

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE FINANCE AND ECONOMICS
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY, 18th MARCH 2003
BY DEPUTY R.C. DUHAMEL OF ST. SAVIOUR**

Question

In January 2002, the Committee gave its approval to a Planning Vote request for £250,000 to enable studies to be undertaken of a number of sites mainly under the administration of the States of Jersey and the Parish of St Helier with a view to maximizing their development potential.

The Finance and Economics Committee requested the then Planning and Environment Committee to establish a Feasibility Study Co-ordinating Group, (FeSCo), to include political representation from the Planning and Environment, Finance and Economics and the then Public Services Committees, together with a Treasury representative. Area study teams were not to be constrained or restricted in their thinking but to consider previously unidentified alternatives which could provide economic or social benefits.

One of the areas to be considered encompassed Lempriere Street Car Park, the States Car Park adjoining Cyril Le Marquand House, the Public Car Park in Old Street, Cyril Le Marquand House, and the Parade Triangle, which was known as area feasibility study six (AFS6).

Would the President -

- (a) advise members of the cost of the consultancy fees and the civil service time in respect of work undertaken for AFS6?
- (b) confirm that although the terms of reference for the FeSCo Group stipulated the completion of the study by August 2002, the final report was not completed until October 2002, and why no reference to either the existence of the FeSCo Group or its final report on AFS6 was made in the Committee's Report and Proposition P.202/2002, Magistrate's Court: adopted by the States on 5th December 2002?
- (c) advise members of the recommendations contained in the FeSCo Report on AFS6, and, in particular, whether the report recommended the siting of the Magistrate's Court as proposed in P.202/2002, and, if not, explain how this compares financially?
- (d) advise members, in view of the current budgetary constraints, what value of development premium, if any, is the Committee prepared to forego in order to pursue the construction of the Magistrate's Court in the position set out in P.202/2002?

Answer

- (a) The AFS6 study group was led by the Parish of St Helier under the FeSCo umbrella group set up and funded through a planning vote transfer by the then Planning and Environment Committee.

I am advised that the cost of consultancy fees for the AFS6 group was –

John Richards and Partners (architectural consultancy)	£6,317.00
Ross Gower Associates (engineering consultancy)	£ 343.24
Colin Smith and Partners (cost consultancy)	£1,620.00
Total	£8,280.24

The input to the area study (AFS6) by officers of the Parish of St. Helier has been undertaken in addition to those officers' normal duties and no costs have been charged as part of their contribution to the study, nor for civil servants' time.

- (b) The terms of reference provided for the completion of the area feasibility studies was by the end of August 2002, with the production of a document to the FeSCo group in September 2002, to enable the preparation of a coordinated report to political members.

The work of the FeSCo coordinating group was not commenced until January 2003, when all the documents recording the five area studies (subsequently referred to by FeSCo as working papers) were completed. The FESCO coordinated report was finalised in February 2003, after several drafts.

The final version of the AFS6 area document was not available when the Finance and Economics Committee met on 29th November 2002, to consider Magistrates' Court drawings. However, the Committee was provided with an extensive extract from a draft of the area document which I now understand had neither been received by, nor accepted by the FeSCo group at that time.

The Committee considered that the options identified in the draft AFS6 document did not address the requirement to procure a new property to meet the urgent needs of the Magistrates Court and Probation Service. The Committee, therefore, strongly supported the need to continue with the current proposals to develop on the car park site adjacent to Cyril Le Marquand House and uphold previous States' decisions.

Members will be aware that the proposed use of this site for a Magistrates Court has been the preferred option for some time and that this Assembly approved the transfer of the northern section of Old Street from the Parish of St. Helier for the sole purpose of facilitating the construction of a new Magistrates Court with the ancillary States' offices some three years ago when adopting P.201/1999.

The conclusions of the draft AFS6 document were not relevant to the States' discussion in respect of the approval of the drawings for the building to be constructed on the agreed site under P.202/2002.

- (c) The Finance and Economics Committee has, as have all States' members, received but not yet considered the final version of the FeSCo coordinated report. The Deputy will know, as a member of the Environment and Public Services Committee, that this is to be further considered by that Committee. The FeSCo coordinated report recommends that any further study work by the Parish should concentrate on the parish yard on the basis that the Magistrates Court building project will proceed as planned.

The draft AFS6 area document identified three favoured options. Two of these wrongly assumed that the Magistrates Court and Probation Service could be accommodated alongside the proposed new Police Headquarters. This is unacceptable as there is a need for separation of the respective functions, not least to comply with the provisions of Article 6 of the Human Rights (Jersey) Law 2000.

The third option proposed the development of the Magistrates Court building on the present site of Cyril Le Marquand House. Such a radical redevelopment of the whole area could not be achieved within current States funding or in a timescale necessary to deliver the Magistrates Court and Probation Offices.

As the AFS6 report did not identify a credible alternative for the Magistrates Court development, a financial comparison with the proposals approved in P.202/2002 cannot be made. I am informed that entirely independently, the FeSCo coordinating group subsequently reviewed the area document once the report was available and concluded that the figures postulated in it were incomplete since they were unrealistic and failed to take any account of the additional capital cost of replacement facilities which would arise. The FeSCo group therefore rejected the area group's conclusions.

- (d) The preferred options postulated in the draft AFS6 area document in respect of the Magistrates Court are entirely unachievable, therefore any development premium hypothesised by the draft AFS6 document cannot be realised. I am advised that the FeSCo group entirely agree with this

position.