

7. Statement by the Chief Minister regarding youth facilities at the Waterfront:

7.1 Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

The purpose of this statement is to advise the Assembly on recent developments regarding youth facilities on the Waterfront. Following a meeting last week between Senators Vibert and Perchard, Deputies Fox and Gorst, and the Managing Director of the W.E.B. (Waterfront Enterprise Board), I can confirm that proposals are being developed to provide for skateboarding facilities on the Waterfront. Although this still needs to be positively confirmed with Harbours, the footprint of the old T and T Building on the New North Quay, south of the Maritime Museum, has been identified as an area suitable for the citing of a youth skateboard facility. This is an area of some 35 metres by 25 metres and is currently being used as a temporary car park. It is planned to provide an open-air skateboard park, but with a tented structure along the lines of the structure at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh. Following planning application approval it is envisaged that the facility will be available by the end of 2008 at the latest. The advantages of this proposal are that the facility will require little ongoing maintenance and it will also be close to the youth café in Liberty Wharf. The cost of the facility will be funded directly by the Waterfront Enterprise Board. I can also confirm that other youth and community facilities are proposed to be developed on the top of the Waterfront car park. The Managing Director of W.E.B. has recently written to Ministers and Chief Officers, asking for nominations from States' departments for a working group to be established to develop proposals for such youth and community facilities. Discussions on these developments will begin in the near future and it is planned that detailed proposals will be published by the end of the year. I am pleased that these positive developments will provide much-needed facilities for our young people. As I said when I became Chief Minister it is crucial that we engage and invest in our youngsters and I will continue to be committed to improving the provision of youth facilities in St. Helier.

7.1.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

This is wonderful news to hear this afternoon. Will the Chief Minister be able to tell us whether or not these facilities will be accessible free of charge for the youth of the Island? If he is not able to answer that, as I have asked this question before, will he investigate whether or not it is feasible and possible to make these facilities available for the youth of the Island free of charge?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I can confirm that the facility will be available free of charge.

7.1.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I wonder if the Chief Minister could just clarify whether the area concerned is under the administration of W.E.B. or Harbours because I am thinking that in the past Harbours has done practically everything they can to discourage skateboarding down there, so I am wondering if they may have objections to this.

Senator F.H. Walker:

There may be a hint here for the Deputy that currently the land is under the administration of Harbours, but if the States approve the proposition at the next sitting it will come under the administration of the J.E.B. (Jersey Enterprise Board), so I am hoping the Deputy will therefore support that proposition.

7.1.3 Deputy S. Power:

I wonder if I can ask the Chief Minister if he is aware if the Jersey Port Users Association have been contacted and whether Huelin-Renouf have been contacted because Huelin-Renouf are proposing to move to the New North Quay in the not too distant future.

Senator F.H. Walker:

I am not aware if those particular organisations have been contacted, but obviously the facility will have to be produced and proceeded with, with the agreement of other parties. It is a question of which is the greater priority and in my view - and others - the youth facility carries the greatest priority at this time.

7.1.4 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It is really good news that the park is now on the way - I am all in favour of a skateboard park - but on the New North Quay, can the Chief Minister state whether this is within the fenced-off area, being as it is in close proximity to the harbour?

Senator F.H. Walker:

No, Sir, it is not.

7.1.5 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I did not get an opportunity, Sir, but would the Chief Minister not agree with me that this is fantastic news for the youth of the Island and I am very, very pleased to hear these facilities are going to be free of charge. Well done.

Senator F.H. Walker:

I thank the Deputy for that. I was hoping that somebody might acknowledge the fact that this is a good, positive development for the youth of Jersey and I am grateful for Deputy Le Claire being the one to do so.