

2024.04.16.

4.7 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Common Strategic Policy’s priority within it to “deliver a plan to revitalise Town” (OQ.57/2024)

Further to the lodging of the Common Strategic Policy, and the priority within it to “deliver a plan to revitalise town”, will the Minister advise what funding mechanism will be utilised to deliver this priority and whether this mechanism will include the use of any funding received from the States of Jersey Development Company?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. As part of the Government Plan 2024 to 2027, there are allocated funds of up to £5 million identified to fund public realm projects sourced from the Government’s capital programme, prior year allocations carried forward in the current plan and planning obligation agreements, including some relating to the recent States of Jersey Development Company developments on the Esplanade. Proposals for funding mechanisms to deliver the new Government common strategic priorities will be included within the 2025 to 2028 Government Plan.

4.7.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Will the Minister agree to brief the town Deputies on the projects planned for St. Helier for the next 2 years?

The Connétable of St. John:

I would be more than happy to do that. The Deputy will be aware that my Assistant is the Constable of St. Helier, and both he and I are looking at the priorities that are currently in train to see whether or not we believe they should be changed at all. We are particularly keen to introduce functional examples making it easier for people to walk and cycle within St. Helier, and would be more than happy to discuss these with the Deputies.

4.7.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Does the Minister foresee the introduction of new street furniture and social spaces within his estate as a priority to enable Islanders to create a vibrant St. Helier without necessarily having to always spend money or visit retail or hospitality outlets?

The Connétable of St. John:

Absolutely. I think the experience that people get when they either visit St. Helier or if they live in St. Helier, is vital for us to maintain and enhance the retail opportunities we have. The Constable and I are working closely on that, and we have already identified some areas that we would like to see improvements in.

4.7.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It is a small area, but street furniture for seating in Jersey is woefully lacking for communal seating, where members can sit among each other and share a longer period of time. Does he see that as an area he can prioritise?

The Connétable of St. John:

I was recently on holiday with my wife, and my wife commented at the lack of seating in the city we were actually visiting, and I think St. Helier has quite a lot of seating. But that does

not mean to say that it cannot be enhanced. Only 2 weeks ago, I was sat on the seat at Snow Hill waiting to go to an appointment, and I found it very relaxing and very interesting sitting there. So we will consider that as well.

4.7.4 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Given that the Common Strategic Policy refers to youth facilities as well, and there is an existing funding pot for skateparks, which was going to be used towards a St. Helier skatepark, is the Minister able to confirm that the funding that already exists for a St. Helier skatepark will remain and continue?

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes, I am delighted to confirm that the funding remains and the officers are working tirelessly to try and find suitable locations, not only within St. Helier but in the east of the Island, for skate facilities. Longer term, we would like to do something much more substantial, but we would like to try and do something as quickly as we possibly can for those youngsters, in particular, in the St. Helier area.

4.7.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Has the Minister considered having discussions with the 13 St. Helier Deputies about his plans to revitalise St. Helier?

The Connétable of St. John:

I would be more than happy, as I said in an earlier answer, to meet with the St. Helier Deputies and listen to their ideas. If they have sites, for example, for a skatepark, I would be delighted to hear from them. A skatepark that is achievable in delivering in a short period of time is something that we are really keen on.

4.7.6 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Has the Minister had engagement with the group that worked around revitalising the Central Market and the area around, and if there are any plans to improve the area?

The Connétable of St. John:

We have had discussions around the market. The Constable of St. Helier is leading on the Central Market for both the Infrastructure Department and the Economy Department, and I believe there is a meeting scheduled for later this week.

4.7.7 Deputy J. Renouf:

In addition to funding, does the Minister agree that it is important that the revitalisation of town takes place in the context of an overall strategic framework, and that it is important to have some kind of a master plan for what is trying to be achieved in town and not just pursue haphazard projects?

The Connétable of St. John:

The Deputy raises a very good point. We have so many reports about St. Helier and what can be done, particularly around making it easier for walking and cycling. That is why I refer to looking at priorities. I am more than happy to, as I said, join the Constable and meet with the Deputies and talk to them about those priorities and ensure that they fit with an overall plan.

4.7.8 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can I ask if there is an intention to engage with his colleague, the Minister for the Environment, to see whether there is going to be any master planning for St. Helier?

The Connétable of St. John:

The Minister for the Environment and myself have a fortnightly formal meeting, but we also have lots of informal discussions, so I am sure that will come up in our next discussion.