

14.01.21

Dear Senator Moore and Scrutiny Panel,

This is my response to your call for public input on the proposed Westmount Road access to the Overdale site and p.167/2020.

### 1. Will you be affected by the proposed access route to Overdale? If so, how?

Yes, I am a resident and **home owner in the Hillcrest / Castle View close and I own part of the private drive to access the close that is under compulsory purchase** (p.129/2020). As a resident in the west side of Town, I also frequent People's Park and walk Gallow's Hill daily. This area will be permanently and adversely impacted by the proposed road access through impacting so much and so many people. I believe it is the road option that negatively impacts the most of any other option presented and is wrong for Jersey.

I have a **written property market evaluation that estimates my property will reduce in value by £200,000** by having a large busy road in front of me. My neighbours have similar assessments. The government has been unequivocal in **denying any form of compensation for loss in property** or for compensation to cover the 5 plus years of tens of thousands of lorry trips by our door steps, blasting granite, extensive drainage works, thousands of pilings to be ploughed deep into the granite, road closures, huge wall/cliff reinforcements, risk of working near fault lines, noise, dust and danger for our children who walk to school every day. Don't forget the 500-700 construction workers on site every day.

In fact, **Senator Farnham has offended the home owners** by stating our property value will increase and **insulted us** by comparing the largest construction project the island will ever undertake with the inconvenience of regular road maintenance. I understand why Jersey cannot compensate homeowners for all types of works, but this project is **unprecedented in its scale and length of time to complete**. Accordingly, home owners deserve unprecedented treatment, particularly in the Hillcrest and Castle View close which, if the plans are approved, will be sandwiched between a busy 12 metre road and the future parking lot for the hospital.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] With the resignation of the Minister of Education and the absolute failure of the island to control Covid-19, we are **now on the path to a second non-confidence vote in April**. A failing Council of Ministers is **not** an appropriate environment to approve the biggest project the island will ever undertake.

**How is it the government** [REDACTED] **think it wise to spend £38.5 million on a road up a cliff with no evidence it is required, no design, no feasibility or cost study undertaken?**

### 2. How do you think the access route will affect the homes, leisure facilities and surrounding areas and the overall impact on the landscape?

The topography of Gallow's Hill is important to the Town's skyline and overall beauty. The proposed plans are too expensive (**£38.5 million** budgeted BEFORE detailed survey/feasibility or risk study is

conducted) and will ruin all of it. The historic **Jersey Bowling Club** is slated to be destroyed and **'Hangman's Corner'** decimated through plans to widen Westmount Road to 12 metres (double its current width – page 6 of the ROKFCC report appended to p.167/2020). Hangman's Corner of course is a site of historic significance and was also the spot where **Major Pierson gathered the troops** for the victorious Battle of Jersey. None of this has been mentioned in any contractor reports and seems not have been taken into consideration which is wrong.

There will be a **loss of more than 50 mature trees** from those in the parking spaces along Pierson Road to the trees on Gallow's Hill to widen Westmount to 12 metres. **People's Park will be nothing more than a postage stamp** surrounded by a busy 12 metre wide road. The Playground will be destroyed or need to be moved farther inside the now smaller park area. It will be **dangerous** for children and adults to access the Park and the enjoyment reduced with a major road around its perimeter on 3 sides. The plans also contemplate the Petanque bowls area on Pierson Road to be swallowed up in the super-highway plans for the junction at Pierson and Victoria Avenue.

As a homeowner and resident of the close where **3 homes beside me are currently under the compulsory purchase order** (p.129.2020), the effect on my neighbours has been nothing short of devastating. Retirees, an owner who is in the UK for an extended period and now unable to return due to Covid, to a family living in a new build home– all treated with abrasive notices and heavy-handed tactics by the government and their contractors; their first notice their home is slated to be destroyed given by form letter dated 10 September 2020. I am in contact with other land owners whose property is under compulsory purchase and they too are unhappy with the poor treatment by the government. As for homes, the **additional 9 homes in Westmount Terrace are also being secretly purchased by the government now in an effort to avoid telling the public the full extent of homes required to support the road and parking lot. The current proposal actually requires 12 homes to be destroyed.**

As for me, I received an email notice on a Friday **20 November 2020** at 6 pm telling me in 3 lines the government is required to purchase the private access drive that I own in our close, with a view to close in January 2021 or else it will be taken by compulsory purchase. This was only 3 days after the hospital vote and in clear **breach of the second amendment to p.123/2020** submitted by Connetable Crowcroft which required a pause on compulsory purchase of land required for the road access pending the States approving a report on alternative access routes. I responded by sending the callous email to the media to call out the breach and it was covered by the JEP, among others. I again got another email on **7 January 2021** from the government's estate agent asking if I would like to negotiate a price for my land pending the 9 February States debate on the road access to speed up the process. In my opinion, this is just further evidence that the government is not genuinely looking at any alternatives or amendments to their destructive proposal or considering public input. **Any cost overruns or time delays on the access route will be of the government's own making as they are not using their time wisely to address outstanding issues and concerns.**

### 3. Do you feel the plans offer easy access using bus, bicycle or walking and take into account appropriate sustainable methods of transport?

The Site Evaluation Report, Hansard of the p.123/2020 amendment debates and p.167/2020 report primarily reference the requirement for such a large-scale access route to permit **heavy construction vehicles** to access the hilltop site of Overdale. There are **no** details provided to demonstrate this monstrosity of a road is required for ambulances, staff or patients and their families.

The Site Evaluation Report clearly states that **bicycle and pedestrian traffic to Overdale will be limited** due to the steepness of the incline. This is combined with the conclusion that **Overdale is more than 5-10 minutes walk outside of Town** (Site Evaluation Report, pgs 41 and 70) and therefore cannot be supported by the existing commercial/retail infrastructure. Therefore, it is **imperative that sustainable transport options are articulated BEFORE the States approve the proposed route** to ensure the existing Town infrastructure can be successfully integrated. None have been included in any report to date and have been brushed aside to be an afterthought with focus only on building a super-highway and big parking lots. The **States have committed to sustainable transport and to be carbon neutral by 2030**. This is more than a hollow statement and a large public facility such as the new hospital must have a coherent transport plan in place to achieve that. This is particularly so as **70%** of current arrivals to the hospital are on foot; reversing this statistic by encouraging private car use will be detrimental to achieving their goals.

#### 4. Do you feel the public were given adequate time to properly consider all the information provided by the States to engage properly in consultation?

No. The media announcement on 6 October announcing Overdale as the 'preferred' site may not have been a surprise but the fact that no options would be put to the States for the vote on 17 November meant it was not a 'choice' at all. That set up a showdown of the States effectively having 'a gun to its head' by voting for Overdale with the ruinous Westmount access route or nothing at all. If the public did not draw attention to the severe adverse impact this route would have on hundreds of residents, leisure centres, nature and west side of Town, the second amendment to p.123/2020 probably would not have been submitted and the government's contractors would be carving up the west side of town right now. The residents have had to work very hard to make our views known in very short spaces of time. This includes absorbing large and technical reports that are not coherently organised or contain appropriate analysis. The government has done nothing to assist the public in understanding the true destruction of their proposal.

The **government has not consulted with the hundreds of residents in Inn on the Park and Dandara Westmount flats** about the extensive road works contemplated at their front door and above their heads on the cliff edges. The government similarly **did not consult with Ocean apartments and more than 15 homes on the west side of Westmount or 9 Westmount Terrace homes (east side between the 2 fields)**. The government did not consult with us in the Hillcrest / Castlevue close until AFTER we complained that we were impacted. It was only the efforts of the residents to actually inform one another of the little information we were provided and scramble to get our views known to the States and use the media where possible as changes this large to the west side of town and the cost affect everyone.

For the biggest project the island will ever undertake and a road access that will have major and permanent negative alterations of the west side of town, we expect a proper consultation with full information, diagrams and the willingness to amend for reasonable concerns. Only then will public confidence be gained in this very long term construction project that will affect hundreds of residents for at least 5 years (and probably longer).

#### 5. Do you feel that any views of the public (whether minority or majority views) were adequately addressed by the Government of Jersey?

No. From the rigged site selection where criteria that apparently removed other sites from contention were ignored when it applied to Overdale, to the media announcement of Westmount Road as the main access route, the government has ignored the public repeatedly. In the Hillcrest / Castle View close, **we were told we are not 'directly affected'** even though homes less than 2 metres from us were to be destroyed. Senator Farnham repeated throughout the autumn that all those 'affected' had been contacted when it was not true. Any engagement has been one-way communication with the government dispensing its view that alternates between: advising it has done substantial analysis to support the Westmount Road option to the road design being **'nothing more than a line on a map'** (ROKFCC Zoom meeting, 15 December 2020) when residents have asked for that supporting analysis. Residents have been **promised repeatedly** that the underlying analysis of the 4 access routes described in the Site Evaluation Report would be provided and nothing has been produced to date. Contractor representatives have not been able to speak to their own reports and/or refuse to answer appropriate questions about the road access. All individual communication with those whose land and homes are under compulsory purchase has been disgraceful and disrespectful.

The **government has repeatedly delegated communication** about substantial issues that only it can answer and should be accountable for to its contractors to communicate with the public. First, it was a lady in Scotland who had no knowledge and no access to any government representative, to Richard De Gruchy who did not respond to questions/emails, to now Soundings. Based on our first set of public meetings on 15 and 16 December by Zoom, it is doomed already to fail to gain any public confidence in this project. It is yet another expensive talking head with no knowledge about the project or Jersey and its residents.

The public have suggested several low-cost and practical one-way road options, both on social media and in resident Town Hall meetings (autumn 2020). In fact, the current hospital's main access route for ambulances is a one-way route up Pierson Road (followed by Cheapside, Parade and Gloucester). One way roads are often used as a traffic management solution in Jersey, particularly in Town. No evidence has been shown to indicate that patients are suffering adverse consequences due to a primary route as one-way. No details are provided on traffic impact to indicate why a one-way route won't work up to Overdale. (section 2.4 p.167/2020) In fact, St. John's residents association has requested for years that the road be made one way. Why would p.167/2020 then indicate this option would be detrimental to traffic on St. John's Road when in fact it would be easier to manage for the school and resident access? Once again, the government has not consulted with the residents or seriously considered alternatives.

In **2015, an Overdale proposal** was commissioned by the government at half the size and cost to the current proposal (attached is the footprint comparison). The road access route contemplated was St. John's road with no major amendments. While this model may not match what is required today, it is an alternative that should be seriously reviewed. I note that on its face, the 2015 model is better aligned to the **Jersey Care Model** which will see care diverted from the hospital to GPs and home care, thus meaning less trips and out patients to the hospital site. This is combined with a slower growth in population post-Brexit where Jersey can better control growth by immigration. All this lends itself to supporting **no need for super-highways**. The government has **not** referenced the 2015 proposal or the Jersey Care Model at all in the current plans.

Despite the report in p.167 summarily dismissing one-way routes as causing traffic jams in other areas, the current proposal has **not addressed the impact on traffic by creating a super-highway** junction between Victoria Ave and Pierson (pg 74 Site Evaluation Rpt) that it will have on Cheapside and St.

John's Road and beyond. It has also not addressed traffic clogs at First Tower as people attempt to access the new 'super highway' approaching from the west. Much more transparency on traffic management through the surrounding area is required for any road option that is to be seriously considered.

## 6. Was your voice heard?

**Connetable Crowcroft and our 4 Deputies have been responsive** including visiting our close prior to the hospital vote and setting up 2 Town Hall meetings (28 Oct and 12 Nov) and inviting Senator Farnham. While the Connetable and the Deputies have taken our concerns seriously and worked to get these concerns addressed by the government, Senator Farnham has not taken any public comments on board at all. He has steadfastly refused to recommend any amendments to the ruinous plans or address any concerns. I also note that **Scrutiny and some of the States members** have been sympathetic upon reviewing my correspondence, particularly about the breach of p.123/2020 on 20 November referenced above.

We have set up a **Facebook page, Guardians of Westmount Road and People's Park, with more than 230 members** (as of date of this email!) in a very short period of time to bring attention to the devastation proposed for the access route. We are doing the work the government should be doing in letting people understand the true proposals easily and simply. From comments on the site, the **public strongly oppose** paving over our history, public spaces and natural beauty for construction vehicles!

**With respect to the government and their hired contractors, we have not been heard at all.** I have been leading our Westmount residents group in trying to engage in constructive dialogue with the government and its contractors on achieving a cost effective and suitable solution on road access to the Overdale site. We have been thwarted at every turn with communication from the government being condescending, tone-deaf to the residents' views and our concerns summarily dismissed. We all want a new hospital that represents good value for tax payer money, is consistent with the States overall objectives and can adapt to the future of medical care. The government would benefit from working constructively with us to achieve our shared goal.