

23.10.03

3 Deputy L.V. Feltham of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the North of St. Helier Hub Youth Centre capital project (OQ.193/2023)

Further to the response to Written Question 345/2023, will the Minister advise why the North of St Helier Hub Youth Centre capital project is currently on hold and why the central St. Helier primary school project is not listed as a capital project?

Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour (The Minister for Infrastructure):

It would appear that I owe Deputy Feltham something of an apology. As a result of the written question, I sent the Deputy a property schedule where the youth centre project appeared in a category marked "on hold". I believe the term itself was probably inappropriate. It should have been titled "work in progress". The "on hold" reference was simply referring to the fact that no physical progress has been made. This is because, thus far, it has not been possible to identify a suitable location. That said, I can confirm that basic feasibility studies have already been carried out on more than 15 properties, that attempts to find an appropriate site are ongoing, and that in recent weeks a property has been identified that shows a slightly higher degree of promise. As for the second part of the question: I am aware of proposals for 2 St. Helier primary schools, one for the east side and another for the west. Neither of them were listed on that same information sheet. That is because Property Holdings does not currently own the identified eastern site, and the western site has still to be identified.

[10:15]

However, as the Deputy might be aware, one of these school projects, the Gas Place project, is mentioned on page 65 in the main report of the 2024 Government Plan, where £13.5 million has been earmarked for 2026, and it is on page 26. I should mention that the sum of money involved covers a number of projects, and that project is included in that figure. I do apologise; the department issued a schedule and I did not study it sufficiently well. I should have identified that. That was simply an omission. So I can only apologise.

3.3.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am conscious that the funding for the St. Helier Youth Centre was secured, I think Deputy Ward, if he were here, would put me right I am sure, around 5 years ago. Also we have known about the need for a school for some time as well. I would like to seek the Minister's assurance that there are resources and enough people in his department to be able to work on these critical projects for St. Helier. Could he give the Assembly his assurance?

Deputy T. Binet:

Yes, I think I can give that assurance but, as I say, we are a little bit short-staffed so things do not happen in quite as much of a hurry as they perhaps ought to or as we would like. There is pretty much not much we can do about that.