

23.05.23

12 Deputy C.S. Alves of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the long-term plan for the old Les Quennevais School site in delivering hospital facilities (OQ.106/2023)

In light of the Minister for Infrastructure's recent comments that the hospital facilities created at the old Les Quennevais School site could be kept for 20 to 25 years, will the Minister clarify what her long-term plan is for the services due to be delivered from this site, given that it was meant to be a temporary 5-year measure?

Deputy K. Wilson of St. Clement (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

At this moment in time, it is too early to identify or determine what the long-term plan for the services that will remain as Enid Quenault Health and Wellbeing Centre looks like. We are waiting for the feasibility review on the new healthcare facility programme and once we have a clear understanding of what that tells us, I will be happy to share more information.

3.12.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Was the Minister aware of this 20 to 25-year plan for the site before the Minister for Infrastructure made those comments?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I was not aware of the timescale, but we are talking about 2 different things here. We are talking about the lifespan of the building and we are talking about the way in which services can be provided over a 25-year period.

[11:15]

As we all know, services do change and the requirements will change. In essence, that does not stop the function of Enid Quenault Health and Wellbeing Centre being supported to provide services in the local community over a 25-year period, if indeed that is the duration of the fabric of the building.

3.12.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister may be aware of the political slogan "Nothing About Us Without Us". That is the idea that representatives should not make any decisions without the full consultation and engagement of those directly affected. In thinking about that, I am thinking immediately about those in the vicinity of Le Clos des Sables and Les Quennevais Park. I cannot help feeling that there has not been any meaningful consultation with these residents in particular, who are now being told that they might be left with what was supposed to be a temporary hospital facility on their doorstep for about 5 years, potentially being there for the next 25 years. Can she comment about what consultation has taken place, either with her department or with D.f.I. (Department for Infrastructure)?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I would like to reiterate that the reason why we are at the Enid Quenault Health and Wellbeing Centre is to support the decanting of the Overdale facility to make way for new healthcare facilities on that site. Clearly there has been some opportunity identified to build and consolidate the provision of services in the location, but any long-term planning will certainly involve a much broader consultation with the local public as well as with the representatives who represent the parishioners' interests.

3.12.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I cannot help feeling we are putting the cart before the horse here. It sounds like decisions are either being made at the moment by stealth. I cannot help feeling that we are sleepwalking into a situation where we do not really know where the hospital is going and that because of that we are making consequential decisions. In my constituency, and in the heart of the most populated area of my constituency, there was high hopes, I think, when the old school was ceased to be used, that it could be used for some longer-term community use, which was not simply - if you will excuse the rather clumsy expression - the plonking of a healthcare facility because there was nowhere else for it to go. Will she speak to the direct representatives of that area, including the 2 non-Ministerial members to make sure that the residents of the area are engaged with in short order through a meeting that is convenient for all parties?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, I would be happy to do that.

3.12.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister agree that given the level of investment to date on the site that extending its life can only provide better value for the people of Jersey?

The Bailiff:

Minister? The question is directed to you, Minister.

Deputy K. Wilson:

My apologies, sorry. Could I ask the Deputy to repeat, please?

The Bailiff:

All right. Would you mind repeating the question, Connétable?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Of course, Sir. Given the level of investment in the site so far, would the Minister agree that extending its life can only provide better value for the people of Jersey?

Deputy K. Wilson:

As I have said before, it is too early to say. I think we will get really good value out of it for the duration that was originally identified. Clearly, this decision was taken before I came into office. But I think the facility that is available in the location will serve the community well, irrespective of what it provides.

3.12.5 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister agree that her team in developing the proposals have been engaging well with the Parish authority in terms of the Roads Committee and the arrangements needed to enable the hospital to open with bus access and so on? Would she agree with that process, that it has worked well?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I will review it. I have had some representation as to some concerns raised by constituents and if I feel that the process to determine access is an issue, then I will certainly address that.

3.12.6 Deputy R.J. Ward:

In any consultation about long term use of a facility, will the Minister take on board the effects of putting such a facility into an area where lots of people live in terms of the transport issues that do arise when these things happen?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, access is an issue, not only transport wise but also in terms of the volume of activity that goes on there, and we will keep this under review. What I can actually advise Assembly Members is that we do have a range of services that are going to be provided and we have no sense at the moment as to whether or not people will choose to go and take these services at Les Quennevais or whether they will choose different options. One of the things that we do know is that there are clinicians who are very interested to provide those services at Les Quennevais but, as I said, there is an issue of band access.

3.12.7 Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of transport, will the facility have staff that are solely based in that health facility or will there be a movement of staff around the number of different health facilities, which could also increase the movement around that area?

Deputy K. Wilson:

At the moment we are planning to have sort of static services that will have identified staff groups, and I am happy to provide Assembly Members with the list of the services that will be planned for over the 5-year period. Clearly, as service arrangements and such requirements change, this may well fluctuate and we will keep this under review.

3.12.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As this was originally planned as temporary accommodation for services while Overdale was planned for those 5 years, my understanding was that a number of those services being moved were in community services that were happy on a temporary basis but, potentially, it is less convenient to be not centrally-based. What conversations has the Minister had with those services about this being a more longer-term option and whether indeed this is the best place for these services to be situated on the Island?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Sorry, Sir, just before I answer that, I am having problems with my microphone button here; it keeps sticking, so if I cannot turn it off ...

The Bailiff:

It is on at the moment I think, so I think you are fine.

Deputy K. Wilson:

Is that okay? It is all right, okay.

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy K. Wilson:

In answer to the Deputy's question, there have been a number of staff groups and specialisms that have talked to me about the concerns that they have got, particularly in relation to access to

services. One of the things that I think is important to remember is that we have planned for this on a 5-year basis and, clearly, that needs to be an arrangement in place until we are in a position to be able to provide the alternative hospital facilities where these services could or may be permanently located. But for this moment in time we are listening, we are talking to staff, we are trying to understand some of the concerns. Again, until we move and see how the service is working, I am not in a position to address some of those issues until we know whether the service is working for patients.

3.12.9 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Given the uncertainty that the Minister has just expressed, does she consider the additional expenditure on making this facility suitable for a 25-year term to be good value for money?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I think that will be determined over time. I think the investment that has gone into the service arrangements at this moment in time represents good value for money in the sense that it is providing much more suitable accommodation for the majority of the services that will be relocated there. It will be a modern refurbished environment. Some of the facilities are not offering that currently. That said, there will be no real change for some of the services that currently enjoy decent facilities. But faced with the strategic choices that we have got, you have to make an investment in the transition and the development of services so that we can start to build new healthcare facilities across the Island. Our investment in these facilities have been, in my view, well used because if you go round to the centre itself you will see the specification, it is a really good building for people to work in.

3.12.10 Deputy C.S. Alves:

We have heard from the Minister that obviously these things take time and it is fairly flexible at the moment. Can the Minister give us an idea of when she will have a plan and an idea of how exactly things will look on the site?

Deputy K. Wilson:

I think on the outcome of the feasibility review we will then start to develop the service strategy. The feasibility review has been undertaken to assess whether or not it is possible to move from a one-site option to a 2-site option. What we now need to do is the next stage of that is to understand how and in what way we will strategically organise services for the longer term. I will put a caveat in with that, which is that we do need to take account of the fast-moving changes that impact upon the way services are provided, particularly the developments of technology. This is not a fixed point but there are some basic foundations that we need to put in place that will be revealed through a service strategy going forward.