

23.05.23

1 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding contingency planning for increased traffic flows arising from the movement of gym facilities to Springfield Stadium (OQ.97/2023)

Will the Minister explain what contingency plans are in place for the increased traffic flow around Springfield Stadium generated by the closure of Fort Regent and the subsequent movement of facilities to Springfield; and, further to this, what communication, if any, has been undertaken with other Ministers or the Connétable of St. Helier regarding this issue?

Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The closure of Fort Regent involved a comprehensive assessment of traffic around the Springfield Stadium as part of a planning application for the recent refurbishment works. Measures to manage the increased traffic included upgrading the main site access, extending car park capacity to 61 spaces, that is inclusive of disabled and electric vehicle spaces, and promoting sustainable travel with additional cycle parking and pedestrian pathways. The transport assessment suggested that the potential impact on traffic during peak hours would be low and could be managed. The Parish of St. Helier were aware of the plans and I note they submitted a formal consultee response as part of the planning process.

3.1.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have been contacted by a number of residents who have said at times it has been gridlocked around that area, particularly when there are school clubs. Was the Minister aware that this might happen in any of the contingency plans or the planning for traffic that were made before the move from Fort Regent?

Deputy T. Binet:

I think there are always going to be concerns in that regard and to that end I took a visit to the gym myself yesterday evening, and I spoke to a number of people in the gym about a number of things. I think we need to wait a little while longer and see how things pan out.

3.1.2 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Is the Minister aware of an agreement made some years ago by the then Minister responsible for Fort Regent, former Deputy Pat Ryan, that no loss of green space should be suffered at Springfield as a result of increasing car parking? While we know that more parking is needed, I am slightly concerned to be reassured that there has not been any loss in children's play space or green amenity space as a result of the increase in parking.

Deputy T. Binet:

As I understand it, the Parish put in an objection to the plans to relocate the children's car park and, as such, the green space has been preserved. I can confirm that there are no plans at the moment to change that, so hopefully that is reassuring.

3.1.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

On a recent visit to Springfield it was pointed out to me that the front area, in front of the entrance, has been largely given over to cycle parking. While of course that is a good thing, there were concerns raised to me by members involved in the running of Springfield that this space in front of Springfield could be put to better use than parking of any vehicles and, furthermore, that there were

issues about the potential for young people to run out of Springfield Stadium into a very busy road. I wonder whether the Minister would be willing to meet with me, and perhaps Deputy Ward, to discuss how this part of Springfield could be enhanced and made secure.

Deputy T. Binet:

I am very happy to do that.

3.1.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South:

Does the Minister recognise the validity of the concerns that have been raised by residents in the area about the level of traffic that they have experienced in the recent days since the opening of the facilities at Springfield and, if he does recognise the validity of those concerns, what options does he believe he has to try to alleviate that?

Deputy T. Binet:

I most certainly recognise the validity of those concerned; it would be stupid not to. As I have said, these are early days. I think there are a lot of people that attended in the first couple of days just to see what the facility looked like. I do think we need to wait a little while longer to see how things pan out and we are and will be continuing to monitor the situation. I am very happy, as I said before, to turn up onsite and to invite those concerned to meet with the Traffic Department as well.

3.1.5 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central:

Does the Minister recognise the words of one of his colleagues who said that users of Springfield will get used to the absence of parking? What way would they get used to the absence of parking apart from by not turning up?

Deputy T. Binet:

I am in danger of repeating myself. We are going to monitor the situation and see what we can do going forward. It has to be said it is not an ideal situation because at Fort Regent the gym was enormous and there were a multitude of carparking spaces. But, as the Deputy will know, Fort Regent is in a mess, it is full of asbestos and it is all inappropriate. We had to do something and this is what has been done.

3.1.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

Could the Minister confirm that part of monitoring the situation will include the monitoring of air quality around the area?

Deputy T. Binet:

It has not been suggested by anybody. I am not really sure how valid that is in relation to the attendance of the gym. I think we have 10 gyms, some of them of a similar size in town, and I am not sure that that is really a profitable exercise.

3.1.7 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The Minister mentioned that he had visited the gym, could he confirm if he spoke to just gym goers or did he speak to my constituents in St. Helier Central?

Deputy T. Binet:

I went to the gym to speak to the managers of the gym and the people attending at the gym. I did not have a great deal of time, it was on my way home later yesterday afternoon. So the answer to that question as far as residents are occurred is no.

3.1.8 Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is a shame the Minister did not drop into our drop-in session that we run every Monday at Springfield Café. He is always welcome. Today I intend to lodge a proposition, if it has not already been lodged, to enable Active card users to use the hopper bus - I am trying to remember the word - for free for a set time to try and alleviate some of the traffic issues and try and encourage some out of their cars. Will the Minister be supporting that proposition?

Deputy T. Binet:

I will tackle the first thing first. I have requested a visit to Reform on a Monday afternoon, and I am not sure but I think there is a slot for me later in the summer. We have discussed it so it is not something that has escaped me.

[9:45]

Now I have forgotten the second part of the question. Hopper bus: yes, very happy to consider that.