

2018.03.19

5 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding formal consultation undertaken with staff in relation to whether the new hospital should be built on The Parade site: [OQ.57/2018]

Will the Minister advise what formal consultation, if any, he undertook with the staff of the General Hospital and Overdale as to whether the new hospital should be built on the existing Parade site; and if such consultation was undertaken, will he also inform Members of the results?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

To be clear, the States Assembly determined the location for the new hospital in December 2016, that was P.110 of that year. Since then there has been ongoing engagement with staff on the design and the development of the proposal on the new location or the current location approved by the States Assembly. While no formal consultation has been undertaken with the staff of the General Hospital and Overdale as to whether to build on the existing location, the project team has met clinical teams affected by the proposal a total of 165 times. That is not 165 individuals. That is 165 team meetings in the period July 2016 to 2018. This engagement will continue. It is ongoing as we develop the design and we increase the levels of detail. This, I believe, is key to delivering the very best hospital on the preferred location.

3.5.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I am surprised by the Minister saying they did not consult with the staff on the hospital, after all they are going to be working in this for the next 20 years or more than that. I just wondered if the Minister would be surprised that every member of staff that I have spoken to at the General Hospital, and it is a number, all think it is the wrong site and also believe that they should have been consulted on it. What does the Minister say to that?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Two questions there. First of all, the Deputy started by saying he was surprised that the staff had not been consulted with on the design of the new hospital. They are being designed on the new hospital. They are the only ...

The Bailiff:

No, Minister, the question is on the location of the new hospital, not the design of it.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I agree with that but the Deputy started on the design in the first part of his supplementary question. He then went on to the location. The location was a matter for this Assembly. The location was a matter for the project team, which included some senior clinicians. What we need to do is to make sure we build the right hospital on the right site at the right price. So staff are involved. The Deputy may well have spoken to people who do not agree with it being there. I speak to senior clinicians regularly and it is a shame that the Deputy did not attend the briefing where the clinicians were present to be able to give their view to States Members. Officers and clinicians and staff are involved but it is not a formal consultation on the location now. That has been set. That was set a long time ago. It is about what the design of the hospital will look like.

3.5.2 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I wonder whether the Minister could just confirm where the current mental health facilities that are being proposed, that underline this question, are currently from? In other words, where are they taken from and where are they going to?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Sorry, I thought the question was about the location of the General Hospital.

The Bailiff:

It is, I do not think it is about mental health at all.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I will withdraw it.

3.5.3 The Connétable of St. Clement:

I wonder if the Minister could tell us how long the hospital has been on its current site and during that time, how many complaints have there been that it is in the wrong location?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Something like 200 years, off the top of my head. I personally have had no complaints about it being in the wrong location. But I regularly get complaints that people have difficulty accessing the hospital because they have to come out the car park and walk right round the building. Part of the design is to put that right.

3.5.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can the Minister tell us, of the 176 meetings he had with clinicians, how many clinicians is he talking about? Are we talking about meetings with the same 4 individuals or 5 individuals or what? Will he also undertake to consult more widely with the people at the chalk face?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

The staff at the hospital are no different to the rest of the public. There will be the majority with the view that the hospital should stay where it is and there will be others that have different views across the various sites. Of the 160 or so meetings that took place it was not the same clinicians. There are some lead clinicians. The senior directors of the different disciplines. But they are involving numerous members of staff in their consultations. I have attended numerous myself. I do not attend the consultations, that is for officers to do, but I have attended numerous staff briefings where all levels of staff can come in and answering questions. Yes, there are some that still feel - the Deputy knows this - it should be on the People's Park. That boat sailed a long time ago. We have got a really good site. A site selected by this Assembly. A site that the Planning Inspector said is the right location. The location that the Minister for the Environment has said is the right location. What we need to do now is get on and deliver the hospital, like the public tell us they need.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Labey, did I overlook you with that final supplementary? Did you have a question?

Deputy R. Labey:

I did, but it might have been ruled out because I was going to ask why the mental health facility was not considered in the new hospital.

The Bailiff:

It would have been ruled out.