

2.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the future of the old Fort Regent swimming pool:

Following yet more break-ins and vandalism at the old Fort Regent swimming pool, will the Minister give the order to demolish the building, as it is now beyond repair and could be a danger to the public, and if not, why not?

The Connétable of St. Peter (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

The short answer is no, we will not be giving the order to demolish it, but certainly what we are currently doing, we are awaiting the outcome of the Fort Regent Political Steering Group report, which I understand will be presented around about July this year. Members will recall that the steering group was set up as a result of the States adopting P.118 in 2009, and the group have been mindful of the state of the pool throughout its deliberations. The report will influence any decision that will be taken on Fort Regent swimming pool, which is effectively beyond repair. An estimate has been received last year of between £800,000 and £1 million; it was obtained for the demolition. These are funds which the Treasury and Resources Department currently does not have. It has been identified that the costs are mostly associated with asbestos within the roof structure within the inside of the building. To prevent further vandalism and protect the public, Jersey Property Holdings will be letting a contract at the end of this month to board up the building once we have received a method of works, because what we do not want to do is see scaffolding outside for a number of weeks, which the vandals could then use to climb up and get into the building via other accesses. The department considers that any plans to demolish the swimming pool should be deferred until such time as the Fort Regent Steering Group has delivered its regeneration plans for the whole of the Fort, and development value of the swimming pool site is protected by an appropriate planning concept.

2.1.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Even though in years past I was very much against the closure of the Fort Regent pool, as the Assistant Minister states, it is well beyond repair, and as the Assistant Minister will see by the photograph I sent over, the access is easily obtainable through broken fencing, *et cetera*. Will the Assistant Minister ensure that the building is sealed and obscene graffiti removed with immediate effect?

[09:45]

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Yes, certainly I can give assurance to the House and to Deputy Lewis that work is in hand to protect the building by boarding it up on the outside to ensure that nobody can get in. There are materials inside which we do not want the public having access to, and part of the works will also remove the graffiti, which was quite graphically shown in the photographs handed to me this morning by Deputy Lewis.

2.1.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

Notwithstanding what might be an excellent report from the steering group, would the Assistant Minister outline how much is budgeted in order to proceed with the regeneration of the Fort?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Currently I am not aware of any funds that have been allocated for the regeneration of the Fort. Certainly Property Holdings have looked at a number of schemes whereby some of the land assets around the Fort could generate an income to do the regeneration required. But I think it would be irresponsible at the moment to identify how that is going to be spent until such time as the Fort Regent's Steering Group has delivered its report, so we can make a proper, valued judgment based on input from the steering group.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I give guidance to Members: the question was about the Fort Regent swimming pool, so questions in relation to the Fort generally will not be allowed, as they do not follow on from the nature of the question.

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

Could we be given the cost of the work to be carried out, the remedial work to board this property up, and in doing so, will these figures be added into the cost of the actual removing the asbestos when the time comes?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I should have answered that to Deputy Le Hérissier's question. The funds at the moment put aside to do the boarding up is £30,000 and it is that money that will be coming out of Property Holding's maintenance fund and will not be added to the cost of demolition at the end of the job, because that is a different budget line.

2.1.4 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

How many tenders did Property Services receive for the demolition of the swimming pool at Fort Regent, because to my mind the figures quoted, between £800,000 and £1 million, seem extremely excessive.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I entirely agree with the Deputy of Grouville. They are excessive numbers. Basically, Property Holdings have gone out to a number of contractors to get an indication of the probable costs and they have ranged from as low as £750,000 to £1.24 million, so it is that ballpark figures that we are very much focused upon, and certainly that identifies that at the moment. There is no point in spending more money in developing any demolition type project until we have got a better idea what funding is available and how we can release the capital asset from around Fort Regent on the back of the steering group's report.

2.1.5 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Could I urge the Minister to take seriously the possibility of demolishing the Fort Regent swimming pool, particularly as it has been standing for a long time, and Senator Cohen and his historic building officers are likely to list it?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I think that is a question probably for the Minister for Planning and Environment, thank you, or should I say the Minister for Environment now. It is of concern, obviously it is a major public concern. It is right in our sight line in whichever direction we come to town from, the east or the west, and the fact it is an asset there which is doing absolutely nothing and becoming an embarrassment to the public. I know Education, Sport and Culture are very mindful of the need to do that work and

to regenerate the whole area within the Fort. It is finding something which is going to complement the offering of the Fort itself to attract more people up there. It is the skill that we are looking for, to find that anchor tenant, if you wish, that is going to draw far greater use of the Fort overall.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy Lewis, a final question? No. Then as you pass on your final question, Deputy Le Fondré can have the final question.

2.1.6 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence:

Just erased the question from my mind. Very quickly, would the Assistant Minister perhaps confirm hopefully that one of the reasons that the cost does appear quite excessive is due to the nature, for example, of asbestos, *et cetera*, in the building, which will require very specialist handling? There is a part (b) to that, it would seem to make sense to make sure we have a co-ordinated approach, rather than if we do knock the swimming pool down and nothing sits there, it is very unlikely we will ever get a building back there under present planning guidelines.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I can confirm that Deputy Le Fondré has very well put the case for me, and thank you, and I agree with every point he made.

Very well. Deputy Lewis.