

3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the content of the online North of Town Masterplan consultation:

Will the Minister inform Members what steps, if any, he will take to amend the content of the online North of Town Masterplan consultation which does not present any options for the Millennium Town Park (that is with or without building on Gas Place and Talman sites) and presents a picture with the maximum building on the site?

Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

The Deputy justifiably takes a keen interest in the fairness of questions contained in public consultations. He raised this matter with me last week and I immediately instructed my officers to look into the issue and correct any perceived bias in the construction of the questions. They have adjusted the online consultation document and the printed questionnaire to draw particular attention to the possibility of placing buildings on the Talman and Gas Place sites. The construction of the questionnaire does allow respondents to state that they do not wish to see building on the Town Park site. I must point out that the consultation is presently scheduled to close on 5th January. I can assure the Deputy that I will take into account the fact that he, together with others, would generally prefer to see no building on the Town Park site, though clearly this must be balanced against the affordability and funding issues that do require a Town Park, together with a holistic parking solution.

3.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I thank the Minister for his answer and for his prompt response. I have not had time to inspect the consultation document yet, but I no doubt will do perhaps before question time is over. What I would ask is that will he also take into consideration the possibility of not building on the town site, given that there is already some funding towards developing the Town Park without building in the pot?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

There is the question of affordability and I will need to balance the question of affordability with the requirement to deliver a holistic parking solution, but I will take into account the fact that the Deputy and others would prefer to see no building on the Town Park site. With regard to the first part of his question, the consultation now reads: "With regard to the proposal for the Gas Place and Talman site, do you agree in particular with the proposed buildings on this site?" Then you can tick from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." Thank you.

3.2.2 Deputy P.J. Rondel of St. John:

Will the Minister give consideration to extending the period of the consultation, given this has been raised in the Chamber this morning, by at least one month, given the delay in having put up the necessary on the internet? Thank you.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, I will and I will let the Deputy know later today whether that is feasible. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The final supplementary.

3.2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I have almost forgotten it. What does the Minister propose to do about the responses he has already received from a flawed document? Will he, if he does decide to go ahead and extend the consultation period, ensure that that does not delay any developments that take place in 2010 on developing the park?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

On the second part, yes, I can give that assurance. In relation to the first part, I am quite clear that the consultation was not fundamentally flawed and that those respondents who had a particularly strong view that no building should be placed on the site made that very clear in their responses. All that we have done is to clarify the position by reinforcing the wording after the Deputy pointed out what he considered to be bias. Thank you.