

2016.03.22

3.1 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the use of the site of the current police station as a temporary solution for car parking:

Further to the Minister's statement during the States sitting on 8th March 2016 that parking could be improved in the Rouge Bouillon area because the site of the current police station could be used as a "temporary solution" for car parking, could the Minister advise for how long this "temporary" solution would be in place?

Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The new police H.Q. (headquarters) and station is due to be completed by January 2017. A 3-month period is allowed in the programme to relocate the police to their new premises. Therefore by Easter 2017 the building on the Summerland site and the former St. Helier Girl's School will be vacant. Jersey Property Holdings is in discussion with Andium Homes regarding the potential to dispose of the Summerland site for development as affordable housing. The former St. Helier Girl's School site, adjacent to the fire station, will be vacated and would be able to be demolished. An ongoing feasibility study to be completed prior to the site is vacated will determine the future requirements for the fire and ambulance services and what area could be used to provide temporary additional parking and for how long. Naturally proposals to demolish the building and change of use would be subject to the planning process.

3.1.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

The Minister knows the urgency of housing in the area. On a P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee)... Andium Homes do not have any money for this site for housing and the Minister, himself, pushed by myself last year, said: "There is no money in the capital M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan) for this site for housing." Where is the money coming from? The temporary solution, he never said how temporary.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Andium's financing is a matter between Andium and the Treasury. I am not party to that. They have a £207 million bond or up to £250 million bond to carry out such works. It is up to them to prioritise their services. What we will be doing is making that site available to them. If they do not want to proceed with that site for whatever reason then it would be available and we would naturally offer it to the other housing associations to see if they can develop it for affordable housing sooner. With regards to the timetable, that is dependent on the feasibility study of what we would use the former St. Helier Girl's School site for and how long that site will become available and as yet we do not know how long a temporary car parking site will be available.

3.1.2 Connétable A.S Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Much as we welcome the possibility of housing on this site, does the Minister not agree with me that the area is already densely built-up and that there is also a need for permanent parking facilities for the community as well as generous provision of open space? Will he undertake to talk to the Parish about the mix as plans develop?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I am quite willing to talk to the Parish and, indeed, the Constable. We both sit on the Future St. Helier Steering Group and this obviously will be a topic that will be discussed at that group.

3.1.3 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. Helier

Plans to renew the States of Jersey Police Headquarters have been in place for many years and of course in the last 3 years they have been brought to fruition. At what point, could the Minister explain, was there a proper project plan put in place so that you knew exactly what was going to happen with this site when you agreed the building of the new police station? Did it form a fundamental part of the project plan to do something with that asset upon completion of its replacement?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Certainly for the western side of the police station, which is the Summerland site, and eventually the ambulance site, that has been earmarked for many years now as a site for affordable housing. On the eastern side, which is the old granite police station, the fire station, and the old St. Helier Girls' building, the long-term view is that the fire service will stay there and it was the view that the ambulance service would move across the road to there as well. But that may change depending on where the new hospital is built and the specification for the new hospital. So until that is decided we will not know whether or not the ambulance service will be joining the fire service on that particular site. Until those matters are addressed we do not know how much land we have available for perhaps a temporary car park or an extension to the play area for Rouge Bouillon School or for any other community.

3.1.4 Deputy A.D. Lewis:

Is the Minister therefore saying that there was not a plan for that part of the site, i.e. where the current fire station is, before they commenced work on the new police station?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

No, I am not saying that at all. I am saying that the plan changed because we are looking at the opportunity of moving the ambulance station to be at the new hospital, wherever that may be.

3.1.5 Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary:

Following on largely from the Constable of St. Helier's question: does the Minister not acknowledge that there is a lack of general parking in that area for commuters coming in from the north of the Island and that the quality of life and of air quality, particularly for St. Helier residents, could be dramatically improved if a permanent solution was found for them to stop them having to traverse town to the existing car parks?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

As I said 2 weeks ago, I completely agree with the Constable of St. Mary in this aspect. What we have to do is balance the other potential needs for that site. For example, I know that Rouge Bouillon School needs some additional external space. It is a balance about what community needs are greater but, as I have already said previously, I do favour trialling a car park in that area for the very reasons that the Constable has said.

3.1.6 Deputy J.A. Martin:

It is quite disappointing. The Minister stated definitely the police, we know, will be moving in January to April 2017 and, following on from Deputy Lewis, when will they start this feasibility study? When the place is empty? Surely it should be starting now or at least 3 years ago. The Minister keeps moving the goalposts. This was sold to move the police station because of the actual need for extra housing and this was going to be the site.

The Deputy Bailiff:

A concise question please, Deputy.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

When will the Minister start this feasibility study?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Deputy Martin probably did not hear me in my answer to her first question. The feasibility study is ongoing and it has been for a period of time now. It will be completed by the time this site is vacated.