

2019.04.30

2 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour of the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables regarding the identification of potential development sites in each Parish: (OQ.95/2019)

Will the Chairman advise whether, as part of the Island Plan Review, the Connétables and their parishioners will be identifying potential development sites, in order to meet the Island's future housing needs; if so, when will they do so and, if not, why not?

Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence (Chairman, Comité des Connétables):

I thank the Deputy for his question. The Connétables recognise that the Island Plan is one of the most important documents in shaping the future of our Island and, as such, we are pleased that the Minister for the Environment has already been in contact with us regarding the forthcoming review of the Island Plan. Consequently, meetings have been arranged with all Connétables on an individual basis to brief them on the programme ahead and to have initial discussions about what the Island Plan might be able to achieve for their Parish. Village plans will certainly feature in those discussions, as we try to identify potential development sites within our Parish that may meet the future housing needs of the Island. Notwithstanding the approach from the Minister, a number of Parishes are already actively looking for a site, or sites, to provide affordable housing and committees have already been established in some Parishes with parishioners. The Deputy will, of course, be aware that if all goes to schedule, building for first-time buyer homes in St. Martin will begin shortly. That is a fine example of a Parish-led scheme. Finally, we are pleased to note that the Connétable of St. Mary will sit on the Housing Policy Development Board, thereby ensuring a direct link with the Connétables and the Parishes.

4.2.1 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I thank the Chairman for her reply. Can I just ask whether the committee, as a whole, has produced some guidelines, or criteria, that all the Constables are working to when identifying potential sites for ongoing development? For example, is it brownfield, is it not agricultural commercially available sites, then greenfields? Is there some sort of guidance for the Parishes?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I can confirm that the committee has not begun that work yet. Rather, it is important that we wait to find out whether there will be any changes to the criteria in the Island Plan, which will affect where housing developments may be built. Of course, the Deputy has just mentioned brownfield sites and green-zoned sites. At the moment, as I mentioned, some Parishes are looking to identify sites that comply with the current policies. However, when we meet with the Minister and / or his representatives we will know more about what they are intending to bring forward as part of the review.

4.2.2 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier:

Does the Ville du Manoir debacle provide lessons in Constables going rogue and identifying sites going forward?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am not sure that I agree with the Deputy's choice of words such as a 'debacle'. The Assembly will decide on that matter later in this sitting. However, it is, of course, incumbent upon us all as elected Members to identify sites that may be suitable for providing the housing that is so desperately

needed within the Island. As the head of the Civil Parish, I believe it is the responsibility of the Connétable to be working with parishioners towards that end.

4.2.3 Senator K.L. Moore:

Would the Chairman agree that the Parish plan and consultation process as carried out in St. Peter and also in St. Martin provide excellent examples for the rest of the Comité to follow?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, I was re-reading the proposition last night of the Senator, to remind myself of what has happened to date. It certainly seemed to me to be a good example of the Constable working with parishioners and elected officials of the Parish to identify housing within the Parish. The fact, however, that it is without of the current Island Plan policies and was, therefore, rejected leads me to consider that the working relationship between the Planning Department and all Parishes, as we undertake these reviews, has to be very close to achieve the aims of the Island.

The Bailiff:

Given the number of questions, I am not going to allow extensive questioning on this question. I shall take questions from the Deputy of St. Martin, Deputy of Grouville and then a final supplementary.

4.2.4 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

Does the Constable feel that in a future planning system Constables and Parishes may have more say in the applications in their own Parishes?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I think that would be a prime example of the validity of Parishes within the Island system and certainly I would hope that the review of this Island Plan works more closely with the Connétables than I would say the previous review did. I was the Constable during the review leading up to the 2011 Island Plan and I really do not recall a great deal of consultation with me and the Parish leading to the production of that plan. So, I would certainly hope so. I think they have new Constables now in role and, as far as I am aware, we are all looking forward to working with the department on the forthcoming review.

4.2.5 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

Does the Constable have any criteria for people coming forward with sites as to what they are looking for, the former sites? Also, is there any criteria from the Comité des Connétables, or each individual Constable, to suggest what criteria is needed for people to go on the first-time buyer lists and sheltered housing? Are there any checks to make sure those people are not duplicated on various Parish lists and on the Gateway scheme?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am not aware that there are any criteria. However, that will certainly form part of the discussions that Constables have with the Planning Department and also with their parishioners when they engage with them. Again, I refer back to the proposition of Senator Moore, regarding the Ville du Manoir proposal in St. Peter. It was clearly set out there how the decision had been made as to whether, or not, somebody was entitled to be on their waiting list. It seems to me that that was quite an informative list of criteria, links with the Parish, *et cetera* and I am sure that all Connétables will take that into account during this consultation period.

4.2.6 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes, I just wonder, again casting our minds back to the last Island Plan debate, for those of us that lived through that 2-week period. I wonder whether the Chairman will agree with me that sites that got adopted into the Island Plan for development often had the backing of their Parish through a Parish Assembly when it came to rezoning?

[10:00]

Does the Chairman think that going forward that should be something that all the Constables should be looking to do?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

It is certainly what happened in St. Peter. I am sure we will be coming to discuss that later on during this sitting. Of course, it is the decision of each individual Connétable as to how they engage with their parishioners and how they progress this. Having said that, I would certainly feel - knowing the Connétables as I do - that holding Parish Assemblies would be what they would intend to undertake.