

States of Jersey States Assembly

Scrutiny Panel

Dear Senator Moore

Access to Overdale

14 January 2021

I am responding on behalf of Cycle4Jersey to your request dated 4 January 2021 for our views. Addressing the questions posed:

1. Were you consulted in regard to the proposed access route, if so, at what stages?

Only in your letter dated 4 January

2. How will you be affected by the proposed access route to Overdale?

C4J exists to promote cycling generally and specifically in Jersey as part of the encouragement of sustainable transport and sustainable, healthy and quality life. The States have declared a Climate Emergency. A vital element of the response to that Emergency should be the requirement to reduce vehicle use and dependency on motorised transport. It can only be concluded that the solution proposed will increase vehicle movements and worsen the situation. It appears throughout that consideration wasn't properly given in approval of Overdale as the preferred site and use and re-engineering of Westmount Rd as the access route to it of how this meets the adjustments required by Climate Change.

3. Were you given the opportunity to request clarifications if required?

No.

4. Are you content with the level of engagement you had from the OH Team and GoJ throughout regarding the proposed access route?

No- as above, we had not previously been consulted.

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

No.

Siting and constructing a single site hospital at Overdale could hardly be worse in offering easy access for bikes. Whilst there is potential for pedestrian routes they will not suit all those who should have access to the hospital. Able cyclists or those with eBikes are able to climb up Westmount and Old St John's Rd. Cycling up Westmount Rd is pleasant enough at present, but will become less so with expansion of the road's width, heavy construction vehicles and more vehicles generally. In assessing road suitability for bikes a mixed "active travel" route for pedestrians and cyclists, as hypothesised, doesn't suit all cyclists, in particular road cyclists. It then creates friction with drivers who dislike cyclists using the road when there is a mixed footpath/ cycle route available.

6. How will the proposed access route change and impact on the work you currently undertake?

Whilst alternatives including park and ride were notionally considered, the responses which those asked appear to have given, mean in practice that the only option realistically considered seems to be on-site parking. Apparently this may involve conversion of two fields into car parks, exactly what the Island does not need. Will the whole Island become a car park? In addition because of their site in part above a quarry in which flats have been built this raises drainage concerns with water run-off. There would also presumably be the need to install vehicle calming and crossing from the car parks to the Hospital site.

There is then the potential conflict with access to the crematorium. I noted an article in the JEP suggesting the crematorium be moved if Overdale is to be the single hospital site. If it is, then it would be better to use the crematorium site rather than the fields across Westmount Rd for parking. In making this suggestion this doesn't imply approval of the expansion of car parking generally.

There is already too much traffic using Tower Rd and St John's Rd and "temporary" crossing and traffic calming has been installed to improve safe access to Mont a l'Abbée and Haut Vallée School. Construction and operation of a single site hospital at Overdale will only worsen the situation, necessitating further traffic calming and crossings.

7. What do you think the key challenges will be for the preferred access route?

The level of contingencies suggest there can be no confidence that the scheme will come in under budget.

The States accepted Constable Crowcroft's amendment to its adoption of Overdale as the preferred site to "maximize sustainable modes of travel to and from the new hospital, and to minimize the impact on homes, leisure facilities and the surrounding environment of the access interventions currently proposed"

What is proposed will palpably fail these criteria;

- I was told that the present parking between trees to the SE side of People's Park would be converted into an access lane for Westmount Rd.
- There are also plans to reduce or shift the present children's play area and cut into the bank and pedestrian walk on the N side of People's Park allowing a wider carriageway for Westmount Rd.
- The Bowling Green will be extinguished.
- Three houses will be subject to compulsory acquisition. Others will be crowded in by car parking.

People's Park itself was rejected as a site for the New Hospital. However it now appears its size and qualities will be significantly impacted anyway to provide access for the development of Overdale, so the worst of all outcomes.

Conclusion

Reports indicate that States Members were not properly informed when Overdale was approved as the preferred site. The proposals for access to the site including for construction emphasise its disadvantages as a single hospital site. The plans for substantially expanded car parking are an indictment of the whole scheme.

I was told that all present buildings on the Overdale site would be demolished, requiring the move of the departments presently there, so relocation will anyway be required. Experience during the Covid-19 crisis has confirmed that more medical services can be provided remotely, practically and even with potential savings, using modern technology. The crisis also indicates that stand-alone units may have advantages as infectious diseases can be better isolated. The Jersey Care Manual indicates a future with a less centralised hospital facility, so again suggesting a smaller hospital and/ or decentralised structured.

All this suggests the States should look again at the question of a single choice hospital site and, if adopted, whether Overdale is really the best option.

It is clear Members should not have approved Overdale as the only option without detailed plans and costings. It is clear the scheme presently mooted does not satisfy Constable Crowcroft's requirements for its impact and should be dropped.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'P' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Hargreaves

For Cycle4Jersey