

2024.10.22

3.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Lido at Harve Des Pas (OQ.192/2024):

Will the Deputy Chief Minister outline what plans, if any, he has for the Lido at Havre des Pas in the period between the current tenant's departure from the premises and a new lease being signed by the next tenant?

Deputy T.J.A Binet of St. Saviour (Deputy Chief Minister - rapporteur):

On behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure, I can confirm that the intention would be to use the period of vacant possession - whenever that might be - to show interested parties the full extent of the facility at which they would be invited to tender. I can also confirm that, during the period, the intention would be for a food and beverage concession to be operated and for the toilets and changing room facilities to be made available in the usual way.

3.5.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Does the Deputy Chief Minister have any intention of allowing the current occupant to remain *in situ* to ensure that there is a seamless transition between tenants?

Deputy T.J.A Binet:

I think the Assembly will appreciate this is a little bit difficult for me, in the absence of the Minister for Infrastructure and the Deputy Minister for Infrastructure, to make plain what the current intentions are. I became involved with this - and as the Assembly well knows, it is not my department - I got asked to take this question several days ago and as recently as yesterday afternoon I sought further legal advice on the status of the current occupancy, and I am still awaiting further advice on that. I think, given all of those factors, it would be very difficult for me to answer that question.

3.5.2 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would the Minister comment on the close proximity between Lido Havre des Pas pool, Fort Regent and the La Folie, and why all 3 of them are suffering from the same problem?

The Bailiff:

I am not sure that falls within the parameters of the question, Deputy, which is ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I believe they are in one district and all of them have problems with the tenants that left and not replaced, so I might re-ask the question.

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, no, that question simply does not fall within the parameters of the questions posed. In which case, there has been no second question. Deputy Gardiner, do you wish to try an entirely different question?

3.5.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes, I would like to try an entirely different question. What assurance can the Minister give that, if the current tenant will vacate the property, that this property will not follow the route that we have with La Folie and empty spaces at Fort Regent?

Deputy T.J.A Binet:

I am not in a particularly good position to make any assurances, but I think the likelihood of that happening is not great. That is probably the best way I can answer that question at this point. I would also say that the question does relate very specifically to the period of vacant possession; I am not quite sure that that falls within that, but it is just an observation.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Deputy Ahier.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sir, I have my light on.

The Bailiff:

I beg your pardon, Deputy Jeune.

3.5.4 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

This is a question that really I have no answer of, so I am interested to understand, is that the Minister could outline, the current tenant has been asked to vacate the property, including taking away all the equipment out of the properties; that includes dismantling the kitchen and the bar area and, I assume, other things that they have put in. What happens if the current tenant then wins the lease again in a few months' time? What happens there? Because of course there are a number of costs that the tenant has had to endure to take out the stuff in Havre des Pas, at the Lido, and what happens when they have to put it all back again? Because they will have to do more costs to them.

Deputy T.J.A. Binet:

I will not deny that this is a long-running and complicated issue. I will make the point again that I have sought further legal advice and, depending on the outcome of that advice, some of those things may or may not be resolvable. I think that is the most I can do to answer that question.

The Bailiff:

Did you have a supplemental question to that, Deputy?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Well, it would help very much in trying to understand - for the debate that is due to take place later - so if the Minister could circulate his answer before then, that would be very useful.

The Bailiff:

I do not invite questions, but of course during the course of any debate one of the law officers will be present and are able to give legal advice.

3.5.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I understand that the Deputy Chief Minister is not capable of responding for the Minister for Infrastructure, but possibly he may be able to respond to this. In the latest Lido Steering Group newsletter, it states that a new lease was agreed between Deputy Tom Binet and the tenant. Does the Deputy Chief Minister recall whether such an agreement was reached, or was it rather the tenant refused to sign?

Deputy T.J.A Binet:

Once again, that does not in my view relate to the question, but I am happy to answer that. I think, to be precise, a lease was presented but it was not formally agreed or signed by the tenant.

The Bailiff:

Very well. I will just take a pause here to mention something that has come out of the last few questions. Not singling anyone out in particular, but for the questioners, Standing Orders require that the questions are succinct and therefore there is not a mini speech in front of them. A point, possibly, and then a question. Current practice of the Assembly is that any answer should not exceed one minute and 30 seconds. If I could just remind, because both of those things - in my judgment - have been breached at a number of stages during questions thus far.