

3.11 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding land-based options for St. Helier Harbour area youth facility:

Would the Minister confirm what other land-based options, if any, have been considered alongside the planned floating youth café?

Deputy J.B. Fox (Assistant Minister of Education, Sport and Culture):

The need for youth provision in the southern area of St. Helier has been known for some time. It is an area of town where young people naturally congregate. A youth café - the "Move On Café", - in the old Harbour Offices, have been very popular with young people and they have enabled the Youth Service to confirm the type of venue and the style of approach preferred by young people. The Department of Education, Sport and Culture has always known that the use of these premises would only provide a temporary solution. Our young people deserve better than this. In discussion with the Waterfront Enterprise Board, over the last 2 years, it has become clear that plans for redeveloping the Waterfront make the provision of affordable youth facilities very problematic. Purchasing suitable premises would be beyond the resources of the department and rental values in the area are expected to rise.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry but it is a very simple question: "What other land based options are being considered?" You have not started to tell us that yet.

Deputy J.B. Fox:

Very sorry, Sir, I am guided by my department.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, your department is too long [Laughter] and should focus on the questions.

Deputy J.B. Fox:

The answer is that a number of land-based contenders have been looked at, over a considerable period of time, and basically the historic vessel is the one that has come out on top, Sir.

3.11.1 Deputy S. Pitman:

Could the Deputy explain where these land-based options were and also could he explain what has happened to the area of land designated for youth provision in the original WEB (Waterfront Enterprise Board) design brief?

Deputy J.B. Fox:

Yes. The one in the original WEB design brief I recently brought up at the Waterfront Forum 2 weeks ago. That no longer exists as it has been taken out of the equation, hence all the alternatives that we have been looking at. We have been looking at sites around the Weighbridge area, we have gone as far afield as the area adjacent to the new town park which is not an appropriate area for this particular use.

3.11.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Assistant Minister not consider that what amounts to a commitment - a promise - has been reneged on by WEB?

Deputy J.B. Fox:

Yes, Sir, but not necessarily by WEB, because we took this up to the previous P and R (Policy and Resources Committee) and the Chief Minister, who has now made a pledge that within one year the Council of Ministers - or he himself - pledges that they will be producing a firm plan for the provision of much needed youth facilities in St. Helier. We just have not got there yet, Sir.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Thank you. A year too late.

3.11.3 Deputy S. Pitman:

When does ESC (Education, Sport and Culture) plan to bring the historic vessel to Jersey and could he confirm whether or not it has been paid for?

Deputy J.B. Fox:

No, we are only on the feasibility studies at the moment. This is very early stages. We are looking at the options that are available to us, the costings, the health and safety and all the other issues and we have not reached that stage at this time.

3.11.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Assistant Minister confirm that the idea he has floated of a skateboard park in a warehouse at the harbour could be linked with the development of youth facilities in that area?

Deputy J.B. Fox:

At this time anything could be linked until some firm plans have been brought forward. I am awaiting some positive results of the Chief Minister's pledge through the support of WEB (Waterfront Enterprise Board), the Harbour Office and a whole host of agencies. There will be some youth facilities. The main proposal that we understood that this warehouse would be vacated - if the proposals for the modernisation of St. Helier Port was that the existing tenants would be moving out - was that it seemed that this should also be looked at as an appropriate venue for youth activity. It is in the right area and, by the looks of it, it is the right size and, yes, it could incorporate other youth facilities but that, again, is subject to further reviews and discussions at this time.