall that we originally wanted to do a bigger piece of work and extend the current leases for a further 2 years while that work was undertaken. That was not received well by the tenants. We listened to them and that is why they are having new 9-year leases being offered. Those leases, in draft form, were sent to them earlier this year and we are just working through the final details now up to their renewal.

**3.15.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Assistant Minister have a new leaseholder for the relatively large space immediately on the left as you go into the fish market from this end, which has been empty for something like the last 15 months?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

That particular space we are working with the traders in the fish market, we are still looking at proposals of possibly utilising that space and knocking through to the western wall into Castle Street and using maybe an alfresco area in that area. But without setting any hares running, we are yet to discuss any plans with the current occupiers of that space, being Jersey Telecom, they use it for van parking. But we are working closely with a group of tenants from the fish market to produce a fish market that is going to be vibrant and sustainable for the foreseeable future.

**3.15.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

That sounds like to me plans which are half made a month from the renewal date for leases. Does the Minister not consider that is inadequate planning?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

I can inform the good Deputy that we opened these discussions with these proposals with the market tenants back in the spring of this year, and we have been working closely with them throughout the summer developing those plans. But we want to get it right the first time so we are taking the time to make sure that what we do with the fish market works for the traders and the public.

**3.15.4 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Would the Assistant Minister advise whether there is to be any increase in the rents, if so what are they, and are they R.P.I. (Retail Price Index) based or are they above R.P.I. or below?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

The rents for all market tenants will be based on the square footage areas of their prime space, their storage space, any space that is being used, for example alfresco eating, *et cetera*. This has been done by an independent professional from outside of Property Holdings and we have been able to give assurances to the traders that their rents will not be increasing substantially. But the overall mix they pay will determine on what type of premises that they are occupying.

**3.15.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

He said the rents will not be increasing substantially, presumably as an average they will not be but is it likely that some stallholders will see a sharp increase in their rent and others may not?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

No, I can confirm that tenants will not be receiving a sharp increase. Some will be paying slightly more for prime space, slightly less for less prime space, but we are managing to keep that within reasonable limits.

**3.15.6 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:**

Firstly, can the Assistant Minister obviously confirm - which I think they are - that Property Holdings are the owners or manage the markets? Can he also confirm that there has in the last year been no overall strategy for the markets, no consultation with the Constable, the Tourism Department, the town centre management? Would he not agree that beginning just before a new 9-year lease signing, all this should have been sorted out many months ago because they are going to hobble along exactly how they are now and probably still close on a Thursday afternoon and plead poverty.

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

Unfortunately the Deputy is not sufficiently well informed. We have been having extensive consultation with other parties apart from the tenants. We have been consulting with the Chamber of Commerce, we have in fact been consulting through the town centre team with the Parish of St. Helier. We are working in partnership with a number of bodies, but particularly we are working in partnership with the tenants and the traders and we are ensuring that they have a vibrant place to work and their livelihood.

**3.15.7 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

Can the Assistant Minister confirm apart from the rising rent is there going to be any change in terms and conditions? Are they going to be uniformed? Are the markets going to open on a Thursday afternoon?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

I can confirm that core hours are being set out in the terms and they are for all the units to be open for 6 hours a day for 6 days a week. I will have to come back to the Deputy on that because I do not want to give misinformation, but there are core hours of 6 hours per day, 6 days a week.

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

I am grateful to the Assistant Minister for the information he has supplied us with and I hope that his confidence is borne out in terms of the leases. Could he in closing agree with me perhaps that our central markets and fish market are extremely important to the Island, as well as to St. Helier, and that he will work as far as possible with the Minister for Economic Development to ensure that they are promoted and made a very central part of our tourism offer?

**Deputy E.J. Noel:**

I am happy to confirm that but it is not only the Minister for Economic Development, we are also working with other Ministerial colleagues, such as the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to improve parking and drop-off and pick-up facilities in the area as well.