

Dear Scrutiny Panel (Scrutiny@gov.je),

This is my response to your call for public input on the proposed Westmount Road access to the Overdale site and p.167/2020 (scroll down, bottom of email).

I am taking this opportunity to share some thoughts below about the scrutiny panels and the new hospital for Jersey. I would appreciate if these are shared with the government and other politicians, I'll also likely send them to the local medias:

Scrutiny Panels

I think that in general the scrutiny panels and PAC are doing a very good job at examining, investigating, the work of the Government and offering some levels of balance of power in a very narrow, self centric, Jersey political system.

Scrutiny panels must be valued and empowered.

New Hospital Project

My personal responses to some of the most shocking and misleading statements repeated over and over in the last few months by the most senior members of the government (Senator John Le Fondré, Senator Ian Gorst, Senator Lyndon Farnham and Deputy Susie Pinel). Please note that my responses are not directly aimed against the Overdale site but would apply to any site that would cost £800M and that would require the construction of a road and the demolition of more than 20 buildings and homes.

- ***This is money well spent, Overdale is future proof and will support expansion for the next 40 years.***

Probably the most shocking statement from the government, is how it can justify spending £800 million to build a hospital on a hill while it'll take the local economy years to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, that no one can fully assess yet, the negative impact of Brexit on Jersey, and that the probable risk of a new financial crisis in the coming years? Now more than ever, Jersey needs value for money and to be fiscally prudent to restrict public borrowing.

Money wisely spent would be to spend the minimum to deliver what is needed based on a comprehensive business case and invest in supporting the local economy (hospitality sector), transportation (Conder Ferries lost £40M in 2020 alone) and raise wages for the health workers (these are just examples).

This government cannot fund free buses or lunches for children, or spend a few thousands to provide the technology for home learning to some children but this Assembly was able to vote a £800M budget in 30 minutes without any debate?

From a medical administration perspective this is going against history, the 21st century trend is to build smaller units/departments in multiple locations ... downsizing and flexibility are the keywords and is enshrined in the Jersey Care Model. Another world best practice is to build new hospitals outside urban areas. The medical and health landscape and ecosystem in 10 years from now will be totally different from we know or do now ... building big for the next 40 years is political megalomania at best!

- ***People are fed up with the hospital saga and want to move fast. We have no time to look at other alternatives and every day costs tens of thousands. We owe the People to deliver.***

True that people are fed up ... they are fed up at politicians pursuing their personal interests or with hidden agendas. Selecting the most expensive and risky site (“report page 143: “Overdale is more expensive and poses a higher risk in cost terms”) without full transparency (i.e. publishing estimated costs and time for top 10 sites) is not going to increase confidence in this wicked government.

The proposal to build the future hospital at Overdale will require constructing a 1.5 km road that would take a year to build and then demolish the 10+ buildings of the existing site and 10+ private homes for another year of work before putting down the first brick at the new hospital. In short it means that we need 2 years before we land the first brick of the new hospital while construction at some other sites could start as early as in a few weeks/months.

The government is in a hurry to start and to spend money but can afford to wait 2 years for a site to be ready?

- ***The Site Selection report suggests to submit 3 separate planning applications (1-to build new Westmount road, 2-to demolish existing hospital and 3-to build new hospital) in order to speed up the process.***

The reality is that it is a way to skirt the planning application process and to put pressure on the planning department. How can the planning application to demolish the existing hospital to build a new hospital be approved if the application to the build the new hospital is not submitted and/or approved?

Kind Regards