

21.11.23

6 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Children and Education regarding the Primary School Estate Review (OQ.232/2021):

Further to the response to Oral Question 220/2021, will the Minister indicate the timeline for consideration of the recommendations of the Primary School Estate Review, including when any reports will be published; and will he advise what consultation on the recommendations, if any, is planned with stakeholders before any final decisions are taken?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier (The Minister for Children and Education):

I am unable to give the Deputy a detailed timeline at this time. The report is due to be discussed at the Regeneration Steering Group next week and the next steps will be dependent on the outcome of the Regeneration Steering Group's meeting. The report will be published in June but at this time it is still in development and needs to pass through the relevant decision-making bodies as detailed in my previous answer to the Deputy. As far as consultation, this will take place in accordance with the Education Law at the appropriate time and this will include a report to the States. I am happy to consult with the Deputy after the Regeneration Steering Group meeting, if that is helpful to the Deputy.

4.6.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I notice that the report will be published in June, so it will be almost a year since we expected the report. Now my question that in the Government Plan 2021-2024 we had £22 million allocated to the development of Rouge Bouillon. I cannot see any reference to the development of Rouge Bouillon in Government Plan 2022-2025. Where has this funding gone?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden:

In the Government Plan we have funding allocated for a north of St. Helier school and a south of St. Helier school. That is where the work is looking. What we have done within this review is we have looked at what that would look like: will it be a new school, will it be an extension to a school? There are many sites, there is lots of detail involved in it that needs careful consideration.

4.6.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Will the report be published before deadlines for the Government Plan?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden:

No, they will not because the deadlines for the Government Plan are on the 30th of this month and we have the Regeneration Steering Group and then the Assembly needs to go through the process, so no, it will not.

4.6.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

What advice would the Minister give for Members, particularly St. Helier Members, who are desperate to support our primary schools regards amendments to the Government Plan, to try and push this through if we have no sight of the school review?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden:

I think amendments without detail are unhelpful, so it is to wait for the detail. But I would ask Members to support the monies that are in there for a north of St. Helier and a south of St. Helier

school as set out in the Government Plan, as that money is for the future and can be changed in the next Government Plan. That is what I would ask.

4.6.4 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would bring to the Minister's attention to the following figures. Between 2021-2024 we planned to spend, and the States voted for, £22 million on the St. Helier primary school estate. Now, when I look at the current Government Plan between 2022-2025, a year later, it is a reduction of £6.5 million in spending for the St. Helier school estate. Are there any other projects the Minister can consider that can go quicker and the money that was allocated last year can be used to improve St. Helier primary school estates?

Deputy S.M. Wickenden:

The money set out is to do with building or extending into a new school. It has been moved in line with the art of the possible. Officers do consider all of this when they put forward recommendations. It is about next year what money is possible to be spent and what will be ready. The following years are having money put in to the Government Plan. Although, as we all know, as we have a rolling plan those monies and amounts can change and go up and down depending on the feasibility work and the starting work. So that is how it works.