

2015.10.15

3.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the consideration of People's Park as the location of the new hospital:

Can the Minister inform Members when People's Park was put forward for consideration for the location of the new hospital and by whom?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I am pleased to say that the Minister for Treasury and Resources kindly agreed that I could answer this question on behalf of the M.O.G. (Ministerial Oversight Group) about the development of Health and Social Services' transformation. The People's Park was first put forward as a location for a new hospital on 22nd July this year. The site arose when Ministers and the Ministerial Oversight Group discussed what alternatives could potentially offer a good performance, as good a performance as the 4 previous shortlisted options, and requested a planning policy opinion on different alternatives. It was discussed, I think answering the Deputy's question, on 22nd July and no particular person put it forward. It came forward as a part of our discussions, our brainstorming, in the Ministerial Oversight Group.

3.2.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Can the Minister inform Members why this particular site was not considered in the extensive rounds of sites that were considered 2 years ago? My understanding is that the senior officer group looked at 22 sites around the Island, which was whittled down to 10 and then 3 were put forward. The 3 top runners were put forward for consideration. So I am just wondering why it was not put forward 2 years ago when they started the process.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

The very simple answer to that is that while it was not considered as an option for a hospital, it was considered as an option for a car park that might support a hospital. That is because the site at the time, on the information that the Ministers had available to them, was just not big enough. But further work in reducing the size of the hospital - for example, providing more care in the community, providing more changes around primary care - meant that the size of the hospital was somewhat reduced and it did fit on the site. I think it was right to ask the question was it now a viable option.

3.2.2 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

Following on from that, Deputy Hilton asked when and we have just been told 22nd July. When will this Minister cut-off new sites? Because it was only about 8 or 9 weeks ago he said a new site is imminent. Now, which is true? Is this really being taken seriously and all the scoping being done and we might get an answer next year?

[14:45]

Senator A.K.F. Green:

That is somewhat disingenuous of a former Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services, who knows how difficult this job is and knows how important it is that we get the biggest project the States will ever undertake right, not just right for the people of St. Helier, but right for the people of Jersey. This is a hospital for the next 75 to 100 years and I make no apology for taking a little bit longer to think outside the box and look at the options before coming forward with our plan.

3.2.3 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Sorry, the Minister did not answer; a lot of abuse there. I want to know when he is going to put the close date on and when this site will be considered properly.

Commented [KS1]: Not sure she said this

Senator A.K.F. Green:

When the work is completed. When I have seen all the reports, when I have discussed it with my Ministerial colleagues and when I have taken it to the Council of Ministers.

3.2.4 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. Helier:

As a former Deputy of the District, it will be no surprise to the Minister that there was a public outcry about this matter. Based on that and his own experiences in the District, would he consider withdrawing this as an option at this stage or not?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

No, because there will be an outcry wherever I put it. There will be an outcry if we put it in the People's Park. There will be an outcry from the residents up around Overdale. There will be an outcry if we go to the Waterfront. There will be an outcry from me if we stay on the same site and take 11 years to build a new hospital.

3.2.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I am disturbed to learn that the Council of Ministers might be following the Joni Mitchell school of politics where they pave people's parks to put up a parking lot. That is what we have heard this morning. Perhaps the Minister can tell us helpfully what the minimum ballpark figure is that he is looking at for the new hospital site.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I have been asked that question so many times you would think I would remember it. I am sorry, I cannot remember the square meterage but I will let Members have it. But I like the song.

3.2.6 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier:

The Minister says he is thinking outside the box. Is he still thinking outside St. Helier when in the U.K. (United Kingdom) when new hospitals are built in out of city centres, like Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, Addenbrooke's in Cambridge, the new Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh, they are all about 4 miles outside of town, about the same distance as St. Saviour's Hospital is from St. Helier.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

There are a number of questions there. Addenbrooke's Hospital might be 4 miles out of town, but it is actually built in the middle of a park. I have spoken to the chairman of the authority only the other day about this. St. Saviour's Hospital just is not big enough as a site. Not only would you need a site that is completely clear, if you go outside of town you will need to provide car parking similar to the size of Patriotic Street Car Park. Now, you can do that underground, if the topography allows it, or you can take up field after field after field of surface car parking. But even if you were able to do that, a hospital needs infrastructure. It needs mains sewerage, it needs proper electrical supplies, and all these things are considered when looking at a site.

3.2.7 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:

Is the Minister committed to building the new hospital, if it is a new site, within the St. Helier ring road or thereabouts?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I am committed to find a site that works, that is affordable, that provides a sustainable, affordable and first-class hospital for the people of Jersey.

3.2.8 Connétable M.P.S. Le Troquer of St. Martin:

Could the Minister tell us if any incentives have been given to the Constable or the Parish of St. Helier for the possible use of the land?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I have to be fair to the Constable. We have had a telephone conversation and a meeting with the Chief Minister, so no formal negotiations have taken place, just that - in principle - we would like to look at it. We did indicate to the Constable that obviously if it did turn out that that was the best site, if that was the way to go, then obviously we know that we would need to provide an alternative park and amenity space.

3.2.9 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

The Minister in answer to one of the questions said he believed that there would be an outcry wherever the new hospital was located, but I think we have seen by the outpourings of the public when the suggestion that the People's Park was under consideration that the people think that that is absolutely wrong and it should not happen. It is important green space for St. Helier, St. Helier needs more green space, not less. My question to the Minister is: the Waterfront was one of the top 3 ranked sites for the new hospital. In fact, I believe it was number one out of the top 3. Can the Minister ... sorry, Sir, I have forgotten what I was going to say. Will the Minister confirm that ... oh, I am sorry, Sir, I have completely lost my thread. I am sorry.