

STATES OF JERSEY

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BELLE VUE RESIDENTIAL NURSING HOME AND DAY CARE CENTRE, ST. BRELADE: BUSINESS CASE

**Lodged au Greffe on 18th November 2003
by the Connétable of St. Helier**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to refer to their Act dated 18th September 2003 in which, as part of the States Resource Plan 2004-2008, they approved capital expenditure of £3,819,000 for 2004, and approved in principle capital expenditure for 2005 of £2,804,000, to enable the construction of a residential nursing home and day care centre at Belle Vue, St. Brelade and–

to request the Health and Social Services Committee, before it presents to the States for approval the drawings relating to this project, to prepare and present to the States a full business case to support the development of the said residential nursing home and day care centre. and to include in the business case an examination of the alternative means of providing a similar number of residential nursing beds.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

Despite the lack of support I received for the amendments to the Resource Plan (P.118/2003) earlier this year, I am determined – in view of the recently announced increases in the tax burden on Jersey residents – to be satisfied that the capital programme of the States of Jersey cannot be cut back further than by the paltry £2 million (from £50 million to £48 million) proposed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

I do not believe that it is acceptable in the current economic climate for the States to proceed with capital projects which the private sector might well be able to provide, thereby reducing the need to raise taxes. At the very least I consider it essential for the Health and Social Services Committee to bring forward a robust business case for constructing a residential/nursing home/day care facility despite the concerns raised by the Audit Committee – before the States sanction such a project.

In bringing this proposition I am encouraged to note an exchange of emails between the Presidents of the Housing and Finance and Economics Committees on 9th October 2003, the day after a presentation from the latter committee concerning the imminent rises in taxation, including sales and payroll taxes –

Deputy Le Main: *'It is my opinion that the proposals by Health to construct a new care facility costing several millions again is just madness at this time ... we just cannot afford this luxury, these kinds of schemes will just exacerbate our financial problems'*

Senator Le Sueur: *'I also accept your concerns about the Belle Vue residential home proposals, which are still under consideration. There certainly appeared to be a good case for using some of the existing buildings at St. Saviour's Hospital, but I gather that a westerly location was required. If so, then maybe the Dandara site at Beaumont would be suitable, but since we own Belle Vue it seems to me to make sense to use that rather than buy a new site. I think that Dandara want to build a residential care home, whereas Belle Vue is for nursing care (which the private sector does not normally like). However there would be no harm in talking.'*

Encouraged by this exchange of views from these Committee Presidents, I tabled questions on this matter to the President of the Health and Social Services Committee on 21st October. While he refused to supply the business case requested, in response to a supplementary question he did agree to furnish me with such information as could be provided without putting his officers to any extra work.

Four weeks later I have received no information whatsoever concerning this capital project. At the same time, Island businesses and residents have been taking stock of the consequences of the States' decision to consider as part of the forthcoming Budget such measures as raising taxes, including Vehicle Registration Duty (by 25%), and the introduction of a Sales Tax, which threaten to cripple many small businesses which are struggling to survive in the present difficult economic climate.

No good arguments were advanced during the debate upon the Resource Plan for proceeding with this project which flies in the face of the Audit Committee's recommendations. It is surely incumbent upon the Health and Social Services Committee now to convince the States and the taxpayers of Jersey that it is truly essential for the construction of a new residential/nursing home to go ahead at public expense, and that there is no alternative means available of supplying these facilities.

I have no argument with proceeding with the Belle Vue project if it represents best value to the taxpayer, and will fit in with a strategic approach to tackling the challenges of residential and nursing care in the future. However, I believe that the Health and Social Services Committee have an obligation to the States and the taxpayers to explain why their chosen route is the best one under the current circumstances.

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this proposition, other than the cost of producing the business case report.