

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY D.J. WARR OF ST. HELIER SOUTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 14th OCTOBER 2024
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 21st OCTOBER 2024**

Question

“In relation to the Havre des Pas Lido lease arrangements, and further to reports that the previous Minister for Infrastructure had intended new arrangements to be in place by the end of January 2024, will the Minister explain whether, upon taking office, he pursued the immediate agreement of such arrangements and, if not, why not; and will he further explain what consideration, if any, he has given to the report commissioned by his predecessor on this matter?”

Answer

Upon my appointment as Minister, I was informed in early course of the challenges regarding the Havre des Pas Lido. In particular, I was made aware that my immediate predecessor had wrestled with this case (as indeed had his predecessor) and ultimately signed a Ministerial Decision to break the lease for a number of reasons, rental arrears being the key.

My predecessor was unable to gain agreement to the terms of a lease despite setting the rent at a very low level, effectively £2 per square foot. I understand that my predecessor gave the current occupier until the end of January 2024 to sign a new lease. This wasn't done.

In my direction to the property team for the Heads of Terms I was proposing, two issues shaped my approach. Firstly, the obligation for prudent financial management and, secondly, the value of wider public access to our facilities. I set the rent at an equivalent of £5.62 per square foot, which was still a considerable discount when compared to similar facilities. The Heads of Terms was rejected despite meetings and correspondence, and this precipitated my notification that we would seek vacant possession of the site in order to find an alternative solution.

In discussion with the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, who had visited Guernsey in the first part of the year, we wanted to be able to provide a fresh start for any interested parties. Members will of course be aware that in deference to the bookings that we were told had been taken, notwithstanding that there was no right of occupation and impending notices of eviction, we allowed occupation until the end of October to permit an orderly and professional draw down of business. I am therefore somewhat surprised to learn that, allegedly, bookings have been taken into 2025. This is a matter between any individuals/organisations and the company they have paid the deposit to.

Finally, I have given a great deal of consideration to the report undertaken for my predecessor and am aware that following a £1.2 million refurbishment of the site completed in August 1999 the operator, Modern Hotels Holdings, withdrew from the site in April 2000. This was due to further works being required following storm damage. I believe that this emphasises that this is not an all-season private events space, it is a marine pool for the benefit of the wider community.

In order to get the Pool into a position where we can offer it to a new operator, and if we are to mirror the success of Guernsey for wellbeing, youth activities, and family access, we need to undertake a wide range of works to enable the fresh start that is needed for the Lido so it can be rejuvenated as a venue that can be used all-year round by the whole community.